

# Wrestling with God

“And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.”  
Genesis 32:24

## What is Wrestling?

- A. Wrestling in this context describes praying desperately to obtain God’s blessing in an emergency.
- B. Wrestling is one of the most intense and exhausting athletic endeavors among all sport activities.
- C. The lesson is that Jacob would not let God go until He blessed him, which is very intense praying.
- D. God makes Himself available and vulnerable to righteous saints, who fervently and effectually pray.
- E. For effectual praying to work, it must be a very fervent, intense and passionate, activity (James 5:16).

## Winning at Wrestling

- A. Jacob won the wrestling match with God, for (1) the LORD could not prevail over him (32:25), the LORD declared him the winner (32:28), the LORD changed His name in honor of the victory (32:28), and the LORD blessed him marvelously and wonderfully with Esau (32:29; 33:4,9,15).
- B. Jacob’s earlier verbal prayer shows worship (32:9), claiming God’s promises (32:9), humility (32:10), thanksgiving (32:10), honesty and openness (32:11), and claiming God’s promises again (32:12).
- C. What is the key from this lesson for successful praying? Importunate insistence without quitting (Matt 15:21-28; Luke 11:5-8; 18:1-8; Romans 12:12; Ephesians 6:18; Colossians 4:2; I Thess 5:17)!

## The Need for Wrestling

- A. The situation facing Jacob was quite dangerous: his vengeful brother was coming with 400 men.
- B. Though Jacob had gotten himself into this predicament, he now had to beg God for help to get out.
- C. Jacob’s 11 sons and a daughter were 12 years of age and under - vulnerable (32:22 cp Gen 31:38,41).
- D. It is not a matter **if** you will face such situations in life, but **when** you will face them. Get ready.
- E. Think health, finances, soul, children, marriage, job, church, dilemmas, enemies, nation, and so on.

## Going from Bad to Worse

- A. During the wrestling match, God put Jacob’s thigh out of joint, which made wrestling even more difficult and would render him even more vulnerable to Esau and his 400 men.
- B. If you are praying earnestly for a matter, and the situation gets worse, do not be discouraged. The blessing is just ahead! Remember Jacob here and the Canaanite women elsewhere (Matt 15:21-28).

## Asking for the Wrong Thing

- A. The scriptures warn us of asking for the wrong thing to consume it on our lusts (Jas 4:3; I John 5:14).
- B. Let us not do this, but let Jacob’s error save you worry and give you boldness and comfort (32:29)!

## The Wrestling Assistant

- A. You cannot pray as you ought by yourself, but the Holy Spirit prays for you perfectly (Rom 8:26-27).
- B. This is another means by which the blessed God of heaven makes Himself very vulnerable to you!
- C. However, the Holy Spirit does not pray for those who grieve or quench Him (Eph 4:30; I Thess 5:19).
- D. And the Holy Spirit is not going to pray very often for those who are not praying themselves!

## The Wrestling Reminder

- A. Jacob and his descendants had a new name, which memorialized this great prayer victory (32:28).
- B. Jacob never walked the same again, and Israel always remembered the thigh sinew (32:31-32).
- C. Hosea remembered this great event 1500 years later when preaching to Israel (Hosea 12:3-5).
- D. When God is merciful to you in prayer, do you praise and remember His goodness to you?