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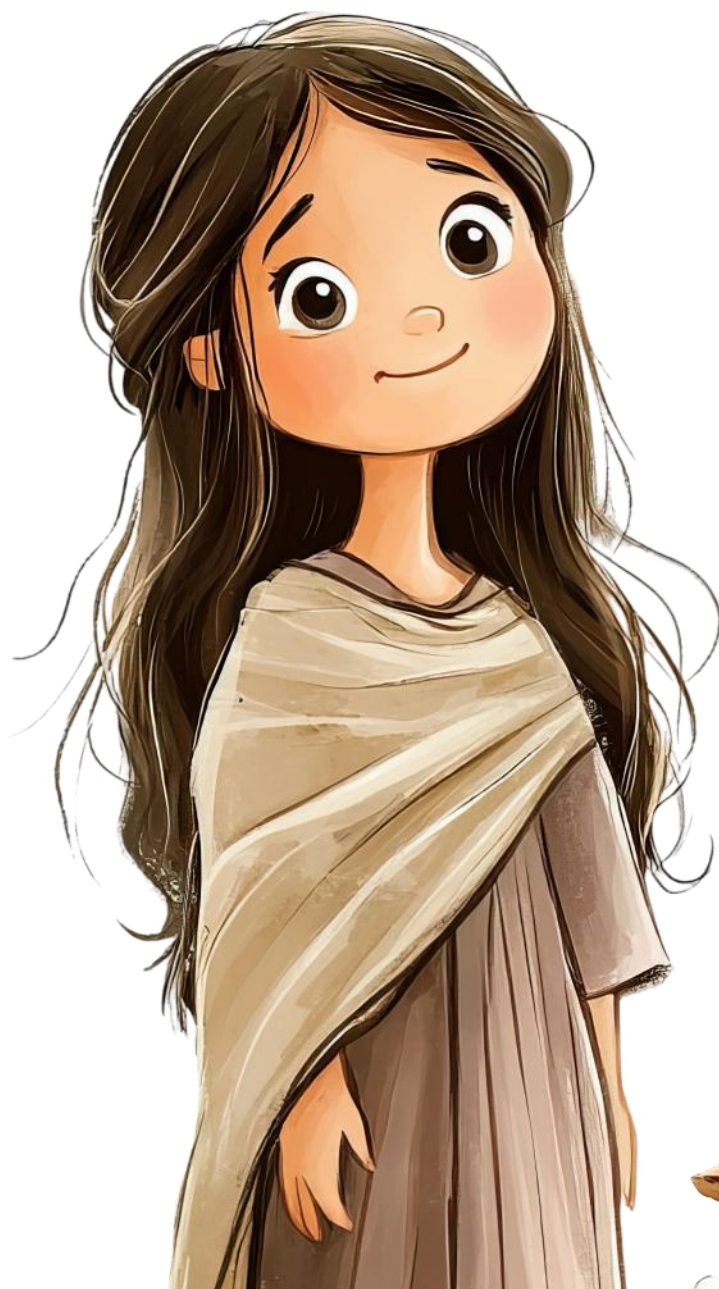
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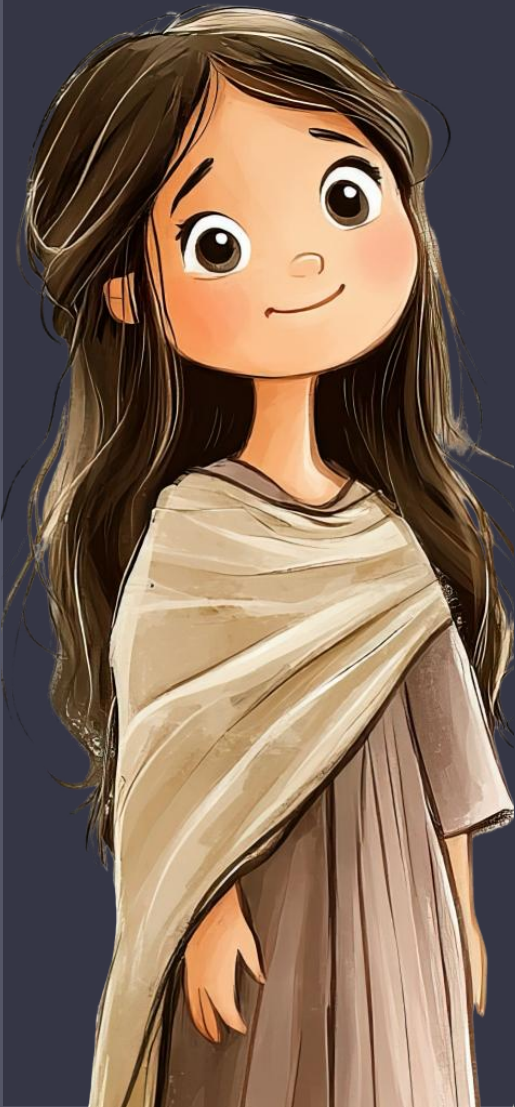
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Pray, Trust and Wait!

INTRODUCTION



Rachel is not just Laban's daughter and Leah's younger sister. She is the enchanting wife of Jacob. Rachel is also the cherished daughter-in-law of Isaac and Rebekah. As the Bible unveils her story, two undeniable truths shine through. Jacob adores her with a depth that knows no bounds. Her beauty is breathtaking. In Genesis 29:17, the contrast with her sister Leah becomes stark, as it states, "Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful in form and appearance." Understanding the weight of this description through our modern lens can be challenging. When two women stand together and one is labeled "beautiful in form and appearance," it casts a shadow upon the other.

The intense physical comparison between these sisters didn't merely ignite with the arrival of an eligible bachelor. I envision that it likely began the moment they drew breath. I can also surmise that these comparisons extended far beyond mere physical traits. You don't have to be a genius to see that such enduring scrutiny deeply wounded their bond. It cast shadows where love

INTRODUCTION

and camaraderie should have thrived.

Readers of this riveting story in Genesis are thrust into a mesmerizing sisterly drama. You simply cannot unravel Rachel's tale without delving into Leah's. It's a tapestry woven together by fate. This scenario may seem familiar: the dazzling "it" girl has her charming star quarterback boyfriend. There's also the quiet sister. Her life is filled with hidden depths, revealing that perfection is but an illusion. Yet, remember, the saga of Rachel and Leah is no mere copy. It is the original. It is a powerful narrative that unfolded long before the flickering images of film graced our screens.

We are going to examine 5 aspects from Rachel's Story:

- Life is full of Surprises
- Things Go the Wrong Way
- Perseverance and Faith
- God looks out for those who are troubled and sorrowful
- God keeps His Promises

GENESIS 29:13-31

13 As soon as Laban heard the news about Jacob, his sister's son, he hurried to meet him. He embraced him and kissed him and brought him to his home, and there Jacob told him all these things. 14 Then Laban said to him, "You are my own flesh and blood."

After Jacob had stayed with him for a whole month, 15 Laban said to him, "Just because you are a relative of mine, should you work for me for nothing? Tell me what your wages should be."

16 Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. 17 Leah had weak eyes, but Rachel had a lovely figure and was beautiful. 18 Jacob was in love with Rachel and said, "I'll work for you seven years in return for your younger daughter Rachel."

19 Laban said, "It's better that I give her to you than to some other man. Stay here with me." 20 So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her.

21 Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife. My time is completed, and I want to make love to her."

22 So Laban brought together all the people of the place and gave a feast. 23 But when evening came, he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and Jacob made love to her. 24 And Laban gave his servant Zilpah to his daughter as her attendant.

25 When morning came, there was Leah! So Jacob said to Laban, "What is this you

GENESIS 29:13-31

have done to me? I served you for Rachel, didn't I? Why have you deceived me?"

26 Laban replied, "It is not our custom here to give the younger daughter in marriage before the older one. 27 Finish this daughter's bridal week; then we will give you the younger one also, in return for another seven years of work."

28 And Jacob did so. He finished the week with Leah, and then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife. 29 Laban gave his servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her attendant. 30 Jacob made love to Rachel also, and his love for Rachel was greater than his love for Leah. And he worked for Laban another seven years.

Jacob remained childless. 32 Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben, or she said, "It is because the Lord has seen my misery. Surely my husband will love's Children

31 When the Lord saw that Leah was not loved, he enabled her to conceive, but Rachel me now."

33 She conceived again, and when she gave birth to a son she said, "Because the Lord heard that I am not loved, he gave me this one too." So she named him Simeon.

35 She conceived again, and when she gave birth to a son she said, "This time I will praise the Lord." So she named him Judah. Then she stopped having children.

GENESIS 30:1-24

³⁰ When Rachel saw that she was not bearing Jacob any children, she became jealous of her sister. So she said to Jacob, “Give me children, or I’ll die!”

² Jacob became angry with her and said, “Am I in the place of God, who has kept you from having children?”

³ Then she said, “Here is Bilhah, my servant. Sleep with her so that she can bear children for me and I too can build a family through her.”

⁴ So she gave him her servant Bilhah as a wife. Jacob slept with her, ⁵ and she became pregnant and bore him a son. ⁶ Then Rachel said, “God has vindicated me; he has listened to my plea and given me a son.” Because of this she named him Dan.

⁷ Rachel’s servant Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. ⁸ Then Rachel said, “I have had a great struggle with my sister, and I have won.” So she named him Naphtali.

⁹ When Leah saw that she had stopped having children, she took her servant Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife. ¹⁰ Leah’s servant Zilpah bore Jacob a son. ¹¹ Then Leah said, “What good fortune!” So she named him Gad.

¹² Leah’s servant Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. ¹³ Then Leah said, “How happy I am! The women will call me happy.” So she named him Asher.

¹⁴ During wheat harvest, Reuben went out into the fields and found some mandrake plants, which he brought to his mother Leah. Rachel said to Leah, “Please give me some of your son’s mandrakes.”

¹⁵ But she said to her, “Wasn’t it enough that you took away my husband? Will you take my son’s mandrakes too?”

GENESIS 30:1-24

"Very well," Rachel said, "he can sleep with you tonight in return for your son's mandrakes."

¹⁶ So when Jacob came in from the fields that evening, Leah went out to meet him. "You must sleep with me," she said. "I have hired you with my son's mandrakes." So he slept with her that night.

¹⁷ God listened to Leah, and she became pregnant and bore Jacob a fifth son. ¹⁸ Then Leah said, "God has rewarded me for giving my servant to my husband." So she named him Issachar.

¹⁹ Leah conceived again and bore Jacob a sixth son. ²⁰ Then Leah said, "God has presented me with a precious gift. This time my husband will treat me with honor, because I have borne him six sons." So she named him Zebulun.

²¹ Some time later she gave birth to a daughter and named her Dinah.

²² Then God remembered Rachel; he listened to her and enabled her to conceive. ²³ She became pregnant and gave birth to a son and said, "God has taken away my disgrace." ²⁴ She named him Joseph, and said, "May the LORD add to me another son."

GENESIS 31:1-17

31 Jacob heard that Laban's sons were saying, "Jacob has taken everything our father owned and has gained all this wealth from what belonged to our father." ² And Jacob noticed that Laban's attitude toward him was not what it had been.

³ Then the LORD said to Jacob, "Go back to the land of your fathers and to your relatives, and I will be with you."

⁴ So Jacob sent word to Rachel and Leah to come out to the fields where his flocks were. ⁵ He said to them, "I see that your father's attitude toward me is not what it was before, but the God of my father has been with me. ⁶ You know that I've worked for your father with all my strength, ⁷ yet your father has cheated me by changing my wages ten times. However, God has not allowed him to harm me. ⁸ If he said, 'The speckled ones will be your wages,' then all the flocks gave birth to speckled young; and if he said, 'The streaked ones will be your wages,' then all the flocks bore streaked young. ⁹ So God has taken away your father's livestock and has given them to me.

¹⁰ "In breeding season I once had a dream in which I looked up and saw that the male goats mating with the flock were streaked, speckled or spotted. ¹¹ The angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob.' I answered, 'Here I am.' ¹² And he said, 'Look up and see that all the male goats mating with the flock are streaked, speckled or spotted, for I have seen all that Laban has been doing to you. ¹³ I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and where you made a vow to me. Now leave this land at once and go back to your native land.'"

¹⁴ Then Rachel and Leah replied, "Do we still have any share in the inheritance of our father's estate? ¹⁵ Does he not regard us as foreigners? Not only has he sold us, but he has used up what was paid for us. ¹⁶ Surely all the wealth that God took away from our father belongs to us and our children. So do whatever God has told you."


GENESIS 31:1-17

¹⁷ Then Jacob put his children and his wives on camels, ¹⁸ and he drove all his livestock ahead of him, along with all the goods he had accumulated in Paddan Aram, to go to his father Isaac in the land of Canaan.

LIFE IS FULL OF SUPRISES

It would be an understatement that nothing went as planned for Rachel. Jacob's soon-to-be father-in-law told him he could finally marry Rachel if he dedicated seven years of hard work and loyalty. Rachel was the love of his life. An odd proposition, perhaps, but Jacob was wholeheartedly committed to marrying Rachel, believing that true love was worth any sacrifice. After an arduous seven years filled with toil, perseverance, and dreams of their future together, the long-awaited wedding festival was at hand. The celebration lasted seven days. It was filled with joy and anticipation by their families and friends. As the sun rose on the morning after “they” were married, Jacob awoke with a heart full of excitement and love. To his absolute shock, he found Leah – the sister of Rachel – lying beside him. He had not found the woman he had long dreamed of marrying. Confusion and disappointment washed over him. Rachel felt the same way. He grappled with the reality of the situation. He felt trapped in a web of circumstances he never expected.

We could spend a few pots of coffee. We could fill in the blanks and dive deep into the intricate layers. This is a perplexing situation. We could come up with all sorts of scenarios on how on earth this even happened. Was Rachel in on this elaborate plot, orchestrating events behind the scenes? Was it a secret agreement she made with her father? Did years of subtle manipulation shape a pact to get what she wanted? Did Laben, with his charming demeanor, steal Rachel away? Did he hide her against her will? Did he craft a romantic tale that now teeters on the edge of betrayal? Was Jacob truly drunk at his own wedding? Was he lost in a haze of celebrations? Did he have no idea which sister he went to the bedroom with that



fateful night? The possibilities spin like a whirlwind in my mind. I suppose if God wanted us to know those details. He would have included them in the grand tapestry of life. Yet to say that “Life is full of surprises” does not do justice to the sheer complexity and twists that reality can throw our way. It was a complete understatement. It presents a puzzle that begs for understanding in ways we might never fully grasp.

Laban cunningly deceives his son-in-law Jacob. He orchestrates a dramatic twist on their wedding night. Laban swaps his daughters, leaving Jacob entangled in a web of unexpected marriages. Jacob is fueled by an unwavering love for Rachel. He commits to an arduous path. He is willing to toil for an additional seven years. He aims to claim the heart of the woman who ignited his soul’s deepest desires. He could have easily walked away. He could have dismissed this chaotic situation. Yet, his profound affection for Rachel drives him to endure. It showcases the relentless, passionate pursuit of love.

What do we do when we find ourselves in a situation like this? When have been manipulated, deceived, and lied to by others? What does God’s Word tell us? Read the following scriptures and use the following page (or your SOAP pages) to make note of when the Lord says.



Scripture about Manipulation, Lying, Deceiving Others:

- Proverbs 31:30
- Hosea 12:1-3
- Hosea 12:7
- Proverbs 14:12
- Psalm 5:5
- Ephesians 4:14
- Proverbs 26:24-28
- 2 Corinthians 11:14
- Galatians 6:7
- Proverbs 20:17
- Jeremiah 9:8
- Proverbs 12:20
- Psalm 52:2-4
- Proverbs 14:8
- Matthew 7:15
- Romans 16:18
- James 3:14-16
- Psalm 101:7
- Proverbs 24:28
- Micah 2:1
- 2 Timothy 3:1-5
- John 8:44
- Daniel 11:32
- Ephesians 2:2-3
- Proverbs 13:15
- Proverbs 23:6-8



Manipulation

Manipulation weaves a profound tapestry that ensnares individuals and shatters their relationships, eroding trust and breeding deception. This passionate exploration delves into how a deceitful tongue can viciously unravel the very fabric of honesty and honor.

Trust and Deception

Manipulative behavior devastatingly undermines trust, the cornerstone of vibrant and healthy relationships. When individuals resort to deceitful tactics, they create a toxic atmosphere where trust withers away. From a biblical perspective, it underscores that God deeply cherishes relationships rooted in trust. Manipulation violently clashes with this sacred principle.

Lying and Honesty

A cornerstone of righteous living is unwavering honesty! Throughout the Scriptures, we are fervently warned against a lying tongue, for it stands in stark opposition to truth and integrity. Consider the powerful words of Proverbs 12:22: "The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in people who are trustworthy." This uplifting verse illuminates the profound truth that our speech is a powerful reflection of our character, and in the eyes of God, honesty shines as a treasure to be valued above all!




Righteousness Versus Manipulation

Manipulation is inherently unrighteous because it stands in opposition to the direct and transparent conduct that Scriptures encourage. It involves twisting the truth for selfish ends. This is contrary to the principles of honor and integrity that build up individuals and relationships. Scripturally, those who manipulate are warned of consequences, as seen in Bible Reasons, with the Bible urging adherents to be vigilant against such behavior, which attempts to corrupt God's word.

How to Identify and Resist Manipulation

Identifying and resisting manipulation demands a fierce awareness and profound spiritual discernment. Embracing biblical principles empowers individuals to unveil insidious manipulative tactics and steadfastly cling to the truth. Protecting oneself from deceit requires an unwavering vigilance. We must guard against the subtle snares that seek to mislead us. They aim to divert us from our righteous path.


The Bible fervently warns believers to remain vigilant against those who cunningly wield dishonest rhetoric to manipulate hearts and minds. Proverbs 16:28 powerfully illustrates the danger of how a single individual can sow seeds of division through deceitful words. It is absolutely imperative to cultivate discernment of the spirit of truth in order to stand firm against manipulation. The Holy Spirit serves as our steadfast guide, leading us away from deceitful spirits and illuminating our path to truth. Believers are called to test the spirits boldly. Not all spirits originate from God. This reminds us of the urgent message in 1 John 4:1.



Detecting false teachings is a vital journey where discernment becomes our most trusted ally! It is essential for individuals to be firmly rooted in Scripture to boldly distinguish between true and false prophets. The Bible provides profound wisdom. It equips us to recognize and steer clear of those who twist its teachings for their own gain. This is sternly warned in Matthew 7:15. Scripture provides unwavering direction on the perils of manipulation. It offers urgent counsel to avoid deceiving others. It also gives strong warnings against being led astray. Through direct teachings and compelling narratives, it paints a vivid moral landscape that demands our attention and action!

The Warnings of Christ and the Apostles

Matthew 7:15 passionately warns believers, "*Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.*" This scripture is a powerful cry from Jesus about the deceptions that lurk among us, hidden behind false facades. 2 Peter 2:1 amplifies this message. It fiercely alerts us to the fact that false teachers will cunningly exploit the unsuspecting. They do so with their fabricated tales. Romans 16:18 boldly unveils that some serve their own selfish desires. They use smooth talk and flattery to lead astray the innocent and naive. The apostle Paul implores us to take heed of such treacherous behaviors. He urges followers to remain ever-vigilant. They must be discerning in their faith journey.




The Christian Response to Manipulation

Christians navigate the daunting challenges of manipulation. They are called to embody the vibrant fruits of their faith. These include love, patience, and unwavering integrity. They do not rise with retaliation. Instead, they rise with the powerful guidance of the Holy Spirit. Thus, they become beacons of truth in every action. Christians hold dear the belief that love is profoundly patient. It is endlessly kind. Therefore, they passionately strive to confront manipulation with a heart of forbearance. They demonstrate remarkable grace under pressure.

For instance, 1 Corinthians 13:4-5 passionately highlights that love is never self-seeking. It is not easily provoked or angered. This profound truth reveals that responding with impatience or harshness starkly contradicts the core teachings of Scripture. Indeed, exercising patience has the remarkable ability to thwart manipulative tactics. It serves as a powerful testament to the extraordinary, transformative nature of Christian love.

Christians must fervently embody their faith with relentless transparency. They should fiercely denounce the traps of deceit that seek to ensnare them. They must boldly proclaim the truth in love, a powerful commandment highlighted in Ephesians 4:15. This courageous stance shatters manipulation, steadfastly refusing to participate in falsehoods or deceptive actions. This fiercely safeguards the integrity of their witness and fosters profound, authentic relationships within their communities.


The Holy Spirit ignites a fierce source of power and counsel for Christians. It



guides them to recognize manipulation. Christians respond with conviction (John 16:13). This divine empowerment equips believers to stand firm against deceptive pressures. It confronts them with an unparalleled wisdom and strength. This transcends human limitations. All the while, they steadfastly embrace their core values and beliefs.


The following is a survey of questions to ponder and do some deep introspection. The purpose is to seek out in our own hearts roots or weeds of manipulations, lyings, and deceptions we have accepted or participated in.

Do I understand the impact of Manipulation? *The Bible emphasizes the importance of honesty and integrity in relationships (Ephesians 4:25). Manipulation is seen as a form of deceit and dishonesty, undermining the trust and respect that should exist between individuals.*





Can I recognize my own use of manipulation or when others try to manipulate me? *Manipulation often involves using someone's emotions or vulnerabilities to gain control or achieve a desired outcome. It can manifest in various forms, including guilt-tripping, gaslighting, or twisting facts to suit one's purpose.*

Do I understand the consequences of manipulation, lying or deceiving others? *The Bible warns against deception and lying, emphasizing that God hates liars (Proverbs 6:16-19). Lies and deceit can lead to damage, broken relationships, and ultimately, spiritual harm.*



Do I understand what the Word of God speaks concerning lying, manipulation, and deceiving others? *The Bible promotes truth-telling and transparency in all areas of life (Colossians 3:9). This includes being honest in words and actions, and avoiding manipulation to achieve personal gain.*

Do I need to seek the Lord's forgiveness and the forgiveness of others for having lied, manipulated or deceived to them?



Do I need to forgive someone who has lied, manipulated or deceived me?

Take time today to be in the presence of the Lord with these questions and let Him lead you to responding to His truth. Be obedient to His prompting.

THINGS GO THE WRONG WAY

10 God said to him, "Your name is Jacob, but you will no longer be called Jacob; your name will be Israel." So he named him Israel. 11 And God said to him, "I am God Almighty; be fruitful and increase in number. A nation and a community of nations will come from you, and kings will be among your descendants. 12 The land I gave to Abraham and Isaac I also give to you, and I will give this land to your descendants after you." 13 Then God went up from him at the place where he had talked with him. 14 Jacob set up a stone pillar at the place where God had talked with him, and he poured out a drink offering on it; he also poured oil on it. 15 Jacob called the place where God had talked with him Bethel.

Genesis 35:1-15

Rachel has fertility problems for many years. This is particularly frustrating because God promised Jacob he would continue and prosper the nation of God's chosen people, begun with his grandfather Abraham and carried into the next generation with Jacob's father Isaac. Rachel would feel personal unhappiness and community grief over her inability to bear children early in her marriage.

Many women today can identify with the devastation of wanting to be a mother. In the Jewish culture, you were only worth what you could birth. Aren't we glad we have a God that says you are worth more than what the world values? For Rachel, she had to watch as her sister gave birth to many sons. Let us look at scripture. We see what is truly born out of desperation.

30 When Rachel saw that she was not bearing Jacob any children, **she became jealous of her sister.** So she said to Jacob, "Give me children, or I'll die!" 2 Jacob became angry with her and said, "Am I in the place of God, who has kept you from having children?" 3 Then she said, "Here is Bilhah, my servant. Sleep with her so that she can bear children for me and I too can build a family through her." 4 So she gave him her servant Bilhah as a wife. Jacob slept with her, 5 and she became pregnant and bore him a son. 6 Then Rachel said, "God has vindicated me; he has listened to my plea and given me a son." Because of this she named him Dan. 7 Rachel's servant Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. 8 Then Rachel said, "**I have had a great struggle with my sister, and I have won.**" So she named him Naphtali.

Genesis 30:1-7

(Bold for emphasis)

What does this passage reveal about Rachel?

Jealousy leads people to do really dumb things. If we continue to read scripture, we find out that this caused Leah to give her servant to Jacob. SO It has not only bread stupidity, but it has also bread competition. But wait, it gets even worse!

14 During wheat harvest, Reuben went out into the fields and found some mandrake plants, which he brought to his mother Leah. Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes." 15 But she said to her, "Wasn't it enough that you took away my husband? Will you take my son's mandrakes too?" "Very well," Rachel said, "he can sleep with you tonight in return for your son's mandrakes." 16 So when Jacob came in from the fields that evening, Leah went out to meet him. "You must sleep with me," she said. "I have hired you with my son's mandrakes." So he slept with her that night. 17 God listened to Leah, and she became pregnant and bore Jacob a fifth son. 18 Then Leah said, "God has rewarded me for giving my servant to my husband." So she named him Issachar. 19 Leah conceived again and bore Jacob a sixth son. 20 Then Leah said, "God has presented me with a precious gift. This time my husband will treat me with honor, because I have borne him six sons." So she named him Zebulun.


Genesis 30:14-20





What are mandrakes? Interesting enough, mandrakes were a root plant that had two large roots. They often looked like little humans. Unfortunately, in ancient times, there was a lot of superstition and mysticism surrounding these plants. They were thought to be an aphrodisiac and aid in fertility. Can we see how far Rachel's jealousy has gone? Instead of relying on the Lord and trusting Him, she's now gone to the pagan use of a plant for fertility. This leads us to pause and look at the bigger picture here. Is it not an understatement to say, Life was not going the way Rachel planned?



Jealousy and Envy

Many times, when things do not go as we plan them, we get discontented with what the Lord has given us. We look at the world around us and feel as though we are missing out. That blessing of a new car next door. The cries of a new baby during a dedication at church. The promotion your co-worker got. We get jealous. Instead of praising the Lord for blessing, we start to think someone got our blessing. This is the seed of jealousy. When we are not thankful and content with what we have, the root of bitterness and jealousy take hold of our hearts. Lets us read the following scriptures about jealousy. Make not of what God's Word reveals about Jealousy.

- Proverbs 27:4
 - 1 Corinthians 3:3
 - Exodus 20:17
 - Galatians 5:19-21
 - Proverbs 14:30
 - James 3:14-16
 - Song of Solomon 8:6
 - 1 Corinthians 13:4-5
- 



Are Jealousy and Envy interchangeable? The short answer is no. Let us look at the definition of both words:

“Envy is a negative feeling of desire centered on someone who has something that you do not.”



On the other hand, jealousy is defined as:

“a feeling of resentment, bitterness, or hostility toward someone who has something that you don’t.”

I know they may seem like the same thing, but the truth is far more profound. Envy ignites a fire within us, rooted in the yearning for something someone else possesses. It’s about that intense desire for the “thing.” It could be an extraordinary quality or a remarkable achievement. This desire stirs our souls and compels us to reach for more.

However, jealousy ignites a fire within us, bringing a simmering intensity that involves a third party. It arises when one fears that their cherished possession is being endangered or being taken away or lost. This fear creates a storm of emotion that often rages through the realms of romance.

In order to fully understand these emotions, let’s look at some examples from the Bible. First, let us look at envy.





Satan's Envy of God: Isaiah 14:12-14

Sarah's Envy of Hagar: Genesis 16







The Envy of Joseph's Brothers: Genesis 37

Now let us look at the cousin of envy, Jealousy. We will do the same with these examples. Look at the situation and the result of jealousy.

Cain's Jealousy of Able: Genesis 4





This leads us to our current study. Rachel and Leah. I believe these women experienced both a severe case of Jealousy. Both of them thought they were going to loose something that had actually been given to them by God. As a result a competition was born and two other women were thrown into the mix. Now it came to Rachel selling her husband to Leah for a plant in hopes later she could conceive from the mystical idea this plant would make her fertile. In the meantime, it did not work and Leah had two more sons and a daughter.

What despair Rachel must have felt. Life was not going as planned. She was stuck in a dysfunctional family dynamic. She was forced to share a husband with her sister. She had grown to envy her sister and all she wanted was her happy ever after. Can you relate? Can you imagine her prayers to the Lord? Perhaps you have spoken similar prayers. *Lord, do you see me? Do you hear me?*

The Lord not only saw Rachel, he heard her, but His plan will always prevail against our own desires. He had a plan for Rachel. She would conceive a son. But not just any son.

22 Then God remembered Rachel; he listened to her and enabled her to conceive. 23 She became pregnant and gave birth to a son and said, "God has taken away my disgrace." 24 She named him Joseph, and said, "May the Lord add to me another son."

Genesis 30:22-23

Joseph

Not just any Joseph. But the Joseph that would rise out of the chains of being sold by his brother into slavery. The Joseph that would spend years in prison, falsely accused of rape. The same Joseph that would interpret the Pharaoh's dream of a coming famine, that would reach this very family and save them. From Joseph, the entire family would be saved and over 200 years that followed his life the nation of Israel would be born. God had a wonderful purpose for both Leah and Rachel! While they were battling each other, the Lord remained patient, loving and poured His mercy and grace into these women.

No, life did not go as they had planned, but God had an even greater purpose that was greater than the dysfunction and circumstances of their lives.

Leah — gave birth to Judah and from Judah came the line that Jesus was born from.

Rachel — gave birth to a son who would experience terrible things, but become a foreshadow of Christ!

Where are you at in life? Has life not gone as you planned? Is it perhaps the Lord calling you to a greater purpose? How does the story of Rachel's life "gone wrong" speak to you today?

PERSEVERANCE AND FAITH

Rachel faced the heart-wrenching challenge of infertility for many years. It was an experience that plunged her into deep despair and jealousy. Yet, in the face of such trials, she chose to rise above. She fervently prayed and placed her unwavering trust in God's perfect plan. Her journey is a powerful testament to the importance of staying resolute in our faith. This holds true even when the answers to our prayers seem distant. They sometimes feel elusive.

The story of Rachel stands as a powerful cautionary tale, igniting our spirits! Even the foreboding narratives in the Bible beckon us to pursue our faith with unwavering steadiness. They are blaring with red flags and warning sirens. Yet, they call us to approach with fierce courage. I may not know your current petitions to the Lord. The temptations you've pondered and the heavy costs they may entail are also unknown to me. Yet, the lives of this sister blaze a trail of inspiration. They remind us to wait patiently on the Lord. We are called to trust in His perfect timing and divine purposes.

28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28

Desiring what God wants for us lays down a solid foundation. It fuels the confidence we need to run the race with great vigor and determination!



The following are deep introspection questions to pause and ponder.



When have you been impatient with the Lord's timing and what was the result?

What situation or desires do you currently need to submit to the Lord?

Pray for the Lord to give you greater trust in His power and ability to provide what you need. Also, seek His help with the disappointment that comes when you don't get what you want. The following scriptures are encouragement to wait patiently upon the Lord!

- Psalms 27:14
 - Isaiah 40:31
 - Lamentations 3:25
 - Isaiah 30:18
 - Psalm 130:5-6
 - Psalm 33:20-22
 - Exodus 14:14
 - Psalm 37:34
 - Psalm 62:5
 - Psalm 37:7
 - Psalm 46:10
 - Isaiah 64:4
 - Psalm 130:5
 - Proverbs 20:22
 - Genesis 49:18
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THE TROUBLED AND SORROWFUL

Rachel faces a troubled family situation. It includes a deceitful father-in-law and devious husband. However, she does have her heart's desire for a time – a family with children and security. It is not hard to see that this family, on personal levels, experienced a lot of sorrow and trouble. There is no guarantee of a trouble-free life if you choose to be surrendered to God. Life will not be without sorrows. It is the storms of trouble and sorrow that the Lord meets us. He may part the Red Sea or He may lead you through it. No matter what His will is, He is going to be there if we choose to seek Him. What we need to realize is this is a moment the Lord allows because He has already equipped us to walk through it.


Listen to what James has to say about troubles and tribulations:

2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

James 1:2-4

Joy in testing? The testing of our faith produced perseverance. What does this mean?

Trials and testing are an exhilarating part of life! Clinical trials lead groundbreaking discoveries. They ensure the safety of medications. These medications can change lives due to their effectiveness. Academic tests are valuable tools. They guide both teachers and students to uncover the areas that need strengthening. This process ignites a spark of improvement. Similarly, God uses



trials and difficult times to test our faith and develop spiritual maturity. As we experience trials and testing, we develop patient endurance. We become steadfast in our belief in God.

James boldly states that believers should be joyful. He encourages them to consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds. This is because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. This is quite a remarkable admonition.

Valuing times of trials and testing with sheer joy is no small feat! We often find ourselves entangled in our pain and disappointment. However, this scripture fervently urges us to pivot our gaze from our discomfort and suffering. We should focus on the profound benefits of perseverance. The trials mentioned in this passage spring from the Greek word "*peirasmós*." They represent an exhilarating adventure of experiment. It involves attempt, trial, and proving. The NAS New Testament Greek Lexicon passionately conveys that these times of testing serve as a trial of man's fidelity. They test integrity, virtue, and constancy.

Trials can also include "an enticement to sin, temptation, whether arising from the desires or from the outward circumstances." A trial can be a time of adversity and affliction. It tests or proves one's character, faith, and holiness. James 1:3 includes the Greek word "*dokimion*" often translated "testing" and is related to proving genuineness and goodness.





Why Do Christians Face Trials and Temptations?

Challenging times ignite the fire of our true character and expose the depths of our hearts. Just as a student embraces the rigors of tests, a Christian must bravely confront trials and temptations. We often perceive temptations as moral dilemmas and trials as physical obstacles. Yet, within the sacred pages of the Bible, both are powerful instruments. They are designed to refine our faith. They demonstrate our unwavering obedience.

1 Peter 1:6 ignites a powerful call for believers to rejoice, even during trials. If necessary, you have been grieved by various trials for a little while. Our human understanding of a "little while" often pales in comparison to God's grand, eternal timeline. The journey of pharmaceutical trials unfolds over countless years before a new medicine can bless the world. The courtroom drama of a jury trial consumes weeks of anticipation. Similarly, our spiritual trials and tests have their unique beginnings and ends. Whether that period stretches to 40 days or even 40 years, each moment serves a divine purpose!

Reading the Bible ignites a powerful understanding of God's divine timing and purpose, especially during our most challenging moments. Just consider the profound trial Jesus faced when tested by Satan. This occurred after he endured 40 grueling days in the wilderness. This event is vividly detailed in Matthew 4:1-11. Let's Look at other tests of faith:



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- Jesus was tested by the Pharisees on multiple occasions (John 8:2-11; Matthew 22:15-22)
 - Abraham was tested at Mt. Moriah (Genesis 22)
 - Joseph was tempted by Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39:6-20)


Trials and temptations are integral to the vibrant tapestry of the Christian journey. It's only natural to fervently ponder, "From where do these tests and trials emerge?"

Does God Tempt People?

God does not tempt us. However, He permits temptation to enter our lives. These trials unveil the true condition of our hearts. They beckon us closer to Christ. In James 1:13-14, we find a powerful answer to the question, "Does God tempt people?" It declares boldly, "When tempted, no one should say, 'God is tempting me.' For God cannot be tempted by evil. Nor does he tempt anyone. Each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed." This truth ignites a fire within us. It urges us to recognize our struggles as opportunities for growth. We find a deeper connection with the divine.

In Job 1, God gave permission for Satan to test Job's character. In Luke 22:31, Jesus tells Simon Peter that Satan demanded to sift him like wheat. Satan





approached Jesus with three distinct temptations in Matthew 4:1-11, each one a fierce trial! Yet, it's crucial to understand that temptations do not inherently lead to sin. Despite being tempted in every conceivable way (Hebrews 4:15), Jesus emerged unscathed. There was no trace of sin in him (1 John 3:5). His victory over temptation stands as a powerful testament to his divine nature!


Times of trial ignite the fire of our faith and fiercely challenge our integrity. The Pharisees cunningly sought to ensnare Jesus with a question about paying taxes. They began by questioning the very essence of His integrity. They were unaware of the profound truth they were about to confront.

16 They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. "Teacher," they said, "we know that you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are.

Matthew 22:16

Not all people in the Bible passed the tests during times of temptation. Let's look at scripture about those who failed the tests.

- Adam and Eve gave into temptation in the Garden of Eden in Genesis 3
- The Israelites did not pass the tests in the wilderness at Massah and Meribah in Exodus 17:7
- Simon Peter denied Christ three times in Luke 22:54-62





People wrestle fiercely with their own desires and the seductive pull of sin. Satan tempted Jesus cruelly after a grueling 40-day fast. He used the allure of food and worldly acclaim as temptation. We find ourselves lured in our most vulnerable moments. Yet, giving in to our pride, unrighteousness, and selfish cravings can lead us down treacherous paths filled with regret. Trials compel us to address the spiritual gaps in our lives. These gaps are much like misunderstandings of derivatives exposed by a challenging calculus exam. In the same way, times of testing unearth weaknesses in our faith. They also reveal our misunderstanding of God's magnificent character.

2 Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands.

Deuteronomy 8:2

God allows us to endure the fiery trials of life. These trials forge our faith. They refine our character in the heat of adversity. The Apostle Peter draws from his profound personal experiences. He passionately ties these trials to the integrity of our faith. They are linked to the authenticity of our beliefs. In 1 Peter 1:7, he beautifully reveals that the various challenges believers encounter serve to unveil the genuine quality of their faith, which is more precious than gold. Gold perishes though it is tested by fire. Their faith may emerge to bring forth resounding praise,









glory, and honor at the glorious revelation of Jesus Christ.

Tests reveal the depths of our knowledge. They also show the vast expanse of what remains for us to explore. Even in the face of failure, there are invaluable lessons to be gained. During these times of trial and testing, we are shielded from succumbing to pride. We learn instead to extend grace to others navigating their own struggles. Embracing trials and temptations enriches our capacity. By doing so, we can minister compassionately to those in affliction. This shapes us more closely into the image of Christ (2 Corinthians 1:3-6).

How Can We Have Joy When We Face Trials of Many Kinds?

Trials and temptations are not mere obstacles; they are powerful tests that refine our faith and yield extraordinary blessings. As James 1:12 proclaims, “Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial. Having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life. The Lord has promised this crown to those who love him.” This crown of life is not just any royal insignia. It symbolizes the glorious laurels bestowed upon a valiant victor. These laurels are received after a fierce battle. The triumphant one, adorned with this crown, is a beacon of honor. They are celebrated and recognized for their unwavering spirit and determination.

After enduring the fires of trial and temptation, we emerge transformed, reflecting the very essence of Christ. 2 Corinthians 1:6 fervently declares, “For as we share abundantly in Christ’s sufferings, we also share abundantly in comfort





through Christ.” Much like the overwhelming joy that surges forth after conquering a marathon, embrace and share in Christ's sufferings. You will undeniably witness His radiant glory!

As 1 Peter 4:12-13 passionately declares, “Beloved, do not be taken aback by the fiery trials that descend upon you. These trials test your spirit as if something unfamiliar were occurring. Instead, embrace the challenge. Rejoice fervently as you partake in Christ’s sufferings. You will also exult and be filled with joy when His magnificent glory is unveiled!”

What Does the Bible Say about Trials and Perseverance?

Times of testing ignite within us an unshakeable steadfastness, fierce perseverance, and incredible endurance (James 1:3). In our darkest moments, we will embody the unwavering spirit of Jesus. He endured the cross "for the joy that was set before him" (Hebrews 12:2). Steadfastness mirrors the very character of Christ (2 Thessalonians 3:5; Revelation 1:9). It reminds us that true strength is forged through adversity. Our relentless perseverance leads us to completeness. It matures us into the individuals we are destined to be (James 1:4).

We are destined to experience the magnificent fruit of the Holy Spirit in our lives. It is brimming with peace, joy, and unwavering patience! Romans 5:3-4 passionately reveals that tribulation serves as a catalyst for cultivating patience in the hearts of believers. Patience, a glorious fruit of the Holy Spirit, reflects the very character of God (2 Peter 3:9). We are to rejoice in our suffering because it produces





endurance; endurance develops character, and character leads to hope.

4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Romans 5:4-5

What about Rachel's sorrow and trials encourages you? What does the Lord speak to you about Rachel's story that casts light upon your own life?

GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISES

When we reflect upon the story of Rachel, we see that God ALWAYS keeps His promises. It might not be how we want Him to keep them, but He is perfect, holy, and not a liar. Let us look at His promises in the life of Rachel.

God's Covenant to Abraham

12 The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you.

2 "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.

3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

Genesis 12:1-3

In the story of Jacob, Rachel, and Leah we see God keeping His promise. He was making a great nation from this family. See, God did not wait for these people to get it together. No, He had a plan and worked His plan into their lives despite the complete disfunction in their circumstances, lives, and relationship with Him. This is how great a God we serve! God continued to keep His promise and from 12 sons, the twelve tribes of Israel were born!

I see You!

8 *You yourself have recorded my wanderings.*

Put my tears in your bottle.

Are they not in your book?

Psalm 56:8

3 The eyes of the Lord are everywhere,
observing the wicked and the good.

Proverbs 15:3

God knows the depths of our sorrow, the times we shed countless tears without understanding the source of our sadness. He rejoices with uncontainable joy in our victories. This happens when we conquer a new skill. He celebrates when we dare to forgive those who challenge our hearts. He is there for us on the gray days when all we feel is an aching numbness. Though He may not immediately resolve every struggle we face, we can always trust in His unwavering presence. We are never truly alone. El Roi is the God who sees us. He witnesses each moment, each tear, and each triumph. God saw Rachel. Saw her tears. Saw her distress. Saw her heart.

I hear you!





*16 But I call to God,
and the Lord will save me.*

*17 I complain and groan morning, noon, and night,
and he hears my voice.*

Psalm 55:16-17

No prayer escapes the ears of God. He listens intently every moment of the day. God heard the cries of your heart ten years ago. He listened just last week. He hears you even now and eagerly anticipates your words for tomorrow. In fact, His attention is so profound that He already knows what you will express. God listens to your supplications as you venture outside into the darkness. He also pays attention as you navigate the school hallways. He is attuned to your uncertainty when words fail you and is present with you in moments of isolation. Every whispered prayer you utter about your longing for acceptance reaches His understanding. Prayers that escape your lips are known to Him. Even the unspoken prayers are heard. He knows the depths of your yearning to be cherished.

We desperately crave a profound relationship with Him, far beyond the mere pursuit of our dreams. God intimately understands the deepest longings of your heart. He hears your fervent prayers about love, marriage, and your future aspirations, urging you to place your trust in Him. God has an extraordinary and





magnificent plan just for you. You are not being overlooked; you are being fiercely protected. You are not being dismissed; God ardently has your best interests at heart.

“Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him” (Ps. 37:7). He’s listening.

God’s timing is not our timing, and His ways transcend our own. His ways are infinitely better, crafted for our ultimate good and to bring Him glory. They are devoid of sin and selfish gain, shining with purity and love. So, when you pray, dear girl, hold onto this truth. God is ever-listening. You can wholeheartedly trust Him to provide the perfect answer for your heart's desires. God heard Rachel’s prayers and she had two sons. This son would become a savior of them all in the coming years.

To Prosper You!

God works his way through Rachel’s son Joseph, who is raised in the pharaoh’s palace and changes the course of Jewish history. The circumstances of Rachel’s life play a large part in God’s plan for His people. Joseph was the second to youngest of the 12 sons. He was hated by his brothers because his father favored him. He was eventually sold into slavery. He was sold to Potipher and God blessed his work and elevated him to running Potipher’s entire house. But evil lurked in the shadows. When Potipher’s wife was rejected by Joseph, she accused him of rape and he was thrown in prison. But God. God was not finished with him. In prison he interpreted dreams of servants who worked for the Pharaoh.



Later one of the servants would reveal that Jospheh could interpret the Pharoah's dream. God elevated Jospheh again to be second in command over all of Egypt.

A mighty famine came to the all lands and because Jospheh helped prepare all nations, without knowing it he saved his own family who came to Egypt to buy food. While this is the short version, the story has many complexities, but we learn that God is a God who can not be tried for neglect and abandonment of His children! While This son was an answer of prayer to Rachel, God saw the bigger picture. He looked down the sands of time and had great purpose for Jospheh.

11 For I know the plans I have for you" – this is the Lord's declaration – "plans for your well-being, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.

Jeremiah 29:11

God had a plan for Rachel's life. God has a plan for your life that not only deals with right now, but stretches to a future that has not come yet. Your obedience in waiting today, might be the change or the rescue other need down the road. Wait patiently. God has plans to prosper you!

As we close out this study of Rachel, take the time to reflect upon her story and life. What is God speaking to you about your own life, circumstances, and walk with Him? IS there a promise you are struggling to believe? Take time today to sit with Him and allow Him to lead you through revealing His Word to you.



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