

Prayer's Essentials

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I. Introduction. Text: Genesis 32:9-32.

II. The model prayer of Jacob.

- A. When you pray, begin with God and His character.
- B. Recognize your own personal unworthiness.
- C. Give a specific petition.

III. Jacob's prayer was practically useless because there was not the slightest indication that he believed God would answer the prayer.

- A. There are times when we need to put legs to prayer, not canceling out normal activities.
- B. This is not the case here.

1. Jacob and Esau are symbols in Scripture.

- a. Jacob pictures the man of faith.
- b. Esau pictures the man who trusts in his own abilities.
- b. Jacob's attempt to bolster Esau is a picture of the believer bolstering up the flesh.

2. Esau was not at all influenced by Jacob's present.

3. God wrestled with Jacob trying to break down his stubborn independence.

- a. God renamed Jacob Israel because he strove with God and prevailed.
- b. Jacob only prevailed when his independence was broken.
- c. God works differently than we expect.

Application questions:

1. What is the essential ingredient of prayer?

2. Why is it so important that our independence is broken before God? What does God want to display?

3. How have you seen prayer work when human power could not accomplish something? How has this helped to strengthen your faith?
