



LOVE STORIES: WEEK 4

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LOVE STORIES

WEEK 4: JACOB & RACHEL

Bible: Genesis 29:20 (NLT)

Bottom Line: True love takes dedication and devotion — a reflection of God’s love for you.

SUPPLIES

- 9-12 cups used for cup stacking (2-3 sets depending on the size of your group)
- Tables

OPENING GAME (IN-PERSON VERSION): BEAT THE CLOCK

HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

Ask for volunteers to stack cups.

Explain that cup stackers may begin when you say, “Go.”

Their goal is to build 7 stacks before the timer goes off (*You can determine how much time you want to give*).

Stackers are not racing the other person but trying to beat the clock.

Leaders: Your job is to watch stackers, and just as they are about to finish, casually bump the table to make the cups fall.

You can do this one or more times before they reach the 7th stack. (*If you have additional youth workers, assign one to each table.*)

Debrief with the group at the end of the game.

Ask the cup stackers how it felt for their cups to fall when they were close to being done.

Allow volunteers to share as well as other youth.

Say: It’s easy to give up after you’ve worked hard and have to start all over.

It takes commitment to keep going in the face of adversity.

Leader Option: Share a time when you had to keep going and stay committed through challenges. Explain how you got through the experience.

OPENING GAME (ONLINE VERSION): BEAT THE CLOCK

HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

Players close their eyes.

The leader says an amount of time (e.g., 40 secs, 52 secs).

Players must put up their thumb when they think that amount of time has passed.

The player closest to the time wins a point. Play a couple of rounds.

Variation: *Have players turn off their camera instead of holding up their thumb. They will turn their camera back on when they think that amount of time has passed.*

Rules: *No cell phones or stopwatches can be used. Students will play on the honor system.*

Debrief with the group at the end of the game.

Ask players how it felt when they were counting the time and waiting.

Did it seem like time was moving slow or too fast?

Allow students to share.

Say: *It can seem like time is moving so slow when we are waiting on something.*

It takes patience and commitment to keep going and not give up.

Leader Option: *Share a time when you had to be patient and not give up. Explain how you got through the experience.*

TEACH

Ask: Do you know what the word *dedication* means?

Allow time for students to respond.

Dedication is a form of the word dedicated meaning *to devote wholly and earnestly, as to some person or purpose.*

Keep this definition as we go through today's lesson.

This week we conclude our series on Love Stories.

Over the past three weeks, we've seen couples in the Bible.

We've examined their stories to help us understand what true love looks like.

We learned from Abraham and Sarah that true love encourages you to put your trust in God.

True love also is about inner beauty and not only what we see on the outside.

Mary and Joseph showed us how true love helps you fulfill God's purposes for your life.

These couples showed us examples of godly love.

As Christians, we know that the way of the world is not God's way.

The way we define beauty, purpose, and trust are influenced by movies, music, television shows, and even books that we read.

This series was designed to give a godly perspective to the concept of love and what it looks like to have a loving relationship centered on God.

This week, we will end by looking at Jacob and Rachel.

If ever there was a poster child for dedication in love, Jacob was it.

As we will see, their story was a love at first sight, working 9-5, deception kind of romance.

Jacob and Rachel would have been on Netflix easily!

Despite the obstacles to being with his true love, Jacob was dedicated.

Let's look at **Genesis 29: 5-13** and see how they first met.

"Do you know a man there named Laban, the grandson of Nahor?" he asked. "Yes, we do, they replied."

"Is he doing well?" Jacob asked. "Yes, he's well," they answered. "Look, here comes his daughter Rachel with the flock now."

Jacob said, "Look, it's still broad daylight—too early to round up the animals. Why don't you water the sheep and goats so they can get back out to pasture?"

"We can't water the animals until all the flocks have arrived," they replied. "Then the shepherds move the stone from the mouth of the well, and we water all the sheep and goats."

Jacob was still talking with them when Rachel arrived with her father's flock, for she was a shepherd."

And because Rachel was his cousin—the daughter of Laban, his mother's brother—and because the sheep and goats belonged to his uncle Laban, Jacob went over to the well and moved the stone from its mouth and watered his uncle's flock.

Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and he wept aloud.

He explained to Rachel that he was her cousin on her father's side—the son of her aunt Rebekah. So, Rachel quickly ran and told her father, Laban.

As soon as Laban heard that his nephew Jacob had arrived, he ran out to meet him. He embraced and kissed him and brought him home. When Jacob had told him his story.

Laban exclaimed, "You really are my own flesh and blood!"

Here we have a case of boy sees girl, boy meets girl, boy falls in love.

We don't know how Rachel feels about Jacob.

But Jacob has fallen head over heels in love with Rachel.

He doesn't know anything else about her as a person except she's beautiful.

Maybe Jacob needs to take a lesson from Ruth and Boaz about inner and outer beauty.

However, in his defense, he will have plenty of time to get to know Rachel better.

Read Genesis 29:14-20.

After Jacob had stayed with Laban for about a month, Laban said to him, "You shouldn't work for me without pay just because we are relatives. Tell me how much your wages should be."

Now Laban had two daughters. The older daughter was named Leah, and the younger one was Rachel.

There was no sparkle in Leah's eyes, but Rachel had a beautiful figure and a lovely face."

Since Jacob was in love with Rachel, he told her father, "I'll work for you for seven years if you'll give me Rachel, your younger daughter, as my wife."

"Agreed!" Laban replied. "I'd rather give her to you than to anyone else. Stay and work with me."

So, Jacob worked seven years to pay for Rachel. But his love for her was so strong that it seemed to him but a few days.

After staying with his uncle and working for him, Laban asked Jacob to set a wage for his effort.

He asked to marry Rachel.

Now, Rachel was not the firstborn; her sister Leah was.

During that time, it was customary for the oldest daughter to marry first.

But clearly, Jacob had his eyes set on Rachel.

Rachel was described as the beautiful one.

Leah was described as having “no sparkle” in her eyes. Can you say hurtful?

However, Jacob offers to work for Laban for seven years to marry Rachel.

Yes, you read that correctly seven years.

Some people are engaged for seven weeks, others seven months.

However, it’s very rare for a couple to be engaged for seven years.

In a typical engagement, couples are planning their wedding.

Jacob was working before he could even have a relationship with Rachel.

Here’s a lesson both males and females can learn from Jacob.

Ladies, if he’s genuinely interested in you, he’ll put in the time and work to be with you.

Gentlemen, you should be willing to put in the time and effort it takes to have a relationship.

There is a reason God has a divine plan for love and marriage.

Why? So, we could have a relationship with God the Father.

In our society, the word love is used casually.

Many people say, “I love you” but it’s not from the heart.

Some say it because they think it will help them get what they want from the other person.

But when it comes to love, actions speak louder than words.

Jacob showed his seriousness by committing to work seven years for Rachel.

Think about what God did for us through Jesus.

It was a dedicated and committed love that sent Him to the cross for you and me.

God gave His Son for our sins.

That's the greatest show of love in the world has ever known.

True love takes dedication and devotion — a reflection of God's love for you.

Let's read **Genesis 29:21-28** to see what happens next.

“Finally, the time came for him to marry her. I have fulfilled my agreement,” Jacob said to Laban. “Now give me my wife so I can sleep with her.”

So, Laban invited everyone in the neighborhood and prepared a wedding feast.

But that night, when it was dark, Laban took Leah to Jacob, and he slept with her.

(Laban had given Leah a servant, Zilpah, to be her maid.)

But when Jacob woke up in the morning—it was Leah! “What have you done to me?” Jacob raged at Laban. “I worked seven years for Rachel! Why have you tricked me?”

“It's not our custom here to marry off a younger daughter ahead of the firstborn,” Laban replied.

“But wait until the bridal week is over; then we'll give you Rachel, too—provided you promise to work another seven years for me.”

So, Jacob agreed to work seven more years. A week after Jacob had married Leah, Laban gave him Rachel, too.

And the plot thickens.

For Jacob, seven years felt like seven days.

At the end of his seven years, he went to his uncle and requested Rachel.

So, like any good father-of-the-bride, Laban prepared a wedding feast.

Then, like any good Netflix saga, there's a twist in the storyline.

On his wedding night, Jacob was tricked. Oh, the irony!

(Note to leader: If time permits share the story of how Jacob tricked his brother Esau and father Isaac out of his birthright blessing.)

Dressed to look like her sister Rachel, Laban sent his daughter Leah to Jacob.

The next day when Jacob realized he had been tricked; he was furious.

However, he still loved and was dedicated to Rachel.

Laban promised Jacob could marry Rachel.

He had to wait until the end of the wedding week.

Jacob agreed to wait and work an **additional seven years** so he could marry Rachel.

I don't know too many men who would be willing to do that, do you?

That's what I call dedicated and devoted.

Love takes work.

Jacob was willing to work for the person he loved.

At the end of the week, Jacob was able to marry Rachel.

His devotion and dedication paid off.

Let's be found as dedicated and devoted children of God.

We can show God we genuinely love Him by telling Him but more importantly, by showing Him.

Love is an action.

Close in prayer.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How did Jacob react when he first saw Rachel?
2. What are some ways you can show someone you love them without saying it?
3. How do you think it made Rachel feel knowing Jacob was willing to sacrifice 14 years total, just to have a relationship with her?
4. Why did Laban try to get Jacob to marry Leah first instead of Rachel?
5. How can you show God that you are dedicated and devoted to Him this week?
6. What similarities and differences do you see in all four relationships from the series?
7. Look back at 1 Corinthians 13:4. What does patient and kind love look like in day-to-day life?
8. Would you consider yourself a dedicated and devoted Christ-follower? Why or Why not?
9. In general, people have a difficult time with commitment. What are some reasons why people are hesitant to commit to something?
10. What is the one thing that you will remember most from this series?