

Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further ***International Bible Lessons***

Genesis 29:15-30

Sunday, January 3, 2016

L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

Some Bible study groups or classes can further discussion by asking some or all of the **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** below. Others may want to send the bulletin size *International Bible Lesson* home with their students for further study in the coming week to encourage continuing Bible study. The *Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further* below are not actually intended to be *the answers* to the discussion questions. These indeed are “hints” a teacher may use to help students think through and discuss the questions in class. The *Class Preparation Guide* includes the questions below, and it can be given to students at the end of the previous class so they can pray, read, and think ahead to prepare for the next week’s Bible class.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. How would you describe Jacob’s work ethic? Contrast it with what others might have done in his situation with Laban and his family.

He worked hard and long enough for a month to impress Laban enough to offer him a paying job. Perhaps he worked each day with Rachel as a shepherd. He worked seven years to purchase the right to marry Rachel, and then seven more years after Laban deceived him with Leah

so he could marry Rachel (a total of fourteen years that resulted in marrying two sisters).

Others might have relaxed and enjoyed free room and board for a month as a relative until they became an unwanted burden on their relative.

2. How might Laban's answer to Jacob regarding his wages have been crafty in preparation to deceive Jacob later "if he wanted to and saw the opportunity"?

Laban's "agreement" was vague enough that he could change the implied terms later. He added terms to the agreement when he deceived Jacob with Leah and mentioned a previously undisclosed "custom." Laban and Jacob understood the agreement differently. Perhaps if a "better man" had come along, Laban would have told Jacob and refused Rachel to Jacob.

3. How long did Jacob's first seven years of work feel to him and why did he feel that way?

The first seven years felt like only a few days, because Jacob loved Rachel.

4. How do our feelings for someone influence how we serve them? What kind of feelings do believers and unbelievers have toward God and how do those feelings influence their service of God?

If we love and respect someone, we will enjoy the opportunity to serve them. If we dislike, hate, or have no respect for someone, then each moment of service will feel like drudgery at the least. Believers love and respect God; they give thanks to God for the opportunity to serve God;

their service brings them much joy as it flows from their love for God. Unbelievers think there is no God, and when they learn of God they certainly do not want to serve God; they would feel like a resentful slave to God and God's laws.

5. Can you name one or more good consequences that God worked out in spite of Laban's sins against Jacob and his daughters?

The twelve tribes of Israel came from Jacob's wives and their servants. Leah bore Judah and Levi, ancestors of Jesus the Messiah and Moses the Lawgiver. Rachel bore Joseph (who saved Israel from starvation in Egypt, and who was the father of two tribes).

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