

He Responds To It All

Description

A Toxic Relationship

24 And Jacob was left alone, and a Man wrestled with him until daybreak.
25 And when [the Man] saw that He did not prevail against [Jacob], He touched
26 Then He said, Let Me go, for day is breaking. But [Jacob] said, I will not
27 [The Man] asked him, What is your name? And [in shock of realization, whisp
28 And He said, Your name shall be called no more Jacob [supplanter], but Isra
29 Then Jacob asked Him, Tell me, I pray You, what [in contrast] is Your name?
30 And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel [the face of God], saying, Fo
31 And as he passed Penuel [Peniel], the sun rose upon him, and he was limping

Genesis 32:24-31 AMPC

Can I shock your senses with the suggestion that Jacob and God were involved in a toxic relationship? God's love towards Jacob was consistent and unwavering, in spite of Jacob's antics. We are first introduced to Jacob in Genesis chapter 25, and over the next 7 chapters we experience different monumental events in his life. Over the course of at least 20 years, we see Jacob swindle Esau out of his birthright, deceive his father Isaac, mistreat his first wife Leah, engage in shady business practices with Laban, mismanage his family/children, and attempt to manipulate Esau before their reconnection. It is these events that set the scene for the verses above where we see Jacob "wrestle" with the Lord. Now we may assume that the scene above is Jacob's first encounter with God, but I'd beg to differ. I believe that God was present for each of the aforementioned actions and events Jacob's life that I listed above. In spite of each of those actions, one thing never changed, God's love and commitment to Jacob. Fast forward to that night where Jacob is "wrestling" with God, and I'd like to point out something important about the scene; Jacob is "wrestling" with God, but we don't see God fight back back, or attempt to abandon the struggle. Now for context, the man that Jacob is wrestling with isn't God, but rather Jesus who has manifested himself in physical form to "visit" Jacob at a crossroads moment. In the scene, Jacob finally lays eyes on his partner who had been in a relationship with him since before his before, a long term relationship that Jacob continued to violate and disrespect, yet Jesus never abandoned or forsook him. Even as Jacob wrestled ALL night, and reflected on their relationship and realized that Jesus had been consistent, faithful, and present the ENTIRE time, Jesus didn't leave him or judge him for it. Doesn't that seem toxic; the fact that Jacob violated the terms of their relationship/covenant repeatedly, and Jesus upheld his end of the covenant can overwhelm one's reasoning. What do I want you to take away from this? First, Jesus loves you enough to stand strong in the midst of your "wrestling" with him, and as long as you hold onto him, he'll heal the wounds that you give give him access to. Second, Jacob walked away with a limp, not as a result of a physical deformity, but symbolically he now leaned not on his own understanding, but rather on the promises and strength of the Lord. A toxic relationship now made healthy.

The Swiper – I’m Just Looking For Something Real

43 And a woman who had suffered from a flow of blood for twelve years and had
44 Came up behind Him and touched the fringe of His garment, and immediately
45 And Jesus said, Who is it who touched Me? When all were denying it, Peter a
46 But Jesus said, Someone did touch Me; for I perceived that [healing] power
47 And when the woman saw that she had not escaped notice, she came up trembli
48 And He said to her, Daughter, your faith (your confidence and trust in Me)

Luke 8:43-48 AMPC

For 12 years this anonymous woman had explored multiple dating apps, and viewed countless profiles of potential suitors with commendable profiles. She’d dated them all, allowing herself to consider suitors with no potential, but due to their good marketing ability, they’d been able to take her on a ride. I feel that because of her predicament she’d become even more vulnerable to manipulation and deceit at the hands of others. Anyone with a good talk, and dreams of a good future could catch her ear and obtain her full devotion or at least her consideration. I imagine that she scrolled through all the sites, reviewed many profiles, and eventually heard of the a new suitor coming through town that had changed the lives of everyone that came into contact with. Who was this Jesus that everyone was talking about, and could he be different from everyone else that I’ve dated in the past? I believe that this woman immediately got up from her place and removed the thought of her previous experiences and fully committed to the idea of a new and better experience with Jesus. What’s interesting is that she didn’t even put the same conditions on her upcoming date with Jesus as she had in the past. For this date with Jesus, she didn’t even require to be wined and dined, she didn’t request a long courtship phase, she didn’t even have a list of questions that he needed to answer before she met him, she simply believed that he could do for her what she’d heard that he did for others. The anonymous woman intentionally pursued Jesus with a clear intention to draw near to him with the belief that merely touching what was connected to Jesus would cause her to be whole. What’s the takeaway from this; Jesus responds to, has the ability to, and even the desire to heal those who are experimentally dating him. For clarity, I’m not saying this is where he desires the relationship to end, or where it should actually end, but rather Jesus meets us where we are.

It’s Complicated – A New Kind Of Love

27 But instantly He spoke to them, saying, Take courage! I AM! Stop being afra
28 And Peter answered Him, Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on th
29 He said, Come! So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water, and he
30 But when he perceived and felt the strong wind, he was frightened, and as h
31 Instantly Jesus reached out His hand and caught and held him, saying to him
32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

Matthew 14:27-32 AMPC

Peter and Jesus met each other in interesting phases of life. Peter was already grown, married, had a career, and was a disciple of John the Baptist. Jesus was 30 years old, beginning a ministry, and

misunderstood by everyone. Over the course of several years, and countless experiences, they were developing a bond that was needed to sustain Peter's faith and life after Jesus' physical presence would be removed from Peter's life. Peter in the course of his relationship with Jesus was introduced to a new way of life, a new view of God, and new standards on love. Peter was continually challenged by Jesus to live a life worthy of the calling that God had on him. In the course of their relationship Peter regularly challenged his previous way of thinking and was confronted with revelations of who Jesus was, and who he actually was without Jesus, and with Jesus. I believe the scene in the scriptures above provide the ultimate test of their relationship. Did Peter really trust Jesus, and is Jesus actually who he says that he is. Did Peter trust Jesus enough to lean on him and take him at his word? Lord, command me to come to you. Come! Peter's response at this single word of Jesus is a reflection of a trust that can't be articulated with words, but only shown in action. He moves toward Jesus, with each step as important, and challenging as the previous one, but he continues forward nonetheless.....until he takes his eyes off Jesus, which leads to invasive thoughts, and doubts. Oh no, I'm sinking, the relationship is on the rocks, trust is eroding. Then, Jesus reaches out and grabs a hold of Peter and saves him from the drowning waves, and rushing winds of negative thoughts, doubt, and worry. Why'd you doubt my love and commitment Peter? I believe this was Jesus' response to Peter's actions and thoughts. What's the takeaway, Jesus understands that relationships has peaks and valley's, yet his love is constant. There is no condemnation for our slips, but rather he is ready and attentive to our pleas for help, because it is in those moments that he can reach out and provide that that love that calms the storm, and stills the wind.

Reflection Time

I hope that you were able to see something in each of these examples, the fact that Jesus responds to each of us regardless of our expression of love. Whether we're in a long-term relationship with Jesus, the "figuring-it-out" phase, or an "on again, off again" rocky road, Jesus is there. He's there in the good times and the bad times waiting for your consent/permission to be who he is. Reflect on your relationship with Jesus to see which stage you're in, and how he's demonstrated his love in your life, even when you didn't recognize or accept it. Ask Jesus to heal the wounded places of your heart/life, and accept his love into your heart/life.

Category

1. Uncategorized

Tags

1. April 2024
2. Faith
3. Genesis
4. Jesus
5. Love
6. Luke
7. Matthew
8. New Testament
9. Old Testament

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Author
guytonjj

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