Genesis Chapter 35 Verse 1

* You would think that after Chapter 34 God would be *through* with Jacob. What Jacob **does and allows to be done** is **terrible.** Not once did he seek God. Not once is God even mentioned in the whole chapter…but Chapter 35 opens with these words, *“Then God said to Jacob.”* God is so very long suffering, merciful, patient and perfect. ***He’s so unlike me.*** And if you’re perhaps in a place where you feel unworthy or distant from the Lord, let this first verse encourage you…***God is wanting to chat.***
* There’s no mention of Jacob *falling apart.* No mention of Jacob coming to God in *repentance and sorrow.* Not one word of Jacob initiating anything with God. ***God pursues him.*** Just like God is yet pursuing you tonight no matter what has happened, even if what has happened is **terrible.** Hear the voice of God.
* Jesus talked about the good shepherd that will leave the 99 and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying…it occurs to me that as He seeks, He calls out to that straying sheep…and Jesus continued in Matthew 18 that when the shepherd finds that sheep He doesn’t sit that sheep down for a ***good scolding***…Matthew 18:13 says that *if he should find it, assuredly, I say to you, He rejoices more over that sheep than over the 99 that did not go astray*…if He finds it. If He finds you…
* How we paint such a ***warped picture*** of God in our minds sometime…like a Picasso…triangle head and stuff…**we make Him like us.** We craft Him in our own image when He is so much higher, so very other…and even in the midst of possibly the lowest point in Jacob’s life so far…*the loss of an entire people*, God calls out to Him again…and His call is **return.** Come back to Bethel…come back to where you were before Shechem…**dwell** there. Don’t just visit, don’t just pass through…dwell. ***That’s the kind of relationship God is seeking with you…***
* Jacob is down and out…God’s call is maybe the same call to you tonight, *get up…arise out of where you are at…go up, progress, make progress, go up to the place of God*…and ***dwell.*** Get back to seeking God. Make an altar and remember, *bring back into your mind* the greatness of God.

Genesis Chapter 35 Verses 2 – 4

* ***Foreign gods?*** What has happened? And what drives me a little crazy is that obviously **Jacob knew** about them…! Now it makes sense how his sons could have done what we saw in the last chapter. *It didn’t start there…it just culminated there!* It’s a slow fade, a *snow ball effect*…***compromise is like that,*** especially in the lives of our children…we allow this…*not good for them but hey, it’s not bad for them…they’re still going to church…*it’s a slow fade…
* This is alarming…foreign gods had been allowed in…and man the tragedy of that is sometimes unbearable as the children walk right away from God as they get older…Notice this, ***one command from Jacob and they’re all gone.*** That command has come *a city too late*…*a defiled daughter too late…* How important it is for mom and dad to honor the Lord in their own homes and lead with courage and wisdom as unto the Lord.

Genesis Chapter 35 Verses 5 – 8

* Jacob has realized that *the place* isn’t important…**it’s the God of the place that is important!** He calls the place not Bethel, *House of God*…but *God’s House of God*…and I like that. The place isn’t important, the lights, the chairs, the songs, the *whatever*…**are you here to meet with God?**  Are you here to *worship* God…***that’s when you’ll find Him***…that’s the altar that should be built!
* This is almost a completely random piece of information here about Deborah because we know literally nothing about her, Rebekah’s nurse however she must have been someone that they loved very much because they names the place *“Oak of Weeping.”* But this makes me think and reminds me of this important point. We are given only minutes of each year of life…there is so much we don’t know and yet I often conclude that I know everything…HA!
* God knows the details, God knows the seconds, hours, days and weeks. ***He has the truth, not me***…and that is one of the reasons why I believe the Word of God is so powerful and one scripture can speak millions of truths at different times throughout a life, every time you read it…*something fresh, something new*…because God truly speaks through His Word!

Genesis Chapter 35 Verses 9 – 10

* I like this…when Jacob finally came into the place which was according to *God’s Word, God’s direction*, God immediately speaks to him and blesses him and notice this, calls him once again, Israel. I like that. ***Who God has called me to be, identified me as, will be fully realized when I am right where He wants me to be***…and that will be a place where I am greatly blessed. Filled with joy, strength, purpose and direction. Vision and assurity, confidence and courage! And notice this, God gives even more…
* It’s not like God *wasn’t* with him even when he was astray…God pursued him. God provided for him, loved him, spoke to him, was with him…but now that Jacob has finally done what God has asked *(which was for his own good, his family’s own good in the first place*) God gives even more…one could say, ***further revelation…***

Genesis Chapter 35 Verses 11 – 15

* (I’m after the *also*) I really like this interaction because Jacob already knew these things…this is the blessing that he received earlier from his father and from God…I like this because ***he doesn’t need anything new…he just needs to be reminded of what already was***….just like me, so very often…I don’t need a shiny new truth from God…I just need to be reminded that *He loves me, He is for me*, **He gave His life in my place, to pay for my sin…**I am important and significant to Him and He has placed eternal value upon me not because of my righteousness but because of His love…

Genesis Chapter 35 Verses 16 – 20

* Notice this, **no contention between Leah and Rachel over this son**…why? I like what Guzik suggests…they’re in the promised land now…and when you get there, ***a little older, a little more grown, things like competition and drama just aren’t important as before.*** Rachel has this last son, the twelfth son of Israel and as she labors in childbirth, she loses her life…And her desire is to name the son Ben-Oni which means, *“Son of my sorrow,”* but Jacob, out of love for his bride names him, *“Son of my right hand.”* And Rachel dies…it’s a sweet scene.

Genesis Chapter 35 Verses 21 – 29

* It’s amazing to me how fallible this family is…the sons of Jacob, Jacob himself, Esau and Jacob together…it’s a mess and yet from this family will come great fruit and a company of nations…You know what, I’m entirely fallible as well, **I am fall**…and yet because of God’s grace, because of His love, because of His sovereign call…through me and through you He can bring much fruit…
* There will be difficulty…***the son of the right hand is the many times the same as the son of sorrow***…here they are in the promised land…walking in full obedience to God and there have been two losses, two deaths in 10 verses…but where loss abounds, grace abounds much more…where sorrow will last through the darkness, morning is coming and there will be joy…God will bring much fruit through you no matter where you are at or what you’ve been through or what you’re going through…a great company of nations, kings…if today you will put away your idols, be forgiven of your sins – purified and dwell with Him…allow Him to change your clothes…