

99-10-17b Genesis Custom

So, when it says, strengthen the hands which hang down, strengthen the feeble knees, make straight paths for your feet, so that that which is lame may not continually be dislocated, but rather be healed. This is what it's talking about. There are some cases where we have to get out of a situation.

We have to separate from something that is dragging us down. Now, think about our study in Genesis. Think about Jacob under the influence of his mother, in apposition to his brother, in an environment where there is favoritism, where there is deceit, where things are done in secret, behind the tent flaps.

Jacob has to get away before he can learn some things and heal up from his tendency to deceive, from his tendency to chisel and to manipulate. He's in an environment where this is commonplace, where this is the norm. Everybody does this.

Well, God gets him out of there, so that his feeble knees can heal, so that his hands which hang down can be strengthened. And it's going to take a period of years for this to happen. We have to recognize that in our lives there are going to be times, there are going to be seasons, there may be phases of our life measured in years where God is going to have to separate us, God is going to have to get us away, and we're going to have to recognize that this is a season of healing up.

This is a season for being nourished and strengthened and built up, so that at some future point, when we are again tested in an area, we will be strong. That injury, that weakness, will have been strengthened. I mentioned Theodore Roosevelt, who as a boy had many physical weaknesses.

He worked himself out of his physical weakness. He was a sickly, strawny boy with a caved-in chest. He started working out with weights, and it became a lifelong passion with him.

What is his reputation? When you see pictures of him, when you read descriptions of him, he was a barrel-chested man who walked through the woods as president and left his Secret Service men couldn't keep up. These are men who were trained in the physical realm. Roosevelt left them in the dust, climbing cliffs.

It was a running joke as to who was going to have to try to keep up with the president when he went out for his walks because he would climb. He was barrel-chested and hale and hearty. He didn't start out that way, but through rigorous exercise, that weakness was overcome.

God will give us the opportunity to get to a place where we can exercise, where we can heal up, and when we're once again faced with a challenge in that area, our soul will be

strong. We may have to learn through discipline. God may chasten us when we fail, and the idea is not to be discouraged, but to be encouraged, to realize that this is a time of recovery.

This is a time of repair. This is a time of learning and growing. We don't constantly look back at a record of failure and decide, well, the race is not worth running.

We're not going to be Mary, what's-her-name, rolling around in despair in the middle of the track saying, oh, it's all over for me. We pick ourselves up, get back on the track, and run with endurance our race because in our life, God has a unique purpose and a unique desire to reflect His glory in the things that He can do in repairing us, in transforming us, in communicating from faith to faith His own glory. So as we resume after the break here, our study of the life of Jacob, and we see some things that are not proud moments in his life, just remember this is an example for us.

All of these things were written for our instruction, and it should be an encouragement that God will do the same for us that He does for Jacob. And Jacob doesn't seem to start well, but he ends up lending his name to the nation that reflects God's glory and in which God dwells for centuries. He is forever recorded in Scripture, and God attaches His name to that of Jacob.

I am the God of Jacob, God will say. So whatever our track record up to this point, it is no time to abandon the field. Well, that's our Scripture reading for this morning.

We'll pause now here and take our break, and when we come back we'll resume the study of Jacob's life in Genesis.