



# Week 1 Study Sheet

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## I Can't Find My Halo

### Consider

Social media posts and advertisements bombard us with portrayals of the perfect life: The picturesque selfie taken from the mountain top, the foodie photo capturing the best meal in town, the perfectly styled family on the Christmas card. The Bible, on the other hand, is full of people with imperfect and messy lives. Jacob's story happens to be one of those stories. From the trickster who was tricked, to a prodigal facing the wrath of his older brother, the story of Jacob is filled with both covenants and caveats. God uses Jacob mightily, but he uses Jacob to illustrate that he uses imperfect people. Have you ever felt imperfect?

### Discover

Read [Genesis 12-20](#), and [21-24](#) before reading the story of Jacob to gain insight into his family story and their relationships with each other and God.

Read [Genesis 25:19-23](#)

- What do we observe about Isaac's relationship with God? (v. 21)
- What was Rebekah's response to the struggle in her womb? (v. 22)
- What was God's response to Rebekah's prayer? (v. 23)
- What emotions do you think Rebekah felt in response to God's answer to her prayer?
- Has God ever answered your prayers in a way that was different from what you desired

Read [Genesis 25:24-34](#)

- How does the birth of Esau and Jacob foreshadow the relationship they will continue to have? (v. 24-26)
- How are Esau and Jacob described, and why is it important for us to be aware of these differences? (v. 27-28)
- What is so important about a birthright? By selling his birthright to Jacob, what tension is placed on the brothers' relationship?
- Why would Esau have despised his birthright?

### Pray

Praise God for his Word recorded so that we can know him. Ask him to grant you a greater knowledge of his character and understanding of his purposes as you begin this study of Jacob.

### Practice

Meditate on [Psalm 139:1-16](#) and consider all the ways God shaped your life, even before you were born. Reflect on the omniscience (divine knowledge) and omnipotence (divine power and authority) of God. Don't be afraid to prayerfully explore the aspects of your life that you don't understand.

### Engage

Reading the Bible each day leads us to encounter God and helps us learn to follow Jesus moment by moment. Read [Genesis 26-27](#) and seek wisdom as you study the life of Jacob.



# Week 2 Study Sheet

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## Jacob vs. Shortcuts

### Consider

A long car ride with a back seat full of young children asking, “Are we there yet?” can leave anyone looking for a shortcut. Months of living through a pandemic is leaving us all with that feeling way right now. Shortcuts do not always deliver what they seem to promise. Just as a shortcut on the road can turn into a crowded detour, the shortcut of impatient faith can lead us to act impetuously. Jacob and Rebekah found this truth out the hard way. Have you failed to trust God’s timing and taken matters into your own hands? Have you had patience in a hard situation only to see God’s hand make the result better?

### Discover

Read [Genesis 27:1-13](#)

- How was Isaac preparing for his death? (v. 1-4)
- Why was Rebekah plotting to deceive her husband? (v. 10)
- What consequence was Rebekah willing to assume in order to accomplish her plan? (v. 13)
- Jacob was faced with a dilemma, to follow his mother’s instruction or his father’s will. Have you ever had to choose between obeying an authority and doing what you knew was right?

Read [Genesis 27:14-29](#)

- What was to be gained or lost from Isaac’s blessing? (v. 28-29)
- Have you experienced the blinding allure of sin? What consequence did you suffer as a result of your bad decision?

### Pray

Ask God to keep you from willful sins. Ask him to grow in you a commitment for what is right and true. Confess any areas of life where you’ve chosen to reject his instructions for a way that seemed better to you. Praise him for the forgiveness that is yours in Jesus and rejoice in his inexhaustible lovingkindness.

### Practice

Choose to submit your will to God’s. Identify any areas of your life where you’re tempted to take the shortcut. Perhaps it’s withholding the truth or exaggerating your deservedness. Maybe you’re being impatient with God’s plans for your relationships or career. Recite [Proverbs 3:5-6](#) and submit your plans to him.

### Engage

Reading the Bible each day leads us to encounter God and helps us learn to follow Jesus moment by moment. Read [Genesis 28](#) and seek wisdom as you study the life of Jacob.



# Week 3 Study Sheet

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## Jacob vs. The Wilderness

### Consider

Could you survive in the wilderness alone for an extended time? What would be the hardest obstacle to overcome? Starting a fire? Making a shelter? Finding food to eat? What about the isolation and loneliness? How would you handle being disconnected from all people? No technology or relationships. For introverts the idea might sound appealing. Solitude can be a tool God uses to get our attention. In Jacob's story, we find that in his isolation in the wilderness, God shows a stairway to heaven. How has God helped you through a low point in your life?

### Discover

Read [Genesis 28:10-17](#)

- What do we learn about Jacob's current relationship with God by the way God introduces himself as the God of Jacob's father and grandfather? (v. 13)
- What was God communicating to Jacob through this vision of a staircase to heaven? (v. 13-15)
- How does God's promise to Jacob parallel the previous promise he made to his grandfather Abram? (v. 14, See [Gen. 12:1-3](#))
- Has God spoken to you through a dream?
- Has God encouraged you during a lonely moment in life?

Read [Mark 4:35-41](#)

- How did the response of Jesus to the storm differ from that of his disciples? (v. 38)
- What action does Jesus take in the midst of the storm? (v. 39)
- How can this story strengthen your faith on those occasions when you feel overwhelmed or afraid?

### Pray

Praise God for his steadfast faithfulness. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever ([Hebrews 13:8](#)). Acknowledge your own weakness and wavering. Ask God to give you strength and courage to face the challenges in your life with an assurance that he will be with you.

### Practice

Reserve a time for silence and solitude this week. Set aside all distractions, technology, and tasks. Sit in silence or take a walk away from interruptions. Press past the restlessness and urge to do something. Tune your ear to his voice and wait for him to speak. Rest in God's presence and allow him to refresh your soul.

### Engage

Reading the Bible each day leads us to encounter God and helps us learn to follow Jesus moment by moment. Read [Genesis 29](#) and seek wisdom as you study the life of Jacob



# Week 4 Study Sheet

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## Jacob vs. Jacob

### Consider

There is a negotiator within us all. From the child pleading to get out of discipline, to the shopper searching for the best deal, we all want things to work out in our favor. After all, we know what is best for us, right? Have you ever found yourself negotiating with God? God, if you do this for me, I will do that for you. These negotiations boil down to a competition between “My will be done” and “Thy will be done.” Jacob engaged in this kind of negotiation immediately after receiving a vision from God. Though God answers us, he does not answer to us. Have you ever tried to negotiate with God only to find yourself disappointed? What’s your approach when God’s answer is not what you want?

### Discover

Read [Genesis 28:16-22](#)

- Why does Jacob name this place “Bethel,” which means “house of God,” after the experience he just had? (v. 16-19)
- What does Jacob’s negotiation with God reveal to us about his trust and belief in God’s promises?
- What vow does Jacob make? Is God in need of Jacob’s ten percent? What is God truly after? (v. 20-22)
- How can we avoid making our obedience to God conditional?

Read [Judges 6:36-40](#)

- What similarities do we see between Gideon’s response to God, and Jacob’s response to God?
- What does Gideon’s negotiation with God reveal to us about his trust and belief in God’s promises?
- Have you ever experienced doubt, and lacked the faith to believe in God’s promises?

### Pray

Thank God for his generous provision in your life. Express your gratitude for the free gift of his Son which he has provided as the atonement for your sin. Thank God for his patience and forgiveness despite your inability to live with consistent and complete devotion.

### Practice

Consecrate your whole self to serving God’s purposes, unconditionally. Reflect on [Isaiah 6:1-8](#) and join with Isaiah in his declaration to go wherever the Lord leads: “Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!” (Isaiah 6:8 NIV)

### Engage

Reading the Bible each day leads us to encounter God and helps us learn to follow Jesus moment by moment. Read [Genesis 30](#) and seek wisdom as you study the life of Jacob.



# Week 5 Study Sheet

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## Jacob vs. A Taste of His Own Medicine

### Consider

The Bible has much to say about how to treat others and the consequences of sinful behavior. Consider 2 Corinthians 9:6 (NIV), "... whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously." Or the golden rule, "... do to others what you would have them do to you ..." (Matthew 7:12 NIV). Jacob used tricks to gain the birthright and blessing from his father. Should we be surprised that he ends up facing the same deception in his own life? Every decision we make has an outcome – positive or negative. What can we do to be sure our decisions lead to positive rather than negative consequences?

### Discover

Read [Genesis 29:1-14](#)

- When Jacob got to the well, who did he inquire about? (v. 5)
- Who did Jacob meet at the well, and how did he greet her? (v. 10-11)
- What kind of greeting did Jacob receive from Laban? (v. 13-14)

Read [Genesis 29:15-30](#)

- What was Jacob's original agreement with Laban? (v. 18-19)
- Why was Jacob willing to work so hard for Rachel? (v. 20)
- What similarities do we see in the stories of Leah and Rachel and Jacob and Esau? (v. 23-25)
- What pitfalls can we avoid by remembering the consequences of this family's continued sin of favoritism?

### Pray

Ask God to help you love others as they are. Seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to reveal any ways that you may have deceived others for your own benefit. Petition God to remind you always to think of others above yourself.

### Practice

Fast from all forms of media for a whole day. Use the time gained to intentionally turn your attention to Jesus. Consider how your deepest longings impact your choices. Evaluate your motives. Seek to understand and realign any area of your life that might be out of line with God's will.

### Engage

Reading the Bible each day leads us to encounter God and helps us learn to follow Jesus moment by moment. Read [Genesis 31](#) and seek wisdom as you study the life of Jacob.



# Week 6 Study Sheet

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## Jacob vs. Domestic Disaster

### Consider

It takes time – sowing, nurturing, and cultivating - to raise a harvest that will bear fruit. Ask any farmer and they will tell you that a good crop demands your full attention at every stage. The same could be said about the relationships with which we surround ourselves. A child, neglected because their parent's attention is constantly diverted to work, screens, or other pursuits, will end up searching for attention from another source. Stories of neglect often end with stories of regret. The story of Joseph being sold by his brothers can be directly connected to Jacob's favoritism. What can we learn from Jacob's story? Has God ever transformed your stories of regret into memories of joy?

### Discover

Read [Genesis 29:31-35](#)

- Why did God open Leah's womb? (v. 31)
- What does the story of Leah naming her sons reveal about the ongoing relationship between Leah and Jacob? (v. 31-35)
- How might children in a household like this be impacted by their parents' relationship and behavior?

Read [Genesis 30:1-24](#)

- How would you describe Rachel's relationship with Leah? (v. 1)
- How would you characterize Jacob's response to his wives? (v. 2)
- What poor decisions did their envy and competition drive them to make? (v. 3-13)
- Have you ever wanted something so desperately that you ignored all the warnings and consequences?

### Pray

Celebrate with God over the healthy relationships you enjoy. Ask God to show you your relational blind spots. Humble yourself and seek his strength to address your shortcomings. Appeal to God to help you navigate through other relationships that are not healthy. Ask him to arrange divine moments to reconcile with others.

### Practice

Confess your sins. [James 5:16](#) makes it clear that we are to confess our sins to one another. Acknowledging our mistakes can be difficult. But when we practice confession to others, we empty sin from the power to bring shame into our lives. Confession is the route to freedom. Specifically consider how you may have hurt those closest to you with your pride, neglect, favoritism, anger, or betrayal. Go to those you have hurt and seek to restore the relationship.

### Engage

Reading the Bible each day leads us to encounter God and helps us learn to follow Jesus moment by moment. Read [Genesis 32](#) and seek wisdom as you study the life of Jacob.



# Week 7 Study Sheet

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## Jacob vs. Laban the Louse

### Consider

Have you ever been in a situation where someone took advantage of you? These situations often sneak up on us. We spend years cycling through the same feelings and emotions. We want to impress the boss, keep peace at home, or ensure we don't face the wrath of another. Then, God steps in. He reveals his plan for your life, and you experience freedom. Jacob faced this same situation with Laban. Once he faced Laban, he realized there had been a bully behind the scenes the whole time. Have you been in a situation like this? How did God help you face your Laban?

### Discover

Read [Genesis 30:25-36](#)

- How would you describe the relationship between Jacob and Laban? (v. 25-28)
- Why do you think the Lord blessed Laban's flocks while Jacob was with him? (v. 29-30)
- Would you consider the deal between Jacob and Laban fair? (v. 31-33)
- Have you ever been in a situation like Jacob with a Laban? How did God help you?

Read [Genesis 30:37 - 31:3](#)

- Why would Laban's sons feel like Jacob was taking everything they owned? (v. 37-43)

Read [Genesis 31:4-13](#)

- How did Jacob justify his actions with Laban's flocks? (v. 7-12)
- How would you deal with someone whose actions were fickle and unfair?

### Pray

Rejoice in the Lord who fights your battles. He has won the victory over your greatest enemy – sin. Ask for his strength to face your human opponents. Seek God's help to love your enemies. Ask him for guidance to determine fair dealings and wisdom to discern unfair dealings. Request for God to strengthen you through the Holy Spirit to address those obstacles.

### Practice

Bless those close to you. The Hebrew word for bless literally means to kneel or adorn with bended knee.<sup>1</sup> We often associate this word with our personal gains. We are "blessed" when we experience good fortune or material blessing. This week, pray and speak spiritual blessings over your loved ones. Find ways to adorn others.

### Engage

Reading the Bible each day leads us to encounter God and helps us learn to follow Jesus moment by moment. Read [Genesis 33](#) and seek wisdom as you study the life of Jacob.

<sup>1</sup>Brown, Driver, and Briggs, The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lectionary, (Hendrickson Publisher, Peabody, Mass), pg. 138, Strongs #1288.



# Week 8 Study Sheet

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## Jacob vs. Self-sufficiency

### Consider

Everything in life is going great! You are the captain of your ship. You can fix any problem. You have a plan for everything. Then, without warning your life gets flipped upside down. You no longer have a plan, you cannot fix your problems, and suddenly you feel exposed. Maybe it was a cancer diagnosis, maybe it was a pandemic, or maybe it was a sudden change in life. You move from being the master of your future, to a prisoner in a valley of chaos and indecision. Jacob faced this moment before he met his brother Esau. He had an encounter with God that would shape his future but leave him limping. Have you faced a place like this in your life?

### Discover

Read [Genesis 32:1-8](#)

- Why does Jacob seek to reconcile with Esau?
- How does Jacob know that God will help him? (v. 1-2)
- Why did Jacob send gifts ahead and divide his people as he approached Esau?
- What can we learn from Jacob about how to approach someone we have wronged? (v. 3-5)
- What is Jacob thinking about once he learns Esau and 400 men are coming toward him? (v. 6-8)

Read [Genesis 32:22-32](#)

- Who was wrestling with Jacob and why? (v. 30)
- What new name does God give Jacob, and what does it mean? (v. 28)
- How does his name meaning foreshadow the nation of Israel's relationship with God? (v. 27-32)
- What issues do you wrestle over with God?
- Has your faith been wounded by tough situations in your life?

### Pray

Present your struggles to God. Talk with God about all that is on your mind. Petition God to meet with you through your prayers and calm the concerns of your life.

### Practice

Prayer is the best medicine for anxiety. [Philippians 4:6-7](#) reminds us to be anxious for nothing, instead we should take all things to God in prayer. Take extended prayer time this week as you share your anxieties with God.

### Engage

Reading the Bible each day leads us to encounter God and helps us learn to follow Jesus moment by moment. Read [Genesis 34](#) and seek wisdom as you study the life of Jacob.





# Week 9 Study Sheet

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## Jacob vs. His Past

### Consider

Jacob spent most of his life running from his past. Specifically, running from his brother Esau. In his running, he found a life. He found his family. He found his identity. He found purpose. Still, after finding out so much about himself, he still had to face his past. He had to face the person he deceived. He had to face Esau, who was ready to kill Jacob the last time they were together. Perhaps the mistakes in your past may not be as dramatic as Jacob's, but we all must face our past at some point. How have your past mistakes shaped you? In what ways have you seen God redeem your mistakes and use them for good?

### Discover

Read [Genesis 33:1-11](#)

- How did Jacob greet Esau? (v. 3)
- How did Esau greet Jacob? (v. 4)
- How would you describe Jacob and Esau's encounter? (v. 4-7)
- How would you describe Jacob's reaction after the reunion with his brother? (v. 8-11)

Read [Genesis 33:12-20](#)

- How do the life choices of Jacob and Esau compare to the life choices of the brothers in the parable of the Prodigal Son? (See Luke 15:11-32)
- What choice does Jacob make after Esau invites him to journey together? (v. 13-17)
- What recurring motivations and choices do you see in Jacob's life?

### Pray

Praise God for his ability to bring reconciliation and redemption to the gravest of circumstances. Rejoice that your future isn't dependent on your righteousness. Celebrate the gift of righteousness given to you through Jesus. Seek God's guidance for how to live in response to his goodness.

### Practice

Move beyond your past mistakes. God never intended for us to live in the shadow of shame that comes from our past mistakes. In Christ, we have new life. Resolve to do whatever it takes to move beyond your past. You may need to confess to God and others, reconcile with those you've hurt, change your lifestyle, or possibly get help from a Christian counselor. Once you've addressed the past, join with Paul in proclaiming: "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. (Philippians 3:12 NIV)

### Engage

Reading the Bible each day leads us to encounter God and helps us learn to follow Jesus moment by moment. Read [Genesis 35](#) and seek wisdom as you study the life of Jacob.



# Week 10 Study Sheet

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## Jacob vs. Depravity

### Consider

Why do we suffer? The world tells us that suffering should cause us to question God or look inward to the choices we've made. We wonder why we're in pain. We seek to understand if we, or God, could have done something to stop it. When we read and reflect on the life of Jacob, we observe many instances of personal suffering. For those who are in Christ, we find that the question of suffering is not "why" or "if" we will suffer. Peter made it clear when he stated, "So then, since Christ suffered physical pain, you must arm yourselves with the same attitude he had, and be ready to suffer, too. For if you have suffered physically for Christ, you have finished with sin." (1 Peter 4:1 NLT) As followers of Jesus, the Bible tells us that we live in a world broken by sin. Suffering will occur. Our stories are shaped by how we respond to inevitable suffering. God doesn't leave us to suffer alone. How are you armed to be steadfast in suffering?

### Discover

Read [Genesis 34:1-31](#)

- What forms of suffering are experienced in this chapter?
- What is the ultimate source of all suffering?
- What sinful motivations contributed to the suffering of Dinah and the Shechemites?
- What forms of suffering have you faced in your life?

Read [Romans 5:1-8](#)

- What does "suffering" produce for those who are in Christ? (v. 3-4)
- How does God help us through our suffering? (v. 5)
- How does God demonstrate his love for us through his own suffering? (v. 6-8)

### Pray

Thank God for being with you during your suffering. Ask the Holy Spirit for help, patience, and hope through any moments of suffering that you may be facing. Authorize God to use your suffering to bring glory to his provision for your life.

### Practice

Give God worship in response to your suffering. During his suffering, Job said, "... The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job 1:21 NKJV) When things are bad, arm yourself with worship and trust that God is in control. Don't allow circumstances to dictate your worship. David proclaimed, "If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there." (Psalm 139:8 NIV) Choose a worship playlist and fill your days with praise as you declare the goodness of God that extends beyond your circumstances. Find OHC curated playlists on Spotify (<https://open.spotify.com/user/oakhillschurch>)

### Engage

Reading the Bible each day leads us to encounter God and helps us learn to follow Jesus moment by moment. Read [Genesis 36](#) and seek wisdom as you study the life of Jacob.



# Week 11 Study Sheet

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## Jacob vs. His Guilt

### Consider

There is always that one conversation that you never want to have. Maybe you need to clear the air with a co-worker. Maybe you need to have a heart to heart with your spouse. Maybe you need have “the talk” with your child. You know the destination, but getting there is hard. You feel guilty about what you have already said or worry about what needs to be said. Instead of confronting your destiny you choose side roads. You avoid your co-worker, you buy your spouse another thing, and you take your kiddo to an amusement park. Confronting our short comings should remind us of God’s faithfulness. God cast our sins as far as the east is from the west, and Paul reminds us, “... there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 8:1 NIV) If this is true, we should face these hard moments with the confidence we have in Jesus. How do you confront your guilt?

### Discover

Read [Genesis 35:1-15](#)

- How did the steps Jacob took before returning to Bethel help him face guilt? (v. 2-8)
- Why did God instruct Jacob to return to Bethel? (v. 9-15)
- Did Jacob do something to deserve God’s blessing?
- What does God do to redeem Jacob’s past and establish his future? (v. 10)
- What is the significance of God’s people forever bearing Jacob’s new name Israel?

Read [John 4:7-26](#)

- What does Jesus offer the woman? (v. 14)
- How does Jesus address the woman’s past? (v. 17-18)
- How does Jesus address her misplaced expectations of the Messiah? (v. 19-26)

Read [John 4:27-42](#)

- How does the encounter at the well transform the life of the woman, and the lives of others?
- How has encountering Jesus, or those testifying of Jesus, transformed your life?

### Pray

Ask God to align your focus with his. Seek ways to build God’s kingdom here on earth as it is in heaven. Ask God to show you what matters eternally, and seek the Holy Spirit for strength to commit yourself to those things.

### Practice

Build God’s kingdom by sharing the hope of Jesus. Begin your day by asking God for the opportunity to bring the good news of Jesus to someone today. Move through the day with anticipation as you look for God to create open doors for spiritual conversations with the people you encounter.

### Engage

Reading the Bible each day leads us to encounter God and helps us learn to follow Jesus moment by moment. Read [Genesis 37](#) and seek wisdom as you study the life of Jacob.



# Week 12 Study Sheet

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## Jacob vs. Death

### Consider

Our own legacy is something we rarely think about. We discuss the legacy of athletes like David Robinson because of the NBA titles and MVP he earned. We talk about the legacy of Bobby Bowden because of National Championships he won and the many NFL players produced by his program. We talk about the legacy of Johnny Cash and the enduring nature of his music. But the real legacy left by these people would echo that of Jacob's revealed to us in Hebrews 11:21. The writer of Hebrews reminds us that it was "by faith" that Jacob left a legacy for others to follow God. As followers of Jesus, legacy goes hand in hand with our faith. What type of legacy do you want to leave?

### Discover

Read [Genesis 48:1-11](#)

- How is Joseph the fulfillment of a promise to Jacob? (v. 1-4)
- What type of legacy does Jacob leave with Joseph? (v. 5-7)
- What New Testament significance does Bethlehem have? (v. 7)
- How does the end of Jacob's life parallel or differ from Isaac's? (v. 10-11)

Read [Genesis 49:29-33](#)

- How would you characterize Jacob's life?
- What can we learn and remember from Jacob's story?
- How do you want people to remember you?

### Pray

Thank God for the legacy of faith others have left for you. Thank him for the people in your life who have helped shape your faith. Ask him to give you faith that you can pass on to others. Request that God would give you opportunities to encourage others in their faith.

### Practice

Study different places in God's Word where a legacy was created. Trace the names in [Hebrews 11](#) and see why their names are included in the Heroes of Faith section found in Hebrews. Reflect on the legacy you are leaving and how you can influence the faith of those around you.

### Engage

Reading the Bible each day leads us to encounter God and helps us learn to follow Jesus moment by moment. Read [Luke 2](#) and prepare your heart to celebrate the birth of Jesus as we move into the Advent season.