



A YEAR
with
GOD
Daily Devotional

DAY 24



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DAY TWENTY-FOUR

Genesis 35 - 37

The Boy With the Dreams

God tells Jacob to go back to Bethel. The place where the ladder touched the ground. The place where a fugitive slept on a stone and woke up knowing that God was in that place. Jacob has been away from Bethel for twenty years - through Haran, through Laban, through the wrestling match at the Jabbok, through the reunion with Esau. And now God says: go back. Start there. Build an altar.

Before they go, Jacob tells his household to put away the foreign gods, to purify themselves, to change their garments. There is something deeply right about returning to your first encounter with God and clearing out everything that has accumulated since. Sometimes the most powerful spiritual act is not moving forward but going back to the place where it all began and remembering.

There are moments when God says: go back to Bethel. Back to the place where I first spoke. Back to the altar you built before you got complicated. The return is not regression. It is recalibration.

At Bethel, God appears to Jacob again and confirms the name Israel. He reaffirms the covenant - be fruitful and multiply, a nation

and a company of nations shall come from you, kings shall come from your own body, the land I gave to Abraham and Isaac I give to you, and to your offspring after you. The promise hasn't changed. Twenty years of wandering, of wrestling, of making and fixing and breaking things - and the promise is exactly what it was when Jacob first heard it.

God's promises do not expire during your detours. They are waiting for you exactly where He first gave them, unchanged and undiminished, ready to be received again.

Rachel dies giving birth to Benjamin - the twelfth son, the last piece of the family that will become a nation. She names him Ben-Oni, son of my sorrow. Jacob renames him Benjamin, son of my right hand. Even in grief, a father reaches for a better name. Even in the hardest moment, there is a God who renames the sorrow.

- The name the pain gives you is not the name God gives you. He is always reaching for a better one.

Isaac dies at a hundred and eighty years old. Esau and Jacob bury him together, as Isaac and Ishmael buried Abraham. The brothers who were enemies standing together over a father's grave. Something about death has a way of reminding us what the fighting was really worth.

And then chapter 37. The story shifts completely, and a new protagonist steps forward. Joseph - seventeen years old, the son of

Jacob's old age, the son of Rachel whom he loved most - is given a coat. A richly ornamented robe. And his brothers see it and they cannot bear it. They hate him and cannot speak a kind word to him.

And then Joseph dreams.

His sheaf stands upright and his brothers' sheaves gather around it and bow down. He dreams it again: the sun and the moon and eleven stars bowing to him. He tells his father and his brothers. His father rebukes him but keeps the matter in mind. His brothers hate him even more.

The dreams God gives you are not always meant to be shared immediately. Timing matters. Joseph was faithful to what he dreamed - but his faithfulness to share it cost him more than he could have imagined. Not every vision is ready for every room.

His brothers are out in the fields near Shechem. Jacob sends Joseph to check on them. He travels alone to find them. And they see him coming - and before he arrives, they are already plotting. Here comes this dreamer. Let's kill him. Let's see what comes of his dreams.

Reuben intervenes - throw him in the pit, don't shed blood. He intends to come back and rescue him. But while Reuben is away, Judah suggests selling him instead of killing him. A caravan of Ishmaelite traders appears at exactly that moment, heading to Egypt. Joseph is pulled from the pit and sold for twenty pieces of silver.

- Twenty pieces of silver. The price of a slave. The brothers think they are ending the dream. They are beginning it.

They dip his coat in goat's blood and bring it to their father. Jacob recognises it. He tears his clothes, puts on sackcloth, mourns for many days, and refuses to be comforted. I will go down to my son in mourning to Sheol.

And in Egypt, Joseph is sold to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh. The dreamer is in a foreign country, a slave in a powerful man's house, as far from the fulfilment of his dreams as it is possible to be. And the chapter ends.

God does not explain the gap between the dream and the fulfilment. He simply stays present in it. The pit is not the end of the story. Egypt is not the end of the story. The distance between the promise and the possession is where character is built that the promise will require.

Speak this over yourself today:

God's promises do not expire during my detours.

The pit is not the end of my story.

*What looks like the death of a dream
is often the beginning of its fulfilment.*

TOMORROW - Day 25 Genesis 38–40

*Before we follow Joseph to the prison, the story pauses on Judah
— and what happens to him is stranger and more scandalous
than anything in Joseph's story. But inside it is a line that will
lead to the genealogy of Jesus. Come back tomorrow.*

Day 24 of 365



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