

Jacob's Warring Household

Gen 29 ²⁸ So [Laban] gave [Jacob] his daughter Rachel as wife also.

²⁹ And Laban gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as a maid.

³⁰ Then Jacob also went in to Rachel, and he also loved Rachel more than Leah. And he served with Laban still another seven years.

³¹ When the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, He opened her womb; but Rachel was barren. ³² So Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben; for she said, "The LORD has surely looked on my affliction. Now therefore, my husband will love me."

³³ Then she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Because the LORD has heard that I am unloved, He has therefore given me this son also." And she called his name Simeon. ³⁴ She conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Now this time my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." Therefore his name was called Levi. ³⁵ And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Now I will praise the LORD." Therefore she called his name Judah. Then she stopped bearing.

³⁰ ¹ Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister, and said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die!" ² And Jacob's anger was aroused against Rachel, and he said, "Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?" ³ So she said, "Here is my maid Bilhah; go in to her, and she will bear a child on my knees, that I also may have children by her." ⁴ Then she gave him Bilhah her maid as wife, and Jacob went in to her. ⁵ And Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son. ⁶ Then Rachel said, "God has judged my case; and He has also heard my voice and given me a son." Therefore she called his name Dan. ⁷ And Rachel's maid Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. ⁸ Then Rachel said, "With great wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister, and indeed I have prevailed." So she called his name Naphtali.

⁹ When Leah saw that she had stopped bearing, she took Zilpah her maid and gave her to Jacob as wife. ¹⁰ And Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a son. ¹¹ Then Leah said, "A troop comes!" So she called his name Gad. ¹² And Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. ¹³ Then Leah said, "I am happy, for the daughters will call me blessed." So she called his name Asher.

¹⁴ Now Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes." ¹⁵ But she said to her, "Is it a small matter that you have taken away my husband? Would you take away my son's mandrakes also?" And Rachel said, "Therefore he will lie with you tonight for your son's mandrakes." ¹⁶ When Jacob came out of the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, "You must come in to me, for I have surely hired you with my son's mandrakes." And he lay with her that night. ¹⁷ And God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. ¹⁸ Leah said, "God has given me my wages, because I have given my maid to my husband." So she called his name Issachar. ¹⁹ Then Leah conceived again and bore Jacob a sixth son. ²⁰ And Leah said, "God has endowed me with a good endowment; now my husband will dwell with me, because I have borne him six sons." So she called his name Zebulun. ²¹ Afterward she bore a daughter, and called her name Dinah.

²² Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb. ²³ And she conceived and bore a son, and said, "God has taken away my reproach." ²⁴ So she called his name Joseph, and said, "The LORD shall add to me another son."

► Our text opens with a genuinely difficult situation that would present a real hardship & challenge for the _____
& _____ of believers in any age.

– It is a situation J, R, & L were not _____
for (Gn 2.21-25; Lv 18.18).

– It is a situation J, R, & L neither _____ nor _____.

– Only extraordinary focus on _____; knowledge of his ways; devotion to _____, humility, & confession of sin; commitment to obedience; and renewal of these things on a _____ basis would avoid the kind of warfare we see between R & L, and the _____ of leadership we see from J.

► Unfortunately, instead of extraordinary godliness, a vacuum was left, in which two evil plants, _____ & _____, took root and spread their destructive fruit.

– _____ is desiring a perceived advantage possessed by another.

– _____ is ill will toward the one who has it.

– One of the reasons these are so destructive is that they flourish in the same environment where _____ should be instead – close connections and personal relationships.

A good example is the two harlots who claimed the same _____ (1Kings 3.16-27).

See also Gn 37.11, 20 (Joseph's "brothers envied him ... and said, 'Come therefore, let us now kill him'"); Mt 27.18 (Pilate "knew that they handed Him over because of envy"); Jm 4.1-2 ("What causes quarrels and ... fights among you? ... You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel." ESV)

► What is the fruit of coveting & envy between R & L?

1) Their focus is not on God, but on _____
_____ and on _____ (8).

2) Each _____ what the other has and
_____ the other for having it (32; 1,15).

3) Each has a very _____ perspective (1, 15).

4) Each views _____ more as a means to an end (5-13,17).

5) Each views _____ more as a means to an end
(14-16).

► _____ is a good counter-example (1Sam 1).

► How do we see a lack of leadership by J?

1) He passively goes along with R & L's _____
of his sexual services, allowing himself to be a mere means to
an end, thus furthering their warfare (14-16).

2) He passively goes along with R & L's plan for him to take
two additional _____ (3-13), and fails to point
out the experience of his grandmother _____ (Gn16).

You cannot fix the problem of sharing a husband among _____
wives by sharing him among _____.

3) He fails to _____ to R in her desperation
(1-2). He fails to point out God's gracious dealings with his
mother & grandmother, both of whom were _____,
and both of whom God miraculously caused to conceive and
bear the Christ-type (Gn 18; 21; 25.20-26).

4) We have no evidence of J ministering to L by helping her to
see that R is not the enemy and did not steal her husband (15).
They are all in the same boat by Laban's doing, and all under
the sovereignty of God who works all things for their good.

– In sum, J's behavior bears all the hallmarks of a man who is
just trying make everyone in his household _____
by going along. He is paralyzed by fear of making his wives
unhappy, when in truth they are already _____.
Trying to make everyone happy is not the same things as
_____ them or seeking their _____.

► _____ & _____ provide good
counter-examples (Gn 50.30; Job 1).