

WEEK 4

Jacob in Haran

Big Idea: God is with me. He helps me do my best.

Memory Verse
***"Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might"* (Ecclesiastes 9:10).**

Word of the Week
"Best" - Best means excellent. Doing your best work is when you try your hardest to make something as good as it can possibly be.

This week's lesson
is based on **Genesis 29:1-30**; **31:1-18**, **38-55**; and *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 188-194.

Sunday

There at Last!

Jacob suddenly stopped walking and listened carefully. Yes, he heard it again! Chatter, laughter, and the "baa" of sheep! With a big smile, he followed the sounds. He found a group of shepherds gathered around a big well with their thirsty sheep.

Jacob had been walking for a long, long time. A drink of water was just what he needed! He gave a friendly smile and said hello. Then he asked the men, "My brothers, where are you from?"

"We are from Haran," the shepherds replied. Haran! That was where Jacob's uncle lived. He had finally made it!

"Do you know Laban . . . ?" he asked them.

"We know him," they said. "Look, his daughter Rachel is coming now with his sheep" (Genesis 29:4-6, ICB).

Jacob looked up to see a lovely young woman leading her sheep to the well. The well was covered with a big heavy stone. Quickly Jacob jumped up to help. With a push and a pull, a wriggle and a roll, he moved the stone free. Then he began to scoop water out for Rachel's thirsty sheep.

After such a long trip, Jacob had found his family. He was so happy he cried happy tears! Then he told Rachel that they were family. She couldn't believe it! She was so excited she raced home to share the news.



What did Jacob's Uncle Laban do when he heard about their special visitor? Read **Genesis 29:13**.

What a warm and happy welcome. God was leading and blessing Jacob just as He had promised.

I Wonder

» Have you ever helped someone before they even asked for help?

Prayer Idea
Ask God to help you make new friends you can serve and love.

Do
Do your best to help someone in your family today, before they ask for help. You might bring them a cup of water or help them carry something. Or, if someone comes to your home today, be cheerful and kind to them. Do your best to help someone in your family today, before they ask for help. You might bring them a cup of water or help them carry something. "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might" (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

Monday

Working for a Wedding

Jacob looked around Uncle Laban's tents and sighed happily. He had found a new home. Although his parents were far away, he was now with family.

Every day Jacob worked hard to thank his family. The Bible says, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might" (Ecclesiastes 9:10). And that is exactly what Jacob did.

Uncle Laban soon realized Jacob was a very good worker. After a month of seeing Jacob do his best, Uncle Laban came to him with a big question. What was it? Read **Genesis 29:15**.

Jacob smiled. Uncle Laban had two daughters, big sister Leah and younger sister Rachel. From the day he had met beautiful Rachel at the well, Jacob had fallen in love with her. "Let me marry your younger daughter Rachel. If you will, I will work seven years for you," Jacob said (Genesis 29:18, ICB).

Uncle Laban thought this was a great idea! He needed some extra help, and seven years was a long time. He nodded.

Jacob was excited. He happily started working right away. His love for God and for Rachel helped him do his best. He didn't mind waiting for Rachel for seven long years. The Bible tells us "love is patient" (1 Corinthians 13:4, ICB).

I Wonder

» Have you ever had to wait for a long time for something good? What was that like?

Prayer Idea

Thank God for strong muscles and good minds so that we can be hard workers for Him.

Do

Make and decorate a card with your memory verse written on it. Place it where you put on your shoes each day, ready for a day of doing your best.

Memory Verse





Tuesday

Wedding Trickery

As Jacob shut the gate to the sheep pen, his smile stretched wide. His seven years of working for Uncle Laban were finished! Running to see his uncle, he said excitedly, "Give me Rachel so that I may marry her. The time I promised to work for you is over" (Genesis 29:21, ICB).

Uncle Laban agreed. What did he do next? Read **Genesis 29:22**.

Jacob's bride was brought to him wearing a beautiful long dress and a veil that covered her face completely. Jacob was so happy. Finally Rachel would be his wife!

As the sun rose the next morning, a sleepy Jacob slowly opened his eyes. He looked at his new wife to see her for the first time without her veil. His eyes opened wide in shock!

How could this be? This isn't Rachel! It's her older sister Leah!

Uncle Laban had tricked him. He had given Leah as the bride instead of Rachel. Jacob had married the wrong sister!

Jacob jumped out of bed and raced to Uncle Laban's tent. Angrily he said, "What have you done to me? I worked hard for you so that I could marry Rachel! Why did you trick me?" (Genesis 29:25, ICB).

Poor Jacob! He now knew what it felt like to be lied to and tricked. It wasn't a good feeling at all!

I Wonder

» Have you ever been tricked? How did you feel?

Prayer Idea

Ask God to help you to treat people how you would like to be treated.

Do

Play dress up with your family or friends. Do your best to look completely different. Then tell everyone who you really are. Think about how important it is to be honest with our words and actions.

Memory Verse

Wednesday

Hard Choices

Jacob was mad! He stared angrily at Uncle Laban, waiting for his answer. Why had his uncle tricked him?

Uncle Laban looked calmly at Jacob. He said that it was right for the older sister, Leah, to get married before the younger sister, Rachel. Jacob blinked with surprise. He knew it wasn't right to lie and trick!

What does the Bible say about lying? Read **Leviticus 19:11**.

Deep down, Laban knew it wasn't right either. But he was greedy. He wanted to trap Jacob into working even longer, for free. He said, "I will give you Rachel to marry also. But you must serve me another seven years" (Genesis 29:27, ICB).

Another seven years? Could Jacob really do his best and work seven more years for a man who had lied and tricked him?

Jacob took a deep breath and nodded. Yes, he would marry Rachel, and then he would work for Uncle Laban for another seven years with no pay. He would do the right thing for Leah and Rachel, even though his uncle had chosen to do the wrong thing. Having two wives was not part of God's plan.

One week later, Jacob was finally married to Rachel, the one he loved. Then back to work he went. Jacob knew God loved to see His children do their best, so he worked hard and with honesty. And God blessed Jacob for his honest work.

I Wonder

» How should you act when things aren't fair?

» What can you learn from Jacob?

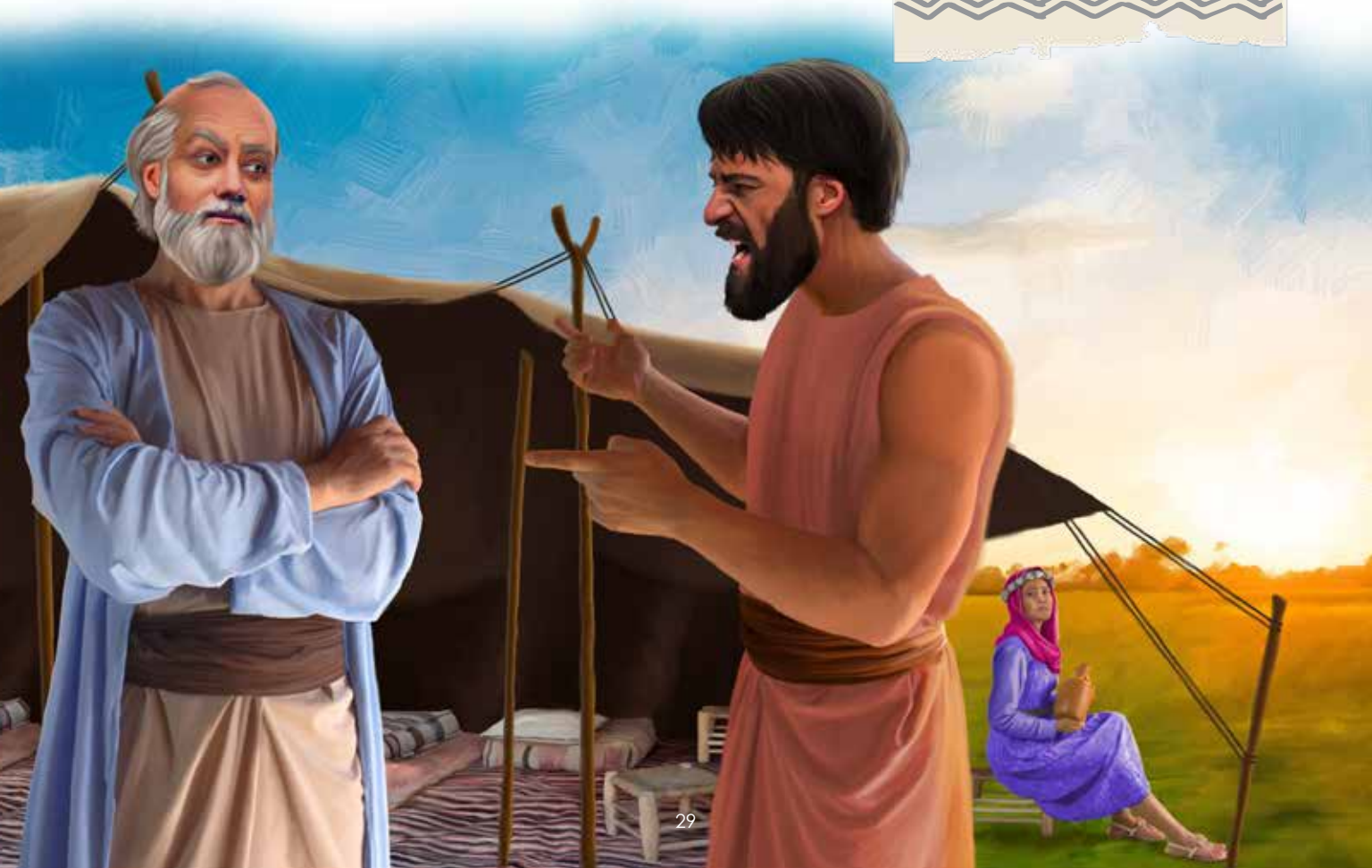
Prayer Idea

Ask God to help you do the right thing even when things seem unfair.

Do

Make yourself one "not-fair" challenge to do with a smile. It's not easy, but you can do it! Choose to do a job when it's not your turn or clean something up when you didn't make the mess. Others may not notice, but God does, and He will be smiling with you.

Memory Verse





Thursday

God's Blessing

Jacob wiped the sweat from his head. With a smile, he picked up the smallest lamb and carried her under his arm. It was too hot for the lambs to walk much farther. Jacob was a good shepherd. He had worked hard for Uncle Laban for seven years. Then he'd worked with all his might for *another* seven years.

During those years, God blessed Laban with lots of sheep and goats because of Jacob's hard work. And He blessed Jacob with lots of sons and daughters. But Jacob missed his family far away. He said to Uncle Laban, "Now let me go to my own home and country" (Genesis 30:25, ICB).

What was Uncle Laban's answer? Read **Genesis 30:27**.

Uncle Laban didn't want Jacob to go anywhere! Jacob had made his uncle very rich! So he said to Jacob, "Tell me what I should pay you, and I will give it to you" (Genesis 30:28, ICB).

Jacob had a big family, but no sheep or goats of his own. He asked Uncle Laban to give him all the black and spotty sheep and goats.

"Agreed!" answered Laban. Then he whispered to his sons to quickly go hide all these animals.

God saw everything. He was with Jacob. As Jacob looked after Uncle Laban's pure white sheep and goats, something amazing happened. Those white sheep and goats began to have lots of speckled and spotted babies. Jacob could keep them all. "Jacob became very rich. He had large flocks, many . . . servants, camels and donkeys" (Genesis 30:43, ICB).

I Wonder

» Why didn't Jacob just get up and leave?

» Who else do you know who is faithful, no matter what happens?

Prayer Idea

Turn your memory verse into a prayer—"Dear Jesus, whatever my hands find to do, please help me to do it with all my might. Amen."

Do

Pass a fluffy sheep or toy around the family circle naming a blessing God has given you. Keep going until you run out of ideas.

Memory Verse



Friday

Going Home!

Angry grumbles rumbled through the camp. Laban's sons were not happy! "Jacob has taken everything our father owned," they complained to each other. "Jacob has become rich in this way" (Genesis 31:1, ICB).

Jacob did have lots and lots of strong, healthy, spotty animals. But he hadn't taken them! God had done an amazing miracle and blessed him.

Jacob heard their jealous whispers. He noticed Laban and his sons becoming less friendly. God saw this too and spoke to Jacob. What did God say? Read **Genesis 31:3**.

Jacob secretly called Leah and Rachel out into the far field. He told them about a dream God had given him. "The angel of God spoke to me in that dream. He said, 'Jacob. . . . I have seen the wrong things Laban does to you. . . . Now I want you to leave here. Go back to the land where you were born' " (Genesis 31:11-13, ICB).

Rachel and Leah had also seen their father's greediness and lying. They agreed to go with Jacob back to his home in Canaan.

But they would need to escape when Laban wasn't watching. One day, when Laban was in a faraway field, they saw their chance. Quickly they packed their bags and rounded up their animals. Then Jacob, his wives, and children climbed onto their camels and raced off in a cloud of dust. God would lead them home!

I Wonder

» Why did God speak to Jacob?

Prayer Idea

Thank God that He helps us to do our best.

Parent Faith Talk

Share a time that God guided you or protected you in a dangerous situation.

Memory Verse

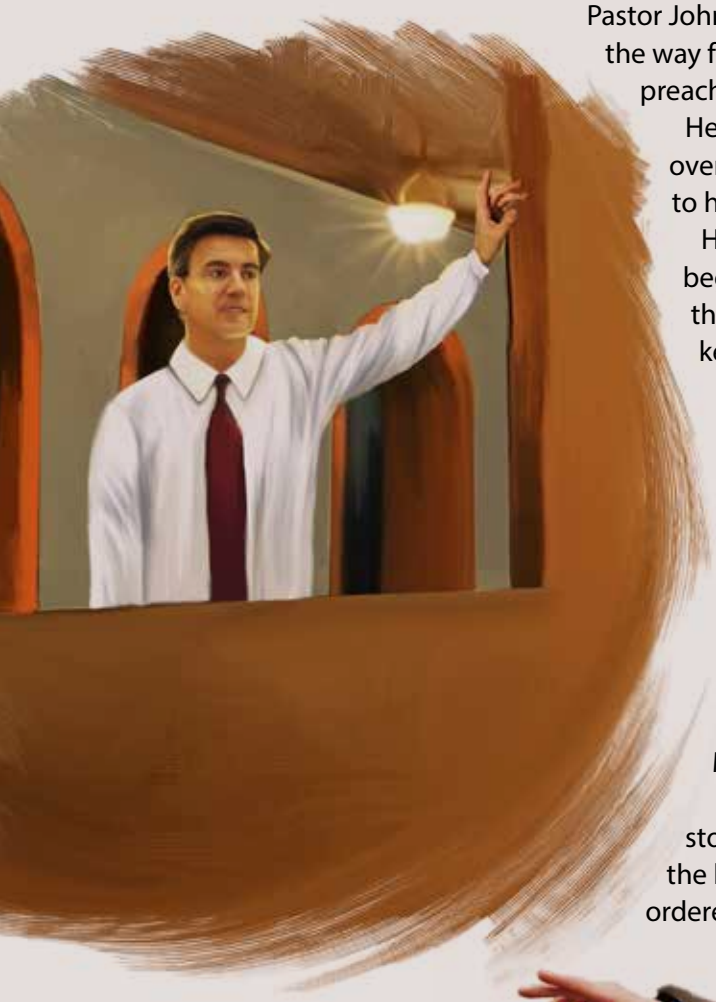
Family Journal

Draw a picture of a time this week when you did your best. Glue it into your family journal and finish by asking God to help you always do your best and never give up.

For You, Parents

"Help your children to do the will of God by being faithful in the performance of the duties which really belong to them as members of the family. . . . Patiently educate [your children] to act their part in the family circle"
(Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance*, p. 36).

The Tall Stranger



Pastor John Matteson wanted to do his best. He had traveled all the way from his home in America to a country named Norway to preach that Jesus was coming soon.

He looked around with surprise. The room was full and overflowing with people who were squeezed in tight to listen to him.

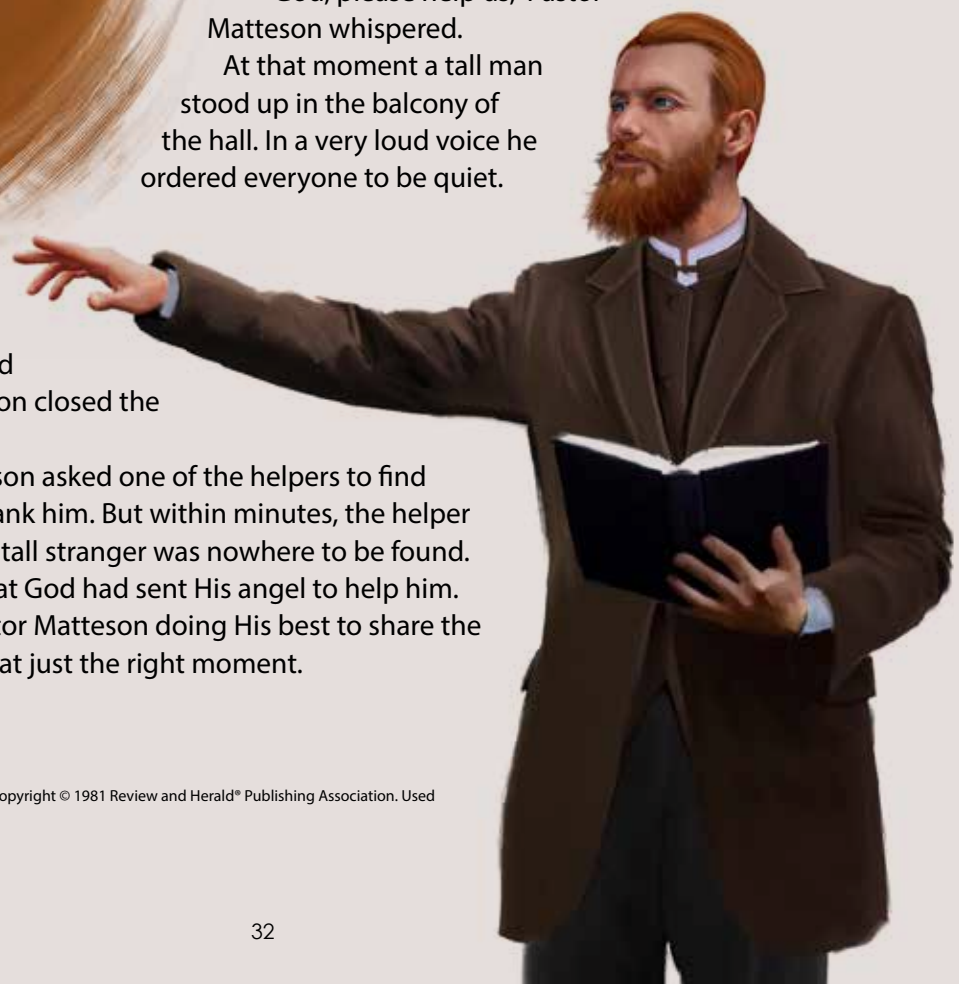
He stood up and began to talk. Suddenly some people began to shout and interrupt him. Pastor Matteson realized that not all the people were there to listen. He did his best to keep preaching with all the noise and calling out.

But then in the middle of the sermon, someone the crowd knew well stood up and started shouting horrible things at Pastor Matteson. Some of the crowd cheered him on, and others started to hiss. Excitement swept through the crowd like a wave through a stormy sea.

Pastor Matteson realized that if the people didn't calm down, someone would soon get hurt. Some men were even walking toward the window with chairs, because they wanted to smash their way out of the crowded room.

"God, please help us," Pastor Matteson whispered.

At that moment a tall man stood up in the balcony of the hall. In a very loud voice he ordered everyone to be quiet.



The strangest thing happened. Everyone sat down and became very quiet. Pastor Matteson closed the meeting with prayer.

After the meeting Pastor Matteson asked one of the helpers to find the tall stranger. He wanted to thank him. But within minutes, the helper came back, shaking his head. The tall stranger was nowhere to be found.

Pastor Matteson understood that God had sent His angel to help him. God had been pleased to see Pastor Matteson doing His best to share the Bible and had stepped in to help, at just the right moment.

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