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GENESIS 28

Series: Understanding Your Roots

[PRAYER] Lord, we want to be sensitive to your speaking to us today. We want to listen to you and what you have to say from your word. So we ask, Father, that you would teach us and continue to transform our minds. We ask that you'd use your word as this light to our path. I especially pray for young people as they listen to this message that you've blessed them and allow them to take something special for their lives today. In Jesus' name, amen.

Well in our story today we go to Genesis 28. It's a story about a man leaving home. He's moving out. Which gives us some great applications for our lives. If you're a young person today, you're going to end up moving out of your house. So you'll find some very specific applications in this passage for you today that you're going to want to consider. Jacob is our guy. He's going to move out and for him he's going to come to a place where he makes his renewal with the Lord even more powerful than it was ever before. So moving out for him was this spiritual experience. We'll certainly apply this to young people today.

But I want you to know the applications are broader than that as well. Because all of us make changes in our lives. Maybe you're moving to a new job. This will apply to you today. Maybe you're moving to a new location. This will apply to you. Maybe you've finished a project and you're going to work on another project in your life. This will apply to you. Maybe it's just every day when you get up you need to be thinking about what God is doing that is new and moving you forward. We're going to learn that from Jacob's life as he is moving out of his house.

One of the things about Jacob's life as we've already seen in the last chapter in Genesis 27 is that he grew up in a dysfunctional family. Now I would say all of our families are to a certain extent dysfunctional because we are broken by sin. Some are a little more dysfunctional than others. But his was quite dysfunctional. We see that because each person in chapter 27 was doing the wrong thing.

You remember in the story that Isaac should have been blessing his younger son because that was the prophecy, but he wanted to bless his older son. He favored his older son. That was part of his problem. So he decided he would kind of circumvent what God wanted to do and bless his older son. While the son was going out to get some food to make that happen, Mom, instead of being able to have a conversation, a family meeting, have a conversation about this, she doesn't know how to handle the conflict well. So she steps in and she starts to be manipulative and controlling. She solicits the help of her son who lacks the integrity to do what's right. So he is the key player who tricks his father in order to get the blessing.

When Esau finds out, he's hurt, of course, by this, but he doesn't know how to deal with his pain. He doesn't know how to deal with the disappointment he has in life. So he's going to kill his brother. So everybody is doing the wrong thing in this story. Jacob now is leaving home under duress and he's going out. That's a challenge for him. One of the things we see about Jacob is he really lacks integrity. His name means heel-catcher – someone who trips other people so he can get ahead. He lacks the integrity that he needs inside of his heart.

I want to talk today about this black box. We all have one inside of us, this heart. We'll call it a black box because things come into it and things come out of it. In fact all the things about you come into the black box. The things about your history, the experience you've had in the past, the teachings that you've had, the biological things that are going on in your body – all of that passes through the heart. And when it passes through the heart it's processed. The way it's processed is important because out the other side comes life. The way you respond to all of life's challenges and your past and so on. So the heart is this very strategic place.

That's why Proverbs says – *Guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life*. That is out of it comes all this other stuff. The wellspring of life. Jacob lacked this integrity inside of his heart at this stage of his life. He makes some mistakes and he's leaving home under this pressure of having done some wrong things, having damaged some relationships in his house, and he's now moving out. It's a challenging place for him. You can feel the pain and you'll see that a little bit in the passage as he's just kind of experiencing what's going on. It's very important to have this integrity.

In fact I want to take you to another man who just finished a project and he is starting a new one. This is Solomon. So if you look at the scripture (I'll take you back to Genesis 28 in a moment so keep your finger there), in 1 Kings 9:4-5 notice what it says. As God is speaking to Solomon who has finished this grand project and now is going on in his life, God says to him – *As for you, if you walk before me faithfully with integrity of heart...* Do you see the word *integrity*? Where does integrity take place? It takes place in this black box. Measure your integrity for a moment in the black box of your heart because that's where things process. That's where things happen. What is your integrity like? So He's saying to him – *Walk before me faithfully with integrity of heart and uprightness, as David your father did*.

What I'm showing you in this passage is that God is doing something very important here that in Solomon's life He's starting a new project. Integrity of heart. Now you have to understand the heart says in Jeremiah that it's deceitfully wicked. So just because something comes from the heart doesn't make it good. A brother might be very angry with his sister. It's coming from the heart. It doesn't make it good what he's going to do to her. So the heart isn't necessarily good. The heart has some challenges.

But God has placed two things inside of our hearts in order to keep the heart going in the right direction. One is the conscience and the other is room for the Holy Spirit. So when you become a Christian, the Holy Spirit comes in there and starts influencing this black box, this heart to keep it going in the right direction. So the conscience has this very important role.

Let me take you to another man in scripture who's just starting out with a new job. He's a pastor. Paul's writing to Timothy. Notice in this verse what he says to Timothy. In the very first verses he says these things: *The goal of our instruction is this love that comes from a pure heart.* Yes, the heart is deceitful, but there's things we can do and that God wants to do in our hearts that can purify it. That's why we guard it. We want this heart to be pure. But he says there are two things inside of it that we need to be aware of. One – *a clear conscience.* You see it right there in the verse. *A clear conscience and a sincere faith.* Moral and spiritual development influence the black box, the heart of our lives so that we can process life and what comes in and we can do the right thing. This is very important, Paul says. You need to recognize this. That you need to have a clear conscience and a sincere faith.

But notice at the end of the chapter (same chapter) it says – *Timothy, my child, entrust you with this command in keeping with the previous prophecies about you so that by them you may fight the good fight.* In other words, we're all fighting this good fight. We're going on and doing things, getting things done in life, we're fighting the good fight, and notice what it says – *holding on to two things.* Do you see that they're the same two things that are mentioned there? They are *faith and a good conscience.* Spiritual and moral development.

A good conscience. This conscience is this thing that is in every person, whether they're saved or not saved. The conscience is part of your equipment when you're born that God gives you and it's designed primarily to lead you to Christ because you realize that you're guilty and you need to have that conscience cleansed. But it also becomes this tool that when trained can help us to be on track and do what's right. Especially when the Holy Spirit also comes into our lives and moves forward.

But notice he says – *Hold onto faith and a good conscience, which some of rejected and have therefore shipwrecked their faith.* So they become these two lights that you put on the shore so when the ship is coming through they keep those lights lined up, you can navigate and not get shipwrecked on the rocks that are nearby. Two very important things that are inside the heart of a person.

Now as we go into our story, I'm excited to look at the story because Jacob is wrestling with some very important things. Just imagine, he's coming out of a home that had some problems. He's hurt people and now he's off on his own. He's left home. Some young people when they leave home can hardly wait to get out of the house so they can be free from restraint and they can engage in whatever pleasure they want to engage in. We hear about those kinds of parties that they have at college and so on. Now the problem is that young people often don't realize the damage that causes to them. They think, "Oh I'm just going to have fun," but that fun enters them into challenges that are damaging. And you end up as Jacob's doing. He's leaving his house now, but he's been involved in some stuff that has damaged him and it's hard for him as he's going forward. Keep that in mind. If you're getting ready to move out, you need to know what is happening.

Let's look at the story now. Let's see what's going on in Jacob's life. *So Isaac (the dad) called for Jacob and blessed him. Then he commanded him: "Do not marry a Canaanite woman."* Let's just stop there. He doesn't say it. It's not an easy thing that he says. It's a hard word. It's the

word *commanded*. It's more intense word than he said "just do this because it's very important". In other words, "Son, listen to me. You're going off on your own. Be sure you choose wisely when it comes to marrying." That's what he's saying here.

So young people, I just want to say to you that when you get married you want to follow a plan. It's not the plan that you see in the world. It's not the plan that you see in the movies. It's not the plan that you hear from your friends. That plan obviously is flawed. We've got all kinds of problems in marriages today because there's a world's plan. Here's the world's plan. Be attracted to someone you really like. They look good and you feel those things inside and compatibility. And if you can be really attracted and really compatible then you can get married. Oh man. That is such a mess. You know why that's a problem? Because people change. And when people change, those things change as well.

There has to be something deeper, this bedrock which is the spiritual values. When two people are praying together, when two people are reading the scriptures together, when two people are serving the Lord together, there's this deeper sense of values that go beyond whatever we're compatible with, the likes and dislikes. And that never changes.

So God does this deeper word in our lives and Dad knows this. So he's saying to his son (he's not just saying, he's commanding his son) be careful whom you're going to marry.

He says – *Go at once to Paddan Aram, to the house of your mother's father Bethuel. Take a wife for yourself there, from among the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother.* He's being very clear here about some instructions about getting married. I just want to encourage you, don't make mistakes that other people make. Most of your friends are going to get married based on attraction and compatibility. When they do that, many of them will end up divorced. I'm just telling you, you want to have a strong relationship. This is the second most important decision you'll ever make in your life. You want to take note of this. It is commanded by dad to his son – be careful of this.

Also the next thing that Isaac does is he blesses him. Now this is the blessing that he should have first [audio glitch], but the challenge here is that he receives this one that is directly given to him. It's not given to his brother with all that kind deception that's going on.

You see this integrity is important for all of us. What integrity means is this. Let's say you're at school and you have an opportunity to get the answers for the text from last year's test. Somebody's come across these answers from last year's test and now you can cheat. You know you can cheat and get a good grade. Some of the other people are doing it. But you say, "No, I'm not going to do that. I'm going to do the right thing and I'm going to respond well to this." So you do. So when you get your grade it's a B. The others got A's, sure. They got A's. But you can look at your B and you can look at it out here and say I earned a B. They've got to look at it back here and say I got an A. That's the integrity.

Now Jacob is receiving the blessing that is due him. It's this blessing that comes to him. Notice the blessing that comes. It's a beautiful thing that God is saying to him. *May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and increase your numbers until you become a community of peoples.*

May he give you and your descendants the blessing given to Abraham, so that you may take possession of the land where you now reside as a foreigner, the land God gave to Abraham.” Then Isaac sent Jacob on his way, and he went to Paddan Aram, to Laban son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah, who was the mother of Jacob and Esau.

So God is blessing Jacob in the right way through his dad. His dad is doing the right thing and sending him off now with this blessing. This blessing that’s being passed on from generation to generation. God has His scarlet thread going through here to Jesus eventually and this is all going just as planned. So now Jacob leaves and he heads off on his journey.

But now there’s a parenthesis in the story. So the spotlight that is on Jacob at the moment is going to shift to his brother Esau. So let’s go to the next page and see what’s happening here as the spotlight has shifted. Because Esau doesn’t handle the conscience issues very well. But he handles them like a lot of people today. There’s a lot of people who respond to their guilty conscience the way Esau is going to respond. I want you to see what he does because there’s some people who are even religious, some people who are church members who think this is the way to satisfy your guilty conscience. Do more good than bad. If I do more good than bad then I can feel okay myself. It’s a dangerous place to be because you’ll always have the bad that you live with. The real way to deal with a guilty conscience is through the blood of Jesus Christ. That He saves us and He cleanses our consciences. That’s what He does.

But let’s go down and read this story about Esau because that’s where the spotlight is at the moment. *Now Esau learned that Isaac had blessed Jacob and had sent him to Paddan Aram to take a wife from there, and that when he blessed him he commanded (there’s that word again, really strong – and Esau is feeling that as he hears what happened with his dad and his brother), “Do not marry a Canaanite woman,” and that Jacob had obeyed his father and mother and had gone to Paddan Aram.*

Now we had read previously that Esau had married two Canaanite women and they were a distress to his parents. It’s a real struggle for his parents to have watched him do the wrong thing. You see in the next verse, verse 8 it says – *Esau then realized...* He realized. It came to him finally. “Oh I get it. Oh wow, this is a problem.” He’s feeling the pain of his poor choice with marrying these two Canaanite women and he realizes he’s done the wrong thing. I just want to encourage you, don’t wait till later when you discover oh I did the wrong thing. There’s a prescription for this that we follow and if you do that then you don’t have to look back and have the regrets. Well that’s what he does. So he’s feeling guilty about that.

It says – *He realized how displeasing the Canaanite women were to his father Isaac; so he went to Ishmael and married Mahalath, the sister of Nebaioth and daughter of Ishmael son of Abraham, in addition to the wives he already had.*

Do you see what he’s trying to do? He’s saying, “Okay, here’s what I’m going to do. I did some bad things, so I’m going to do some good things. Maybe they’ll balance out and I can satisfy my conscience.” You’ve got to know that is not the way we satisfy the conscience. The way we satisfy the conscience is we go before the Lord and we say, “God, I am a sinner. I need your

salvation. I need you to save me. Forgive me of my sin.” And then God removes that and gives us that peace that passes understanding, He gives us the forgiveness that we need.

Alright. So that’s just a little spotlight on Esau. Let’s go back now into the story and see what’s going on in Jacob’s life. As we turn the page here, we see that the story continues. It says – *Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Harran. When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set.* Again, just imagine him feeling the challenges of his past. His brother wants to kill him, he knows that he tricked his dad. He’s just got this negative experience as he’s leaving home. His conscience, no doubt, is bothering him in the midst of this challenge. Paul had told Timothy, as we already read, that the importance of a clear conscience. It’s been said that a clear conscience is a soft pillow where you can just enjoy the rest because you know you’ve done the right thing. Or if you’re doing the wrong thing, what happens? You’re wrestling at night and wrestling in your heart trying to sort it all out or whatever you’re trying to do. Okay?

He stopped for a night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. That’s a hard pillow, a stone that he puts his head down on. It says – *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.*

Notice that God is speaking to him in the night? I don’t know about you, but that’s a tough time when God speaks to us. Sometimes you’re laying awake at night. Maybe it’s because of a guilty conscience, maybe you just had pizza and you can’t sleep. But there’s this time that you’re wrestling sometimes in the night, trying to go back to sleep and it’s sometimes in those moments that God speaks to us. Maybe He reveals to us something that we need to do or helps us solve a problem as we’re thinking it through. Well in this case God is speaking to Jacob and there’s a renewal, there’s a salvation experience that takes place in Jacob’s heart. It’s this connection that he sees with God. He says there’s a stairway coming from right there up to God, there’s this connection. I found the connection to God. He’s going to be so thrilled that he found the connection to God that he’s going to take action based on that information.

Watch what he does. But this is such a beautiful thing. When you find that connection to God and you recognize that He’s there waiting to be with you as God is going to say in just a moment to Him, there’s this something that takes place in your heart that just excites you. This is what salvation is all about. Some people come to Christ because of this connection with God that they experience. Sometimes it’s because of the forgiveness they have because of their past and they realize they can never do enough good to overcome the bad. Or that even trying to do good doesn’t erase the bad and they need the forgiveness of God. Jacob is going to have this conversion experience out here under the stars with a stairway to heaven there.

Notice what happens. Verse 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.”* But it’s not good enough to have your parents’ faith. It’s not good enough to rest on the faith of your dad or your mom or your grandma or someone else. It must be yours. That’s what’s happening in the passage. I’m the God of your father and your grandfather, but now He says I’m going to have a relationship with you.

He says – *I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. 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. 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.*”

Notice the emphasis here on God’s presence with Him. *I will be with you.* I’m going to take you where we’re going here. I’m going to help you as you’re going forward in your life. This is what faith is all about. We don’t know what tomorrow is going to bring, but we know God and God knows. So we trust Him and He walks us into the tomorrows of life so that we can address them. Now when God makes this statement to Jacob, it just ministers to his heart and he realizes this is the Lord, this is what I need. This is that conversion experience that he needs in his life.

Let’s go to the next page where it says this: *When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, “Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it.”* Have you been in that situation where you realize now that God was working all of these years in your life. That God was working in this place where you thought He wasn’t present there, but now you become aware of that and it becomes the realization to you that God is here, God is working, God is doing something amazing in my life. He’s working the details out to bring this to completion. I am so grateful for what God is doing. He realizes that and he goes “yes.”

He was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place!” That’s what happens when we get to know God and we see how big He is, we go, “Whoa. This is bigger than I ever thought. I’m afraid of this.” There’s this fear that takes over. Not in a fear like I’m going to run away as much as a fear like this is so awesome. That’s what he says. He says – *“How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven.”* This is the place where I’ve met God. This is where God has made Himself real to me as an individual. Not as a son of my father or a grandson of my grandfather. It is my faith that I’m taking forward. Yes. This is where I have met God, he says.

Early the next morning Jacob took the stone he had placed under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it. He called that place Bethel, though the city used to be called Luz. So he’s worshipping the Lord here. When we see God and we see the connection that we can have with God, we’re just drawn to worship Him and that’s what’s taking place in this passage.

Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear so that I return safely to my father’s household, then the Lord will be my God and this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God’s house.”

He’s saying I can hardly wait now as I’m going out in to the world, as I’m going out to get a new job, I’m going out to marry a wife, I’m going out to find a new home in some other place, as I’m going out, I want to know God first in my life. Lord, as you reveal all these things, I want to get to know you better. This was the action that Jacob took in his heart. This was the connection that Jacob made that made his faith personal.

I would just suggest if you're leaving home, if you're moving out, this is your opportunity to make Jesus Christ the center of your life as you're going forward. This is an opportunity for you to do something you've never been able to do before because now you're out of your parents' home. Now it is yours. You're on your own walking with the Lord. You're walking on the water with Jesus kind of experience. It's yours and it's all yours. It's not reliant on your parents now, and that's what Jacob is doing. He's saying I'm going forward and he's obviously excited about what God is going to do and is doing in his heart and life.

And then it says the last thing – *“and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth.”* What he's saying is I'm going to tithe of my wealth, of my finances, everything that comes in. Of all my income, I'm going to give a tenth of that. Why is he making that statement on the back of this commitment that he's making to the Lord? Because he wants to demonstrate that God is more important than any other thing in his life. And the ability to give a tenth of all that he's going to make... He doesn't even know what he's going to make. But he's making that commitment now before he goes out and gets a job. He's saying, “Lord, I'm going to give you a tenth of everything I'm going to make. I'm making that commitment because I want to demonstrate that you are the most important thing in my life.”

In the Old Testament there are several ways in which the Law became the schoolteacher, the Bible says, for the Israelites. So they're learning what does it mean to follow the Lord. And there are several ways in which the Lord set up for them in the Law to make Him a priority. It's a priority in their lives over three things. You might just think about these three things in your own life. One is pleasure, a second one is comfort, and the third one is productivity. Pleasure, comfort, and productivity. See in the black box of our hearts, those things want to rule, they want to take over. So we start making decisions based on how is this going to make me feel (pleasure), on how am I going to be comfortable or safe, or how am I going to get things done, or how can I make some more money or whatever it might be. So those things get into our hearts and they start to take over inside of our hearts. So God says hey, what I want you to do is I want you to find some things in your life that are going to demonstrate that God is more important than pleasure, than comfort, or productivity in your life.

So in the Old Testament we have things like well when it comes to money we have the tithe. This is a passage that isn't yet into the Law. It talks about tithing even before the law. But in the Law there was giving a tenth. I'm going to demonstrate that God is more important to me than anything that could happen with my money.

What about the schedule? Well there was the Sabbath Day. I'm going to set aside Saturday as the special day for the Sabbath and that was a way to set apart and make sure that God is demonstrated in my life in a way that is different than any other day. I'm going to honor that. I'm going to demonstrate it in my life. What about other ways that we can do that? See we don't live under the law. We don't legalistically follow those things. We are under grace. That means we give our whole life to the Lord, not just a portion of it. Everything we have belongs to the Lord. So we're under grace.

So what does that mean for us? For some it means they start living a faith of convenience that says well if I have any leftover I will give it to the Lord (time, energy, or money, in my

schedule). But there needs to be some places in our lives which demonstrate that God is more important than anything else in our lives. What is that for you? I don't know.

Just think about eating for example. Because the food that we consume often you know starts to take us over, right? So fasting is one of those times when we might say, "Okay, I'm going to abstain from eating for a bit because I want to demonstrate that God is more important to me than my physical desires." Think about your time and your energy. It might be that you serve the Lord in particular ways. I'm going to serve the Lord in this part of my life because I want to demonstrate that God is more important than other things in my life. So we act in service and serve the Lord. There have to be some ways in our lives we're demonstrating that God is most important in our lives. Otherwise comfort and pleasures and productivity starts to take over the black box and they're dangerous for us.

I was talking to parents pre-COVID, a mom and a dad of several children. They were Messianic Jews. That means they are Christians, but they follow a number of the practices of Judaism, including the Sabbath day. They were saying to me, "We're coming to that place where our kids are getting involved in extracurricular activities and Fridays have been set aside, Friday nights are our Sabbath. That's been our time for family and worship and now that's being encroached upon by extracurriculars. What do you think we should do?" Of course my response is you have freedom in Christ. You have freedom in Christ to do whatever you believe God is calling you to do. It has to do with conscience and convictions. Our freedom in Christ is limited by our conscience and our convictions. So we decide what we're going to do. So they wrestled with that. They decided they were going to keep this day as very important and not engage in extracurriculars on that day. That was their decision.

And then COVID hit. And COVID made it really easy because now there was no options to go anywhere. They said, "We just so love this. There's no pressure for us. We can just enjoy these things." Many families, whether they're Messianic Jews or not, enjoyed the time specifically when COVID clamped everything down and there was family time. There was more time to worship the Lord. More time on our hands because we're at home and so on. There was ways to demonstrate that.

You see each one of us has to make decisions about how we're going to handle all of those things that God has entrusted to us. But the important question is what are some structures in your life that demonstrate that God is more important than anything else in your life?

You see it's those commitments that we make that are not only important for our own black box and the strategies that are coming out of our own heart. How do we make decisions when opportunities come to us? We make them based on the fact that God is the most important thing in our life, in our black box, in our heart.

But it's also important for our children to be watching. Because if our children see that our lives are based on convenience, that we'll fit God in wherever it's convenient, we'll give Him the leftovers in our schedule or our time or our money or our whatever it is, then we're teaching our children something that's pretty sad. Because the challenges happen when they're to be on their own. When they get out, what are they going to do? How are they going to live life? There are a

lot of things that are available to our children today that are exciting and fun. But we have to ask the question ten years from now, fifteen years from now when they're trying to live life, have a job, they're trying to be out of the house, they're trying to manage their own emotions and they're decision-making, what's the most important thing that's going to help them in the black box? It's going to be their spiritual and moral development. Are we investing in that? How are we doing that in order to bring about the necessary skill development, the equipment necessary for a young person to go forward. It's just strategic for us, I believe, in our lives.

Well this is really helping Jacob. He's coming to this place where He's being converted. God is bringing this faith home in a very personal way.

So I want to go back to the conscience as we conclude here. I want to show you some verses about the conscience that will just help you see a little bit more. This may be a motivation for you if you're not yet a Christian to say, "Yes. Boy, this is what I need in my life." So let me take you to a passage in Hebrews 9, which is talking about the sacrifices and the Old Testament laws. It says this: *These things are an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper.* Wow. You can do all those religious things, but they *were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper.*

A few verses later it says – *How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death.* Do you see that God has placed (and we'll see in the next verse) that inside of the heart is this conscience. It's this place that's guiding us and we need that conscience cleansed inside of this black box, the heart.

In Hebrews 10, the next chapter, it says – *let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts (the black box) sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience.* Wow. I need that.

We all have regrets, mistakes, offenses that we have that need to be cleansed. They can be cleansed only fully through the blood of Jesus Christ and His sacrifice. When we get saved, God does a lot of different things, but one of the things He does is forgives us of past offenses. He cleanses our conscience so that it can be used as a tool. A tool to guide us and navigate if it's trained. It has to be trained by the word of God. It's the conscience that's trained by the word of God that can prompt us to know when feeling guilty is appropriate, to know when feeling obligation that we should do something is appropriate. Because you've got that training that comes from the scriptures into our conscience into this place where we've hidden God's word in our hearts so that we might not sin against the Lord. It's just a powerful thing that God is doing.

I love this story of Jacob, and we're going to see Jacob's life continue to develop over the next several chapters in God's word. But this is his conversion experience. This is the time he's moving out of the house. This is the opportunity he could have to do great things and he has this commitment with the Lord. God has touched him in that special way.

I would encourage you young people to make that decision for Christ and look forward to the day that you're moving out of the house so that you can love the Lord more, you can embrace the

Lord more in your heart. Yes, there will be all kinds of pressures around you, but you will be able to follow the Lord. It is a broad path that most people are on and it leads to destruction. There is a narrow path that leads to life. And that's the opportunity you have to trust the Lord with all of your heart and to develop that into your own life. It's not just for young people, of course. For any of us going into the next project, going into the next day, whatever we do, each day is a new day, past put aside. We focus on the Lord and we follow Him today. Amen?

Let's pray. Would you stand with me?

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, we thank you that you have granted us the privilege to serve you. We know you designed us; you placed a conscience in us. We need that cleansing that you provide. So Lord, I ask that you would do a deep work in each of our hearts. There are some things that seem too difficult to forgive at times, but we know that you are all powerful and we can trust you in our lives. So we ask for you to do those deeper works in our lives each one. Lord, we dedicate ourselves to you today. In Jesus' name, amen.

Let's continue to worship the Lord together.