

Growth Guides

For Individual Use

Read Genesis 32:22-28 If you have time, reading the back-story is helpful, Genesis 25-32.

1. Can you identify areas of frustration in your life, where your effort does not equal the results? What behavior, habit, or attitude gets you into trouble? What's broken in your life?
2. Identify what was broken in Jacob's life. What were the results? What are the problems your current way of behaving is causing? Are you tired of the results and are you ready to change? If not, stop here and do not go on.

A good way to discover these areas is to talk with those closest to you. They already know. Don't ask if you don't want to know. You have to commit to being non-defensive or self-protective. You can trust the words of a good friend though and they will say it to you in a sensitive way. The way you experience deliverance is through facing what needs fixed!

You can get at this yourself by stepping outside yourself and asking, "What would others find odd about my life?" Watch the movie, "*Shadowland*." What did Joy find odd about C.S. Lewis? How did it affect his life? What were the underlying causes of this behavior?

3. Take one habit that you would like to work on, just one! Do not work on more than one at a time. You will be overwhelmed and discouraged.

Now look within and retrace the path that led you to see the world the way you do and to your way of behaving. Can you identify an event or several that helped mold your behavior? Are the assumptions you made true or are they skewed in some way? What is true about the world and what is not? What does God's Word have to say about your view and behavior?

4. Identify the people or person who hurt you. If they still affect your life, pray about it. See if you can come to a place where you can go and share with the person what they did to hurt you and how it has affected your life. Be gentle with the person. They may be unaware that they hurt you. Find out why they hurt you.

You can't change the past, but you can keep it from ruining your future and affecting your present. You may need to forgive them. However, do not offer forgiveness until you are ready to do so.

Depending on the wound, this may take a while and it may require therapy or the help of a counselor. If you are experiencing trauma when you do this, stop and seek help from a pastor or professional!

5. Make a list of past painful events that still affect you. Pray for healing, both of the actual event and the memory of the event.

Genesis 32:22-28

Decide not to allow your past to cripple you from healthy attitudes and behaviors and seek to change what you can. Take on new ways of behaving and responding. Look in scripture for information on those new ways. Taking on new thought forms is vital at this point.

6. Read Romans 8:1-13 and 12:1-3. Note the role of the mind in these passages! Note the role of the Spirit in accomplishing the new life! How do we cooperate with God? What are we to do and what does God do?
7. Read also 2 Corinthians 5:17-18. What needs to be reconciled to God in your life?
8. Read Ephesians 4:17 –5:2 and Colossians 3:1-17.

What do we need to do to take off the old self and put on the new self with a new attitude that comes from God? What quality or qualities do have you identified from the list as ones you need to "put on?"

Remember, it is a work of God and one that he must do in your life. You cannot force the shirt over your head yourself. You have to let go of the old clothes and allow God to help you put on the new clothes made in His image!

9. Unlearn the behavior that is hurting your relationships or performance at work and learn new ways of responding. Write on a 3 X 5 card the old habit you want to stop and the new habit you want to start. Also note the faulty thinking on the card and the truth from scripture that counters the faulty thought.
10. What areas of your life are you still living in denial about and what do you need to confess to God and perhaps to another person?

Confess only those things that actually involve another person. If it is affecting just your life then confess your sin to God only. Do not confess things that do not affect someone else. You are merely inviting trouble into your life unnecessarily. Who have you sinned against: Yourself, God, someone else?

Here's a good verse to memorize because basically this is what we are trying to do, dismantle the faulty thoughts we have that come from painful events in our lives and then replace them with God's thoughts that then lead to healthy and godly behavior that results in blessings upon our lives.

"For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." 2 Corinthians 10:3-5