



Life Guide

applying God's Word to life

Consequences, Crosses, and Christ February 25th, 2018

(Genesis 28:10-17)

¹⁰ Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Haran. ¹¹ When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. ¹² He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. ¹³ There above it stood the LORD, and he said: "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. ¹⁴ Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. ¹⁵ I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

¹⁶ When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it." ¹⁷ He was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven."

1. If you feel comfortable doing so, share a time in your life when God was using some kind of suffering for your good. How did you feel about it at the time? How do you feel about it now?

2. Give examples of the three different kinds of suffering humans face in life:

Consequences of our own sin—

Consequences of living in a sinful world—

Consequences of following Jesus in faith—

Then, discuss how each of those "consequences" are actually expressions of God's love when he allows people to suffer them.

3. Thinking about those three different sources of suffering, what problems arise when we confuse the sources of those different consequences of suffering? (i.e.—if I see a consequence of living in a sinful world as a consequence of my own sin)

4. What do you think God was trying to teach Jacob by showing him the dream of the angels ascending and descending from earth to Heaven on the stairway?

5. Read John 1:51. There, Jesus refers to himself as the "stairway" that appeared in Jacob's dream. In what sense could Jesus say he's the "stairway" that connects earth and Heaven?

6. God reassures Jacob that he will always keep his promises. Make note of the different promises God makes to Jacob in this text. Now read the following passages and see how God fulfills every promise he made to Jacob. (**Joshua 8**—Note, Jacob would call this place "Bethel;" **Matthew 1:1-17**; **Genesis 35**)

7. How do the promises God makes to Jacob change his attitude toward his suffering? How do the same promises that God makes to us also change our viewpoint when it comes to our crosses or the suffering we experience?