**Life lessons from Leah and Rachel**

*Various Scriptures*

*So Jacob agreed to work seven more years. A week after Jacob had married Leah, Laban gave him Rachel, too. -Genesis 29:28 NLT*

While most people are familiar with the patriarchs of the Bible, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, we are also blessed to learn from the examples of their wives. In preparing for this study, pay close attention at how each of these women handle their challenges in life and stretch out their \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in God.

**Did you know?**

\* Jacob had a total of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ wives. **Genesis 29:16-28; Genesis 30:3-4;9**

\* The name Leah means \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

\* The name Rachel means \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

\* Leah bore Jacob \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ children, \_\_\_\_\_\_ from her servant.

\* Rachel bore Jacob \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ children, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ from her servant.

\* Both Leah and Rachel were Jacob’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. **Genesis 29:9-10**

\* Leah and Rachel’s stories are told in Genesis 29-35

**As the plot thickens…..**

Shortly after Jacob arrived at Paddan-Aram he saw and met \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. It was love at first sight. One thing led to another, he met her father Laban, lived with the family, and was offered a job. Jacob was so in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with Rachel that he agreed to work seven years free of charge as his wages in order to marry her! However, once the time came to receive his wife Laban gave him his older daughter Leah instead.

Sometimes what we do to others has a way of coming back to haunt us. In this instance, the one who once deceived his father and brother was now himself being deceived. As you might imagine Jacob was furious. Although Jacob was angry he did not let that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ him from attaining what he set out to do. In spite of Laban’s deception we learn that Jacob agreed to continue to work another seven years for Rachel.

**Genesis 29:25-28**

**Think of a time when someone tested your patience. How did you handle it? Did you give up prematurely or endure until the end? Did you allow anger to discourage/distract or were you able to defuse and stay focused?**

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**Supportive scriptures: Romans 12:12; James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:6-7**

**Sibling Rivalry**

By definition a sibling rivalry is the jealousy, competition and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ between brothers and sisters. We’ve all at some point have witnessed and or participated in a sibling rivalry but what does the Bible teach us about these points of contention in the family dynamic?

Leah Vs. Rachel Physical appearances…..Genesis 29:17

**Leah**

(KJV) tender; faint or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

(NIV) weak

(NKJV)delicate; meaning they were a pale color. Such paleness was viewed as a blemish.

(NLT) no sparkle in Leah’s eyes

**Rachel**

(KJV) beautiful and well favored

(NIV) lovely in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and beautiful

(NKJV) beautiful in form and appearance

(NLT) beautiful figure and a lovely face

Based on their first encounter and this information Genesis 29:18 tells us Jacob was in love with Rachel and told her father, “I’ll work for you for seven years if you’ll give me Rachel, your younger daughter, as my wife.”

As we noted previously, when Jacob found out that Laban deceived him, he was enraged. How do you think that made Leah feel? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Remember Ephesians 5:25**

Leah Vs. Rachel Competition in childbearing…..Genesis 29:31-30:24

**Leah (Genesis 29:31-35)**

God enabled her to have children. Notice after every child a statement is made.

First child; “The Lord has surely looked at my affliction. Now therefore my husband will love me.”

Second child; “Because the Lord has heard that I am unloved, He has therefore given me this son also.”

Third child; “Now this time my husband will become attached to me, because I have born him three sons”

Forth child; “Now I will praise the Lord”

**Rachel (Genesis 30:1-7)**

Rachel has the looks, but Leah is having all the babies. Genesis 30:1 tells us not only did she grow \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of her sister but she begged Jacob to get her pregnant. Can you see Rachel? She now has tension with her sister and tension with her husband but Jacob reminds her God is in control. She responds by giving her servant Bilhah to Jacob as his wife. **Genesis 30:3**

Bilhah’s first child: “God has vindicated me! He has heard my voice and given me a son”

Bilhah’s second child: “I have struggled with my sister and I’m winning!”

**Leah (Genesis 30:9-13)**

Retaliates by giving her servant Ziplah to Jacob as his fourth wife.

Ziplah’s first child: “How fortunate I am”

Ziplah’s second child: “What joy is mine!”

Can you see Leah almost bragging about having more children than Rachel?

**What are some things we can do today to avoid bragging and appearing as though we have everything together?**

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**Just like a rivalry Rachel and Leah continue to go back and forth Genesis 30:14-16**

After the back and forth competition between the sisters, Rachel then bargains with her sister over mandrakes. This fruit was superstitiously viewed in the ancient world as “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ apples”. This aphrodisiac was believed to promote fertility. Genesis 30:14-16

Leah’s fifth child: “God has given me my wages, because I have given my maid to my husband”

Leah’s sixth child: “God has endowed me with a good endowment; now my husband will dwell with me, because I have borne him six sons”

Leah’s seventh child: Daughter named Dinah no statement was made.

**But God remembered Rachel….Genesis 30:22-24**

First child: “God has taken away my reproach.” “The Lord shall add to me another son.”

Second child: Called his name Ben-Oni which means “Son of my sorrow” But Jacob called him Benjamin which means “Son of my right hand”

**Unfortunately Rachel died while giving birth to her last son. In reflecting on the brevity of life how important is the rivalry that you are in today?**

**As you consider the back and forth of their rivalry, is there someone that your life (brother or sister in Christ) that you could be competing and comparing yourself with?**

**What are some things you can do to squash this rivalry?**

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**Supporting Scripture Philippians 2:1-5; Galatians 5:20**

***If you don’t compete with one another, compare yourselves against each other you will be able to continue with one another” -Anonymous***