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**TITLE:** From Beginning to End

**TEXT:** John 1:1-5

**MAIN IDEA:** Jesus is the center of God's redemptive story from beginning to end.

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**OPENING ILLUSTRATION:**

In the 1990's the fad of 3D hidden pictures struck our culture. These pictures were printed such that at first glance, they appeared to be a series of intricately repeated images. But the more a person looked at one of these pictures, a secondary picture emerged from within the details. This is somewhat like the story of redemption. While there are individual stories of kings, prophets, nations, and wars, the picture behind the picture is that of Jesus Christ.

**Point 1:** Jesus is the eternal Son (v. 1-2).

**Point 2:** Jesus is the sustaining Savior (v. 3-4).

**Point 3:** Jesus is the now and future king (v. 5).

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**CONCLUSION:**

Jesus was, is, and will be the center of God's story. We must therefore align both our thinking and our lives around Jesus in order to find our place in that story.

# GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS

VOL. 1

*Week 2*

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**TITLE:** The Fall of Man

**TEXT:** Genesis 3:1-15

**MAIN IDEA:** God has never wavered in His plan to redeem sinful man.

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**OPENING ILLUSTRATION:**

Imagine standing at the edge of a plane with a parachute strapped to your back. You have been through the classes, signed the waivers, and been coached by a professional. But when it comes time to actually jump, the question is not one of willpower as much as one of faith. In the end, either you trust the word of your instructors and the manufacturer of the parachute or you do not. Your actions will reveal the level of your trust. Similarly, the first choice to sin was not a moment of weak willpower, but instead a failure to trust in the word and character of God.

**Point 1:** Sin's root is a lack of faith (v. 1-6).

**Point 2:** Sin's effects are fear and shame (v. 7-13).

**Point 3:** Sin's solution has always only ever been Jesus (v. 14-15).

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**CONCLUSION:**

The cross of Jesus Christ was not Plan B. Jesus' life, death and resurrection has always and forever been God's plan and man's only hope for redemption.

# GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS

VOL. 1

*Week 3*

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**TITLE:** The Blessing of Abraham

**TEXT:** Genesis 12:1-4

**MAIN IDEA:** God blesses His people to be a blessing to the world.

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**OPENING ILLUSTRATION:**

Most people have two common pieces of household equipment in their homes - a hose, and a sponge. Both are related to water, but each has a different function. A sponge is meant to collect water, while a hose is meant to take water from its source to a different area. Too often as Christians we function more like sponges, and less like hoses. But God's intent for us, as His people, is not that we soak in His blessings, but instead that we spread them to all corners of the world.

**Point 1:** God requires faith from His people (v. 1).

**Point 2:** God blesses His people (v. 2-3a).

**Point 3:** God's people are conduits of His blessings to the world (v. 3b-4).

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**CONCLUSION:**

God promised to make Abram into a great nation, and we are the fulfillment of that promise. The New Testament (Gal. 3:7-9) tells us that by faith, we are the children of Abraham. As His children, and the people of God, we are to extend the greatest blessing - that of the knowledge of Jesus Christ - to the very ends of the earth.

# GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS

VOL. 1

*Week 4*

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**TITLE:** The Testing of Abraham

**TEXT:** Genesis 22:1-14

**MAIN IDEA:** The Lord will provide for those who trust in His ability, willingness, and wisdom.

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**OPENING ILLUSTRATION:**

Think back to a time when you were made to wait for something. Perhaps it was a recent experience in traffic. Maybe you had to spend an inordinate amount of time anticipating results from a physical exam. Or maybe you can remember the long days leading up to Christmas morning as a child. Most of us aren't very good at waiting. But Abraham had to wait 25 years for the birth of his promised son, Isaac. That amount of time makes God's command to Abraham in Genesis 22 all the more surprising... and difficult.

**Point 1:** God demands faithful obedience from His people (v. 1-6).

**Point 2:** God's people can trust in His power and wisdom (v. 7-10).

**Point 3:** God will provide what His people need, at the time we need it (v. 11-14).

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**CONCLUSION:**

Abraham showed the validity of his faith through his actions, not holding back his beloved son but instead trusting in the wisdom and power of God. God provided a substitute for Isaac, just as He has for us. The fullness of God's ability, willingness, and wisdom is on display at the cross whereby Jesus becomes the substitute sacrifice for us.

# GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS

VOL. 1

*Week 5*

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**TITLE:** Jacob and Esau

**TEXT:** Genesis 25:19-34

**MAIN IDEA:** God often works in surprising ways through unlikely people for His own glory.

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**OPENING ILLUSTRATION:**

When George Lucas was shooting *The Empire Strikes Back*, only he and one other person on set were privy to what is arguably the biggest twist in movie history - the revelation that Darth Vader is Luke Skywalker's father. It was an amazing reveal, a shocking turn when the audience had already assumed something else entirely. We see these kinds of twists happening regularly in the storyline of Scripture as God works in surprising ways through unlikely people. He does so for His own glory. This fact sets the backdrop for the story of Jacob and Esau.

**Point 1:** God's plan is set in His mind (v. 19-22).

**Point 2:** God's plan is accomplished in unlikely ways (v. 23-26).

**Point 3:** God's plan is accomplished through unexpected people (v. 27-34).

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**CONCLUSION:**

The younger brother received the blessing, and it was through the younger brother that the promise to Abraham was continued. God worked in such a way that defied expectation and highlighted His own power and wisdom above anything else, just as He did through Christ. All the circumstances of Jesus' birth and then His death defied the logical choice, but God once again fulfilled His plan through unexpected means.

# GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS

VOL. 1

*Week 6*

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**TITLE:** Wrestling with God

**TEXT:** Genesis 32:1-12; 24-32

**MAIN IDEA:** God will wrestle the self-sufficiency from His people.

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**OPENING ILLUSTRATION:**

The documentary *Alone in the Wilderness* is the story of Richard Proenneke who lived alone for nearly 30 years in the mountains of Alaska in a cabin he constructed by hand. The movie shows Proenneke building the cabin from the ground up, even so far as him constructing his own hammer in order to be able to use the tool. He was the model of self-sufficiency. While we might admire this kind of characteristic, there is a kind of self-sufficiency that is dishonoring to God when found in His people. In fact, it is so dishonoring to God that He will wrestle that characteristic by force from His people if need be.

**Point 1:** Moments of crisis draw us to God (v. 1-12).

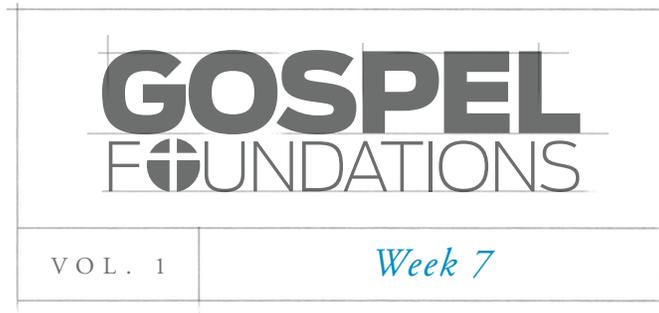
**Point 2:** God uses crisis to reveal our character (v. 24-27).

**Point 3:** God redeems our struggle for His glory (v. 28-32).

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**CONCLUSION:**

Despite all he had seen God do, Jacob was still committed to his own self-sufficiency. God wrestled with him and forced him to own up to His true character. But then God renamed him, a sign of a pivotal change within Jacob. Like Jacob, we will come to moments of wrestling with the will of God, but we can trust that will use these moments of crisis to form in us the image of Jesus.



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**TITLE:** Joseph and a Life of Adversity

**TEXT:** Genesis 50:15-21

**MAIN IDEA:** The plan of God cannot be stopped by the sinfulness of man

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**OPENING ILLUSTRATION:**

Motion sickness is actually caused when there is a disconnect between your balance sensing system (which is located in your inner ear) and the other parts of your body. For example, if you are on board a ship, your inner ear might sense motion from the waves but your eyes might not. Or if you are playing a video game, your eyes might see motion but your inner ear doesn't sense it. The disconnect causes the motion sickness, but how do you get rid of it? Of course there are medications, but one of the easiest remedies is to fix your eyes on a stable, unmoving point. Keep looking there, and the sickness will subside. The same principle applies spiritually. Our lives might have ups and downs, so much so that we begin to feel sick. The solution is to fix our eyes on that which is completely stable - Jesus Christ, who is moving His plan and purpose for us and the world forward no matter what.

**Point 1:** We should not expect a life without adversity (v. 15).

**Point 2:** God uses even the sinful actions of people for His good purposes (v. 16-20).

**Point 3:** Our confidence in God's providence moves us to compassion and forgiveness for others (v. 21).

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**CONCLUSION:**

We see the constant presence and purpose of God throughout the ups and downs of Joseph's life. Despite the evil intentions that surrounded Him, God never wavered in His purpose for Joseph. Joseph was able to, at the end of his life, see the truth that God not only intends, but also works for the good of His people. We have this same assurance because of the gospel in which God has pledged His advocacy for our eternal good.