

## Wrestling with God's presence in our lives

### Share

1. When you cast our mind back, what are those first memories in your Christian journey of being aware of the presence and realness of God?

### Observe & Reflect

#### Read verses 10–11

2. What do we learn about God's grace that He meets Jacob not in obedience, but in a moment of fear and deceit?

#### Read v12-15

3. How does the vision of the stairway (v. 12) challenge human attempts to reach God on our own terms? *Compare Genesis 28:12 to Genesis 11:1–9 (Tower of Babel). What theological contrast is being made?*
4. God reaffirms His covenant to Jacob. Why is it significant that God does this **before** Jacob has done anything to deserve it? What does this teach us about God's covenantal love and the nature of divine promises?
5. What specific needs of Jacob does God address in verse 15, and how do these connect to broader biblical themes of divine presence and faithfulness? How do God's assurances reflect His personal care as well as His cosmic purposes? *Consider the assurance we have in Matthew 1:23 and Hebrews 13:5 and how this could impact our confidence in God's presence today.*

#### Read v16-17

6. What is Jacob response to his encounter with God? What is the relationship between God's holiness and human fear in the Bible?
7. Why is fear sometimes an appropriate response to encountering God?
8. Jacob calls the place "Bethel" (House of God). Consider how this theme is developed throughout scripture. **(1)** Exodus 23:19, Exodus 34:26 **(2)** 1 Kings 6:1, 1 Kings 8:10–11, 2 Chronicles 7:1–2, **(3)** Psalm 52:8, Psalm 122:1-9 **(4)** Isaiah 2:2–3 **(5)** John 2:13-22 **(6)** Acts 7:47–49 **(7)** Ephesians 2:19–22, 1 Timothy 3:15 **(8)** Revelations 21:1-4

9. What does this reveal about where and how God meets His people throughout salvation history? How does it ultimately point to Jesus and the church?

**Read v18-22**

10. Jacob responds with a conditional vow (vv. 20–22). What does this teach us about growing faith, and how can we bring our “mustard seed” faith to Jesus today? Consider *Mark 9:24* and *Philippians 1:6*. How is Jesus patient with your slow-growing trust?
11. How does Jesus affirm this promise for you in *Matthew 6:31–33* and *John 10:28*? What practical worries can you surrender to Christ today, knowing He watches over you?
12. The sermon highlights that Jesus is both the ladder and the gate (John 10:9). What do these metaphors teach you about exclusive access to God through Christ? How does this truth affect your view of salvation, evangelism, and other spiritual paths?

**Read John 1:43-51**

13. How is Jesus the fulfillment of what the ladder symbolised?

**Next Steps**

14. What does Jacob’s transformation from deceiver to worshiper suggest about God’s work in personal transformation?
15. How does God’s unmerited grace change us over time?
16. Where have you seen transformation in your life by God’s Spirit? What are areas in your life – thinking, attitudes, beliefs, behaviours that still need to be surrounded to our loving Lord?