

CONTEND:

Wrestling in prayer [Gen 32:22–31, Lu 18:1–8]

1. God is not the reluctant judge (Luke 18:1–8)

The unjust judge in Jesus' parable is not a picture of God — he is almost the opposite. If even a judge who doesn't care about God, people or justice eventually responds, how much more can we trust God, who loves us, hears our cries and cares deeply about justice? Persistent prayer isn't about wearing God down until he gives in.

2. God knows about the waiting (Luke 18:7–8)

Jesus talks about God's people crying out to him “day and night”. He knows there can be a gap — sometimes a very long one — between praying and seeing God act. His final question, “When the Son of Man returns, how many will he find on the earth who have faith?”, challenges us to keep trusting and praying even when we cannot see what God is doing.

3. Sometimes prayer is a wrestle (Genesis 32:22–32)

Jacob wrestles with God while facing something frightening and unresolved. He comes out blessed and changed, but also wounded — and still doesn't know what will happen next. Prayer isn't a neat formula for getting the outcome we want. When life is serious, painful and complicated, prayer can involve wrestling honestly with God. Sometimes we are holding onto God; sometimes God is holding onto us.

DISCUSS

Starter: When you pray about something for a long time without seeing anything change, what makes it easier — or harder — to keep praying?

1. What difference does it make to know that we don't have to persuade or wear God down — that he already cares about us and about what we are bringing to him?
2. Wrestling with God can include anger, disappointment, questions and confusion. Do you think we sometimes feel we have to tidy those things up before we pray? What might more honest prayer look like?
3. Jacob left the wrestling blessed and changed, but also wounded and facing an uncertain future. What can God do in us in a long period of wrestling, even when the situation doesn't change?

Digging Deeper: Read the wider Jacob story: Genesis 27 — the feud begins; Genesis 32 — Jacob prepares to meet Esau and wrestles with God; Genesis 33 — Esau and the 400 men arrive.

We believe our God-given vision is see: thriving communities springing up, where everyone can belong and find hope in Jesus.

Group Sunday message notes 2026

