



# THE LORD'S FLOCK GROWTH DIGEST

## PASTORAL GROWTH SERIES

### GRABBER TO GIVER

#### Selfishness Series – Part 5

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Jacob, the son of Isaac and the twin brother of Esau, was an epitome of a secular mindset. He was selfish, with a “get-ahead at any cost” attitude. He was willing to step on others in order to get what he wanted. However, when he encountered God, he became a changed man. Thus, God used Jacob mightily to further His plan. In the same way, if we turn our backs on our past and start to live for God, He can use us too in His divine plan. Thus, God’s ultimate goal for us is to conform to the likeness of His Son (Rom. 8:29).

#### A. From Grabber to Giver

1. The name “Jacob” means heel-grabber or deceiver. Because of his cunning greed, Jacob took advantage of Esau’s weakness. He exploited the hunger of Esau by trading Esau’s birthright for a bowl of stew. (Gen. 25: 29-34).

2. The Bible tells us that, years later, Jacob tricked his father into giving him the blessing intended for Esau (Gen. 27: 1-29). He pretended to be Esau by wearing Esau’s clothes and disguised himself by covering his arms in lamb skin so that if his blind father touched him, he would think Jacob was his hairy brother. Jacob’s deception was utterly dishonorable.

3. Because of his deception, Jacob had to flee to escape Esau’s wrath, who vowed to kill him. Jacob, having fled for his life, left behind his possessions and wealth. He was destitute and forced to sleep out on the open ground. He was also estranged from his family. His deceit led him to loneliness and desperation.

4. On his journey towards Haran, Jacob stopped for the night in a certain place to sleep. He had a dream in which he saw a stairway rested on the ground, with its top reaching to the heavens and God’s angels were going up and down on it. Above it stood the Lord, who promised him blessings and guidance. He named the place Bethel, the “house of God” (Gen. 28: 10-22).

5. Results of Jacob’s encounter with the Lord:
  - 5.1 He was transformed from being a grabber to a giver. Jacob, who was once the selfish, “me-first” man, was changed by God’s grace. He pledged his future to God.
  - 5.2 He had a renewed devotion to God, and even built an altar to honor Him.
  - 5.3 He vowed to tithe from everything he received.
  - 5.4 He learned stewardship.
6. God had a plan in spite of Jacob's character. God worked on Jacob's character and changed it; however, God's plan was not dependent upon Jacob's goodness and worthiness, but on God's grace.

From Jacob’s life, we learn that God is constantly working through imperfect, even sinful, people to accomplish His plan. In spite of man’s evil ways, God still works the good out of it. God does not need our help to fulfill His purpose in our life. All He needs is our obedience.

**CONCLUSION:** When we encounter Jesus in our lives, we too shall be transformed. Our old nature – pride, greed, and love for self, among others – shall pass away. We shall become “a new creation”, willing and eager to be used by the Lord in His work to accomplish His divine plan (2 Cor. 5: 17).

**REFLECTION:** How has the Lord changed your life when you surrendered your life to Him?

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