

Running Away Again

Genesis 30:25-43; 31; Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 190-194

Have you ever eaten in a restaurant with your family? If the service was good, did your family leave a reward for the person who waited on you? Did that person expect a reward? When you help someone, do you think about getting a reward?

Twenty years had gone by since Jacob had left his home and family. Twenty years he had worked for his uncle Laban. By this time Jacob had 10 sons and at least one daughter.

After Joseph had been born, Jacob had asked Laban to let him return to Canaan. But Laban had begged him to stay. "Please stay," Laban had pleaded. "I know that the Lord has blessed me because of you."

So Jacob had agreed to stay. And Laban had agreed to pay Jacob for his work. All the spotted, speckled, and dark-colored sheep or goats would belong to Jacob. Since that time, many animals had been added to Jacob's flocks. Jacob was now a wealthy man!

Laban's sons were not happy about this. Jacob knew that they believed his flocks should belong to them. And Jacob also knew that "Laban's attitude toward him was not what it had been" (Genesis 31:2).

So when the Lord told Jacob, "Go back to the land of your fathers," Jacob knew it was time to leave. Without a word to Laban, he gathered his wives, his children, and his flocks and started for Canaan.

After three days Laban learned that Jacob was gone. Laban started after him. Seven days later, Laban caught up with Jacob. That night,

God spoke to Laban: "Be careful! Do not say anything to Jacob, good or bad."

The next day Jacob watched Laban and his men. He wrinkled his forehead with concern as they drew nearer. He knew that Laban would not be happy with him.

"Why did you run away without telling me?" shouted Laban. "You didn't even let me kiss my grandchildren and my daughters goodbye. You know, it is in my power to harm you! But last



night God told me not to say anything to you, good or bad."

Jacob answered, "I left without telling you because I thought you might try to take my wives and children away."

"Uncle Laban," Jacob continued, "I have been a faithful worker for you for 20 years. During that time, I was careful to take good care of your animals. I didn't complain about my work whether it was blistering hot or freezing cold. I worked 14 years to pay my debt

The Message

Loving service is done well,
even without a reward.

Memory Verse

**"Whatever you do,
work at it with all
your heart"**

(Colossians 3:23).

to you for your daughters. And these past six years, I have worked to earn my animals. During that time, you changed my pay 10 times! But God was with me. You would have sent me away empty-handed. But God knows how hard I've worked for you. That is why He talked to you last night."

"Jacob, in a way, everything you have is from me," Laban spoke sharply. "These are my daughters and my grandchildren. The animals you have came from my flocks. But it wouldn't be right for me to keep my daughters and their children." Laban's voice was kinder now. "Let's make a peaceful agreement," he offered. Jacob agreed.

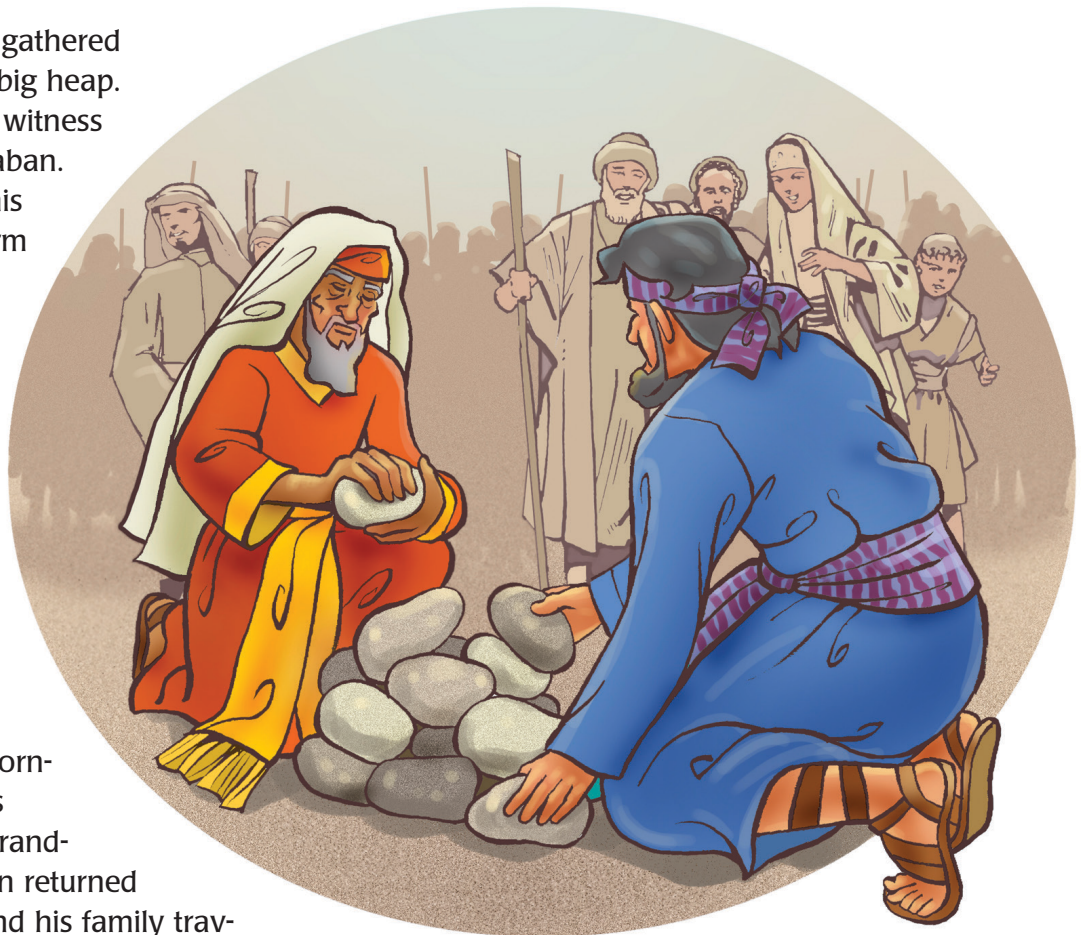
So both families gathered some stones into a big heap. "These stones are a witness between us," said Laban. "I will not go past this pile of stones to harm you. And you will not pass it to harm me."

Jacob repeated the promise. "I will not harm you, and you will not harm me." Then the two men and their families shared a meal together.

Early the next morning Laban kissed his daughters and his grandchildren. Then Laban returned home. And Jacob and his family trav-

eled on toward Canaan.

For years people called that place Mizpah, a place of blessing. For it was there that Laban said to Jacob, "May the Lord keep watch between you and me when we are away from each other" (Genesis 31:49).





S A B B A T H

DO If possible, go with your family to see some sheep or goats. Count the spotted, speckled, or dark-brown animals. Did Jacob have more or fewer animals? How do you know?

SHARE Share the heart coupon you made in Sabbath School with an adult in your house. (Or make a paper heart and write on it one thing you will do without expecting a reward.)

S U N D A Y

READ For worship today, read and discuss Genesis 30:25-36. What agreement did Jacob and Laban make? Now read verses 40-43. What did Jacob do? Why?

DO Say your memory verse over and over while doing a chore (sweeping, cleaning up, washing dishes, etc.).

DO If possible, look at your baby pictures. Then thank the people who took care of you when you were a baby. Thank Jesus, too.

M O N D A Y

READ For family worship today, read and discuss Genesis 31:1-13. What did God tell Jacob to do? Who really caused the animals to be streaked? Why?

MAKE Make a picture of a spotted animal and write the memory verse on it. Use this to teach the verse to your family.

T U E S D A Y

READ During worship today, read and discuss Genesis 31:14-21. How did Laban's daughters feel about him? Why? What did Rachel do? How did Jacob deceive Laban? Was this right? Why? How would you feel about moving away from your family?

THINK Think of something good to do for someone without them knowing. Do it this week and see if they notice. But don't expect to be rewarded!

W E D N E S D A Y

READ For family worship, read and discuss Genesis 31:22-43. What did Laban say to Jacob? How did Jacob answer? What do you think about Rachel's actions? Who served without expecting a reward? To whom did Jacob give credit for caring for him? What did Laban suggest they should do?

THINK Have you quarreled with someone recently? Or treated someone unfairly? Has someone treated you wrongly? Ask Jesus to help you make things right with that person. Don't wait. Do it today. Pray for that person today.

In Jacob's dream of the ladder, God promised to bring him back home again one day.





THURSDAY

READ

Read and discuss Genesis 31:44-55 for worship today. What covenant did Jacob and Laban make? What did they make to witness to their covenant? Why was that place called Mizpah? What do you think about the way Laban and Jacob parted?

DO

Read Genesis 31:49 again. Ask your family to say the Mizpah together.

SING

Sing some praise songs. Then thank Jesus for caring for all of you.

FRIDAY

DO

For family worship, act out the Bible story. Who will be Jacob? Rachel? Laban? Review the memory verse. Ask each person: What have you done to help someone this week?

DO

Find the word *covenant* in a dictionary. Tell your family what it means. Make a covenant with your family. Write a sentence that tells about the covenant.

READ

Read Matthew 6:3, 4 together. What can your family do to help someone in need? Make a plan and do it together this weekend. Ask Jesus to help you do it cheerfully, without expecting a reward.

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PUZZLE

Directions: To find out the meaning of Mizpah, cross out every other letter, beginning with the second letter of each word.

As pdlfagchej
okfi
bwlxezscsvibnygm.