

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



**PRINCE
OF PEACE**
Called to Connect



Reconciliation

November 9 & 10, 2019

Jacob's brokenness left a trail of relational wreckage behind him, especially with Esau. But as Jacob matured, he pursued reconciliation. Broken relationships mark our lives as well, and like Jacob we are called by Christ to reconciliation. By God's grace some relationships are healed and restored. For others, we need to gracefully go our separate ways.

SCRIPTURE TEXT: GENESIS 33:1-20

Read the scripture text together as a group.

BACKGROUND INFO

When Jacob meets Esau, he bows seven times, which is what you would do before a king. Truth is, Esau is the king of Edom. But this also shows respect and submission. The reader is left wondering if this genuine or driven by fear. Jacob also sends significant gifts ahead for his brother. In Hebrew, the word often translated "gifts" is actually the same word used earlier in the story for "blessing". In other words, Jacob is seeking to restore the blessing that he stole from his brother. In God's grace, however, both brothers have been richly blessed.

Most commentators accept Esau's forgiveness as genuine, as is his offer to either accompany Jacob or at least leave men behind to protect Jacob and his clan. It seems, however, that Jacob never intended to dwell with Esau. Oddly, the story never gives a reason for Jacob's deception. He clearly leads his brother to believe that he will follow, but instead goes in the opposite direction. Ultimately, despite Jacob's wrestling, it is Esau who appears the more transformed and righteous of the two. Jacob continues to scheme for his own self-preservation. And yet, God chooses to accomplish his plans through Jacob and not Esau.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- As you read Jacob's story, how do you see your own story reflected in it?
- Why do you think Jacob chose to separate from his brother despite their reconciliation?
- When have you sensed God calling you to reconcile a broken relationship? What happened?
- How have broken relationships and reconciled relationships impacted your faith journey?
- Does reconciliation always mean back in a relationship or can it mean both forgiveness and continued separation? How can you discern which is best in the situation?

APPLICATION: This week, reflect on a time when God has been revealed in the broken relationships in your life. Is there one that needs forgiveness and reconciliation? Consider one step you can take in that process.