

INTERACTIVE TEACHING/LEARNING GUIDE
Week 13

SESSION TITLE: "Payback: How God Gets Our Attention"
FOCAL PASSAGE: (Genesis 29:1-30)

Central Teaching/Learning Aim: To help the learner identify and comprehend the principle of sowing and reaping in his/her life.

I. Creating Interest in the Series (Hook)

A. Display and share the following statistics:

Moral Truth...	All	Christian's	Non-Christian's
Is unchanging	22%	32%	15%
Depends on the situation	64%	54%	71%

Survey conducted by Barna Research 2002

Ask – What is your reaction to these stats? What are the results of situational ethics?

Next – Share the following quote from President Bush:

In the middle of reports of abuse of Iraqi prisoners, President Bush said the "Lord is not on the side of any nation, yet we know He is on the side of justice." The day before, the President had called the abuses of Iraqi prisoners abhorrent saying, justice will be delivered. The President said the deepest strength of America was that from our founding we have chosen justice as our goal. He added, "Our greatest failures as a nation have come when we lost sight of that goal: In slavery, in segregation, and in every wrong that has denied the value and dignity of life. Our finest moments have come when we have faithfully served the cause of justice for our own citizens and for the people of other lands. And through our nation's history, we have turned to prayer for wisdom to know the good and for the courage to do the good."

State – God is a just God. With Him there are moral absolutes. Sin does not go unnoticed. In today's lesson we will see how Jacob reaped what he sowed and discuss how the principle works in our lives today.

B. Optional Method – Display the following Power Point presentation that shows the cause and effect results of poor judgment. The first 3 images are of a crane attempting to extract a car from the water. The next images show the crane falling into the water. Then a larger crane is brought in to lift the smaller crane and the car.

<http://www.preachingtoday.com/img/truck1.jpg>

<http://www.preachingtoday.com/img/truck2.jpg>

<http://www.preachingtoday.com/img/truck3.jpg>

<http://www.preachingtoday.com/img/truck4.jpg>

<http://www.preachingtoday.com/img/truck5.jpg>

<http://www.preachingtoday.com/img/truck6.jpg>

<http://www.preachingtoday.com/img/truck7.jpg>

<http://www.preachingtoday.com/img/truck8.jpg>

<http://www.preachingtoday.com/img/truck9.jpg>

<http://www.websofwonder.com/skyhook/>

Ask – How does this event illustrate the principle of “reaping what you sow”? How can one deception (sin) lead to a larger one? Do you believe that there are consequences to every sin committed?

State – God is a just God. With Him there are moral absolutes. Sin does not go unnoticed. In today’s lesson we will see how Jacob reaped what he sowed and discuss how the principle works in our lives today.

C. Optional Method – Movie Clip “Groundhog Day”

Start: 35:52

Stop: 37:30

Synopsis: In this insightful comedy, an egocentric TV weatherman named Phil (Bill Murray) is assigned to cover the festivities of Groundhog Day in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. Due to an unexpected snowstorm, Phil must spend an extra night in this little town with his producer and love interest, Rita (Andie MacDowell).

When Phil awakens the next morning, he discovers it is still February 2nd. Soon he realizes he is stuck in a 24-hour loop of Groundhog Days. No matter what he does, he wakes up every morning as if nothing had happened the day before.

Phil explores what life would be like if there were no consequences. People could do whatever they wanted. Along with some newfound friends, he lives recklessly, sparking a police chase. After leaving a swath of destruction, he's arrested. But when Phil wakes up, it is Groundhog Day once again.

On this particular day Phil goes out to lunch with Rita. He orders most everything on the menu and lights up a cigarette.

Curious about his strange behavior, Rita asks, "Don't you worry about cholesterol, lung cancer, love-handles?"

"I don't worry about anything anymore," Phil responds.

"What makes you so special?" Rita counters. "Everybody worries about something."

Phil contends that his lack of concern over any consequences (including the wages of not flossing) is what makes him special.

Rita responds by quoting a poem by Sir Walter Scott.

The wretch concentrated all in self
Living so forth with fair renown
And doubly dying shall go down
To the vile dust from whence he sprung
Unwept, unhonored, and unsung.

Phil attempts to shrug this off, but he soon discovers that a world not governed by moral accountability is an empty one indeed.

Groundhog Day, Columbia Pictures, (1993), written and directed by Harold Ramis

Ask – How would your life change if you knew your actions did not affect your life or the lives of others? Do you think God sees and responds to every sin we commit?

State – God is a just God. With Him there are moral absolutes. Sin does not go unnoticed. In today's lesson we will see how Jacob reaped what he sowed and discuss how the principle works in our lives today.

II. Book

A. Utilize the discussion guide to examine the Scripture passages.

III. Look

- A. Place members into groups and have them complete the case studies.

IV. Took

- A. **Distribute** the handout "Pro-Active Living" and encourage members to complete it. (If time does not permit, ask them to work on it this week.) Close in a prayer of confession and forgiveness.
- B. **Optional Method – Ask** members to make a commitment to repentance to end your ABF hour. Some may want to get on their knees. Play the song, "Lord, Have Mercy," by Steve Merkel. It is on the "Worship Again" CD by Michael W. Smith.

Ask – Members to depart quietly and close in prayer.

PRO - Active Living

Work through the following steps in order to function at Peak Performance as a Christian.

STEP 1 Do not try to hide your sins

What is the result of trying to hide your sins according to these verses?

- a. (1 John 1:8a) _____
- b. (1 John 1:8b) _____
- c. (1 John 1:10a) _____
- d. (1 John 1:10b) _____
- e. (Prov. 28:13a) _____

STEP 2 Confess your sins on a daily basis (Or as often as needed)

How does unconfessed sin affect our fellowship with God?

- a. (Psalm 66:18) _____
- b. (Isaiah 59:2) _____

You must develop the discipline of confession to have fellowship with the Lord.

STEP 3 Reap the benefits of confession

What are the rewards you can expect?

- a. (Prov. 28:13b) _____
- b. (1 John 1:9a) _____
- c. (1 John 1:9b) _____

STEP 4 Make peace with your past and press on to the future (Phil. 3:13-14)

Lord, Have Mercy

Jesus, I've forgotten the words
that You have spoken
promises that burned within
my heart have now grown dim
With a doubting heart I follow
the paths of earthly wisdom
Forgive me for my unbelief
Renew the fire again

Lord have mercy
Christ have mercy
Lord have mercy on me
I have built an altar where
I worship things of man
I have taken journeys that
have drawn me far from You
Now I am returning to
Your mercies ever flowing
Pardon my transgressions
Help me love You again

I have longed to know You
and Your tender mercies
Like a river of forgiveness
ever flowing without end
I bow my heart before You
in the goodness of Your presence
Your grace forever shining
Like a beacon in the night

**DISCUSSION GUIDE
(Teacher's Copy)**

- 1a. How did Jacob react when he saw Rachel for the first time? (Gen. 29:1-12)
(It was love at first sight. He kissed her, shouted and wept.)
- b. Have you ever had that reaction over your spouse or date?
2. Why did Jacob agree to work 7 years for Rachel? (vs. 15-19)
(He came with nothing to offer. He had no dowry and had to work for Rachel.)
3. How did Jacob end up with Leah? (vs. 21-24)
(Laban tricked Jacob and sent her to him on his wedding night.)
4. Jacob must have felt remorse as he realized his past deceit with Esau, what do the following passages say about "reaping and sowing" the law of the harvest?

a. Proverbs 11:18	Sow righteousness-receive a true reward
b. Hosea 8:7	If you sow meaningless things you reap meaningless things
c. Galatians 6:7-8	Sow to the Spirit to reap eternal rewards

5. Where do you spend the majority of your time, sowing to the things of the flesh or the Spirit?
6. Jacob accepted his discipline and chose to work 7 more years in order to marry Rachel, how well do you accept the discipline of God?
7. How does this passage reveal the sovereign justice of God?
8. What do the following passages say about unresolved sin?

a. Numbers 32:23	Your sins will find you out
b. Psalm 90:8	No sin is secret
c. Luke 12:2	No sin is secret
d. John 15:2	We will be pruned
e. Heb. 12:5-6	The Lord disciplines you because He loves you

DISCUSSION GUIDE
(Student's Copy)

1a. How did Jacob react when he saw Rachel for the first time? (Gen. 29:1-12)

b. Have you ever had that reaction over your spouse or date?

2. Why did Jacob agree to work 7 years for Rachel? (vs. 15-19)

3. How did Jacob end up with Leah? (vs. 21-24)

4. Jacob must have felt remorse as he realized his past deceit with Esau, what do the following passages say about "reaping and sowing" the law of the harvest?

a. Proverbs 11:18	
b. Hosea 8:7	
c. Galatians 6:7-8	

5. Where do you spend the majority of your time, sowing to the things of the flesh or the Spirit?

6. Jacob accepted his discipline and chose to work 7 more years in order to marry Rachel, how well do you accept the discipline of God?

7. How does this passage reveal the sovereign justice of God?

8. What do the following passages say about unresolved sin?

a. Numbers 32:23	
b. Psalm 90:8	
c. Luke 12:2	
d. John 15:2	
e. Heb. 12:5-6	

Case Studies

Case Study #1

John was in a competitive situation at work—whichever secured a certain account would receive a large bonus. One day after work, he was all alone and decided to snoop at his colleague's computer files. He stole his colleague's ideas and turned them in first, and he received the account and the bonus.

Thinking about today's lesson, write a fitting conclusion to this story. Do you think what John did was worth it in the end? What could he do to make things right? What might happen to him if he makes things right?

Case Study #2

Mary was in a hurry to take her kids to a school function. She was going 50 miles per hour in a 30 mile per hour zone. A policeman pulled her over. He asked her if she was wearing her seat belt. She lied to avoid a stiffer penalty and said, "Yes". The policeman let her off with only a speeding ticket. As she drove off, her third-grade son asked her why she said she was wearing her seat belt.

What impact could her deception toward the policeman have on her kids? What could she do to make things right?

Case Study #3

It is that dreaded time of year again—April 15 tax time. Mark is working on his taxes. On the line where it asks total income from all sources, he decides not to include some earnings he made from a side business where he received cash for his work. He figures he pays his dues, and nobody will ever know.

How could this deception come back to haunt him? If he cheats here, could it lead to other cheating? What advice would Jacob give him after the lesson he learned in Genesis 29:1-30?

Case Study #4

Linda had been hurt by gossip that Carole had spread about her. She decided that enough was enough, and she would get even by making up a story about Carole and spreading it around the group.

Write a possible conclusion to this story. How should Linda respond to Carole? What advice would Jacob give Linda about deception?

THE Word For The Week

Genesis 29:31-30:43

“Prosperity: How God Keeps His Promise”

Monday – Read Genesis 29:21-35

- Was there ever a time in your life when you felt like Leah in that you were unloved?
- In verse 31 the Lord gave Leah a child because she was unloved. How has the Lord blessed you at times in your life when you might have felt unloved or ashamed of certain circumstances?
- Read Romans 8:28. What does this verse tell you about how God uses difficult situations?
- Take a few moments and review the times in your life that have been difficult. Next reexamine your life to see how God has used tough times and difficulties for his glory.
- Thank God that he works out everything for his good. Rejoice today knowing that as a Christ-follower God loves you, cares for you, and works out all the difficulties in your life for His good.

Tuesday – Read Genesis 30:1-9

- What was Rachel’s reaction when she could not have children?
- How often do we identify with Rachel in that we think we must have something because we can’t live without it? What are some of the things that you think that you can’t live without?
- Rachel’s jealousy motivated her to rashly give Jacob her maid so that she could be like Leah in having children. Are there any things in your life which you feel like you must do or have to be considered equal with someone else?
- Confess these areas and ask God to give you wisdom for living a God-centered life in our human-centered world. How can you commit to living for the satisfaction of God and not the satisfaction of others?

Wednesday – Read Genesis 30:9-13

- Just like Leah realized how blessed she was in verse 11, when was the last time that you truly saw how blessed you were by God? Take a few moments and list areas of your life in which God has blessed you.
- Read Matthew 22:37-39. God’s blessings are a result of his love. Just as God loves us and has blessed us as Christ-followers we are called to love others as well. What are some tangible ways in which you can be a blessing to others and show them God’s love today?
- Thank God for all of his blessings in your life. Ask God to show you how you can be a blessing to others in your life today. Pray that God would give you the opportunities to make this happen.

Thursday – Read Genesis 30:14-24

- God’s goodness was enough to supernaturally give Rachel the ability to have Joseph to take away feelings of guilt and shame.
- Are you currently experiencing any feelings of guilt and shame in your life?
- Read Colossians 1:13-14 and know that just as God has rescued the Christ-follower from a life of darkness and sin, God is able to remove feelings of guilt and shame from you.
- Take a few moments and confess to God any areas which you might be feeling guilt and shame. Seek out forgiveness from others if necessary. Thank God for his richest gift to us – Christ!

Friday – Read Genesis 30:25-43

- Jacob had to serve Laban for at least 14 long years to pay for his marriage to Leah and Rachel. Read Colossians 3:17, 23. God commands that we work as if we are serving Him alone.
- Are you honoring God and being diligent in your work? Do your attitudes and actions reflect Christ?
- Take a few moments to think how God has blessed you spiritually and commit to being a blessing through serving others in the body of Christ.

Ancient/Future - A Journey through Genesis

"Payback: How God Gets Our Attention"

Genesis 29:1-30

(Exegetical . . . What it meant to Israel back THEN)

YHWH'S GRACE OF DIVINE GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE CONFIRMED HIS BLESSING UPON JACOB'S JOURNEY WHICH WELCOMED HIM INTO HIS UNCLE LABAN'S HOME AND CONFIRMED YHWH'S CORRECTIVE JUSTICE THROUGH LABAN IN THE LIFE OF JACOB, THE DECEIVER-BELIEVER.

- I. YHWH's divine guidance of Jacob (see the parallels with chapter 24) to the well at Haran, to Rachel, and to Laban confirmed YHWH's blessing upon the journey, which welcomed Jacob into his uncle's home, (1-14).
 - A. Jacob's journey, taken up again after the encouragement of YHWH's blessing, brought him to his destination of Haran, where he came upon a well with three flocks of sheep gathered about, their shepherds waiting for yet another flock to gather before they would roll away the stone and water all the flocks, (1-3).
 - B. Jacob's conversation with the shepherds revealed that he had reached his destination, that his uncle Laban was well, and that his cousin Rachel was, even then, coming toward the well with her flock of sheep, (4-6).
 - C. Jacob's meeting Rachel, after he had failed to persuade the shepherds to remove the stone, water their flocks, and leave him alone to meet Rachel, resulted in his removing the stone himself, his watering Laban's sheep, his kissing and weeping over Rachel, and his revelation that he was her cousin, (7-12a).
 - D. Laban's response to Rachel's report concerning Jacob resulted in Laban's hurrying out to meet Jacob, embracing and kissing him, and welcoming him into his home, where Jacob told of his journey and stayed as Laban's guest for a month, (12b-14).
- II. YHWH's divine discipline of Jacob (see the elder-younger parallels of chapters 25 & 27) through Laban's deceiving Jacob concerning his daughters' marriages confirmed YHWH's corrective justice in the life of Jacob, the deceiver-believer, (15-30).
 - A. Jacob's willingness to serve his uncle Laban for seven years rather than continue on as a free-loader was motivated by his reluctance to return home, his lack of a proper dowry, and his strong love for Rachel, the beautiful younger daughter, (15-20).
 - B. Laban's deception of Jacob consisted of his substituting Leah, his elder and less beautiful daughter, for Rachel, on the night of the wedding feast, so that Jacob slept with Leah, who came to Jacob with Zilpah as maidservant, (21-24).
 - C. Laban's response to Jacob's accusation of deception blamed any misconduct on the custom of "the rights of the elder," (25-26).
 - D. Laban's compromise of restitution suggested that Jacob fulfill his marriage obligations to Leah, that he then marry Rachel also, and that he serve another seven years for the privilege of marrying Rachel, (27).
 - E. Jacob's acceptance of Laban's compromise demanded his fulfilling his marriage obligations to Leah, his subsequent marriage of Rachel, whom he loved more

than Leah and who came to Jacob with Bilhah as maidservant, and his serving another seven years for his uncle Laban, (28-30).

(Theological . . . What it means to believers ALWAYS)
EXPERIENCING GOD'S BLESSING PROTECTS
NO ONE FROM ENDURING GOD'S DISCIPLINE

- I. Experiencing the blessing of God evokes true believers' enthusiastic service of others, (1-14).
 - A. True believers experience God's guidance and blessing in their life-journey, (1-6).
 - B. True believers who experience God's blessing enthusiastically serve others, (7-14).
- II. Experiencing the discipline of God confronts true believers with their unresolved sin, (15-30).
 - A. True believers may naively seek God's blessing while ignoring their unresolved sin, (15-20).
 - B. True believers may find their own unresolved sin coming back to discipline them, (21-26).
 - C. The consequences of God's discipline involve personal conviction, and general suffering, (27-30).

(Pedagogical . . . What it means to us NOW)
WELCOME GOD'S WORKS OF GRACE
IN YOUR LIFE,

(How can I keep growing spiritually and remain in the way of blessing?)

- I. **Welcome God's work of divine guidance in your life, (1-14).**
 - A. Jacob's journey into blessing and service followed God's divine guidance.
 - 1. Jacob's journey followed God's divine guidance, (1-6).
(see chapter 24:12-16; 31; 35; 40; 42; 50; 56)
 - 2. God's guidance Led Jacob into blessing and joyful service, (7-14; 20).
 - B. Your life-journey into blessing and service is being directed by God.
 - 1. God is directing your life-journey, (Psalm 37:23; Proverbs 3:6; Luke 1:79).
 - 2. God's direction leads you into blessing and joyful service,
(Luke 7:41-47; Matthew 25:34-40).
 - C. Welcome God's work of divine guidance in your life.
- II. **Welcome God's work of divine discipline in your life, (15-30).**
 - A. Jacob's journey toward full blessing brought him into God's divine discipline.
 - 1. Jacob, the younger, had been a deceiver of his elders, (25:31-34; 27:18-27).
 - 2. Jacob was deceived by an elder-younger deception, (29:15-30).
 - B. Your life-journey toward full blessing may bring you into God's discipline.
 - 1. Your unresolved sins are known to God, (Numbers 32:23; Psalm 90:8; Luke 12:2).
 - 2. Your unresolved sins will be disciplined (often in kind), (John 15:2; Hebrews 12:5-6).
 - C. Welcome God's work of divine discipline in your life.