

YEAR OF PRAYER: Get In The Ring

Pastor Brandon Zieske

Text: Genesis 32

To wrestle with God means you will experience His signature move.

We pray when we face circumstances that are beyond us.

ROUND 1 - God leads us to confront our circumstances.

God is the one who initiates the wrestling match, because He wants to bless us.

ROUND 2 - God makes us confront who we think we are.

When God makes us confront ourselves, He's looking for a confession.

God wrestles with us to make us see who we are in Him.

ROUND 3 - God confronts us in prayer so we are awed by His grace and mercy.

We can know that God wants to bless us because He became weak for us.

GOD'S SIGNATURE MOVE - THE DISLOCATER

"The move that destroys our self-confidence."

The ART OF WRESTLING IN PRAYER is the art of clinging to God in our weakness.

The ART OF WRESTLING IN PRAYER is the art of discovering that losing is gain.

The ART OF WRESTLING IN PRAYER is the art of surrender.

Food for Thought for the week of January 24, 2016

(Questions and Scriptures for further study and discussion)

1. How did this week's message impact you? What challenged you? What questions did it raise? What confused you?

Read Genesis 32:22-32

2. Do you have any experience with wrestling? Have you been to a wrestling meet? Do you understand it? Tell about it.

3. Is this account of Jacob's wrestling with God the model of prevailing prayer? Is it one step beyond bloody-knuckled knocking? Does this challenge you to ask yourself, "Will I wrestle in prayer as Jacob wrestled and prevail as Jacob prevailed?" Explain.

4. Why was there any struggle at all? If God is almighty and man feeble, why was Jacob not immediately overwhelmed?

5. Who was the aggressor? Who started this? Did Jacob wrestle because he chose to?

6. God did not take unfair advantage of His weaker opponent until He saw plainly that Jacob had no intention of giving in. What does it all mean? (Hint - This conflict symbolizes Jacob's lifelong struggle.) Explain.

7. Jacob was defending himself not attacking, yet he won a victory. His new name Israel means "God strove".

God: Let me go. Jacob: I will not let you go, unless you bless me.

These are the words God waited over 40 years to hear. He would have preferred that Jacob recognize his helplessness and cast himself on the mercy of God long before. Jacob conquered by his helpless dependency. How is that a victory?

8. Is God wrestling with you? If so, what makes you resist? Greed? Fear? Pride? The desire to play it your way just this once? He doesn't wish to bring you to some extremity in which you will have no choice but to cast yourself on His mercy; yet He will if He has to. He may have already done so. The basic lesson is you are helpless and you have no hope except in Him. After that things are never again quite the same. Comment/discuss.

For further study: Why do you think God didn't identify Himself to Jacob when he asked (and he even said please) and yet did identify Himself when Moses asked? Exodus 3:13-14, Exodus 6:2-3, Exodus 33:18-34:7

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