

# Putting Away Idols

Jacob is a very flawed Bible character. He was a deceiver, tricker, thief, and horrible father. However, Jacob also had some good moments (Genesis 35:1-4). There was an occasion when he sought to keep a promise made to God and put his family on the right spiritual path.

## Who was Jacob?

- Jacob was the grandson of Abraham and the youngest son of Isaac and Rebekah (Genesis 25:19-26).
- Jacob was a deceiver who had taken his older brother Esau's birthright and blessing (Genesis 25:27-34).
- Esau hated Jacob so much that he fled to Haran (Genesis 27-28:1-9). There Jacob would work for Laban (his uncle) and marry two of his daughters (Genesis 29).
- While traveling to Haran, in Bethel, Jacob was given a dream from God (Genesis 28:10-22). In this dream, Jacob sees a ladder reaching heaven with angels ascending and descending on it. God repeated the promises made to Abraham and assured Jacob that He would be with him.
- Jacob promised God that he would return to Bethel, build an altar, and worship Him.
- In Genesis 35:1, God reminded Jacob of his promise. The Lord demanded that he take his family, go to Bethel, and keep his vow.
- Before returning to Bethel, Jacob had to deal with a problem in his family. There were idols in his household that needed to be disposed of before he went to worship God.
- The text is unclear about the origin of these idols. They may have been the idols Rachel stole from Laban (Genesis 31:19-21). Jacob knew he needed to purge these idols before he could honor and fulfill his promise to God.

## What can we learn?

- We need to beware of idols! Idols can infiltrate our hearts and families (1 John 5:21). Idolatry is a sin of the heart (Ezekiel 14:3; Colossians 3:5). Idols are anything we love more than God. They can come in the form of money, careers, friends, hobbies, sports, politics, and education.
- We need to be honest about idols! Idols must be recognized, acknowledged, and called out (Genesis 35:2). Jacob didn't sugarcoat the severity of having false gods in his family. He acknowledged that there were evil things spiritually hurting his family. We also need to take spiritual inventory of our hearts and families. We must honestly evaluate what may hinder our devotion to God. We must avoid denying, justifying, and making excuses for our idols.
- We need to take drastic steps to remove idols. Jacob took all of the idols in his household and buried them under an oak tree in Shechem (Genesis 35:2-4). He then traveled to Bethel and worshipped God. We also may need to bury and cut off some idols (Matthew 5:27-30). We may need to purge some immodest clothes, streaming channels, social media pages, associations, and worldly pursuits from our lives.

## Conclusion:

Jacob led his family to spiritual renewal. Do you need to do the same?

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