



PRIZED POSSESSION 2 :: *SPECKLED SHEEP* :: CLAY SCROGGINS

INTRODUCTION

So how does life work? In the quest for success there are those who believe that if you simply work hard it will all work out...for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. On the other side, there are those who have been burned by life—those who have seen their best efforts go up in smoke. So what's the secret? How does life work? By looking at one of Jacob's schemes in the Old Testament we will see how our efforts and God's favor factor into the equation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you tend to view life as a relatively simple equation: hard work = the right results? When have you seen this play out in your life and in the lives of others?
2. When have you seen your best efforts fail to work? On the other hand, have you ever experienced success without really earning it?
3. Read Genesis 30:25-43. How does Jacob attempt to manipulate God? How do we attempt to manipulate God (e.g. giving money, attending church, behaving well, etc.)?
4. Read Genesis 31:1-13. Jacob didn't need to place the peeled branches by the flocks—God was going to provide for him (vv. 11-12). Why do we find it hard to trust God to provide without our help?
5. What do you learn from the story of Jacob and the speckled sheep?
6. Read Proverbs 21:31. Is there a situation in your life right now where you need to do the best you can and then trust God with the outcome?

THINK ABOUT IT

When you follow the principles of God you invite God to bless your life, although He isn't obligated to bless you. Do you find yourself treating God like a celestial slot machine or a heavenly ATM? What is your attitude when you get what you want and when you don't get what you want?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Are you holding on to life too tightly? Do you feel like success rises and falls on you? How can you begin to trust that God is in full control?

CHANGING YOUR MIND

The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but victory rests with the LORD. Proverbs 21:31