

Ladders and Stepping Stones

By: Joe Ruff

*Ladders will either take you up or bring you down.
Stepping stones move you across.*

Genesis 28:12-15

"And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."

Sometimes we dream of the great and spectacular things that God can do. However, we can focus on the individual things in our lives and not the people around us. Goals are wonderful and when we fulfill them there is a great sense of accomplishment. But when we are climbing up our ladder we must not elevate ourselves beyond our purpose. We must remember this was only a dream that Jacob had and not a sign from God to boast to others of His workings in our personal lives. The ladder that Jacob was looking at in his dream had him elevated as an individual. Jacob saw himself to be great and powerful.

The ladder was designed for individual use, to move one person UP at a time. Ladders were not meant to hold more than one person at a time. Therefore, each of us has our own ladder in our lives. In our goals and dreams, we must keep grounded. In our ministries, our jobs, and our families, we must keep humble. Not to elevate, but to influence.

In the end of this chapter, we find that Jacob woke up to realize that he was just dreaming about God's great blessing. God did indeed have things in store for Jacob and his family, such as keeping His promise to Abraham and Isaac; but, Jacob may have carried it a little too far in thinking he was greater than what he really was.

Genesis 28:16-22 gives the account of Jacob returning back to reality. He sees that the stepping stone which he has his head laid upon is the thing that will keep him through thick and thin.

The remaining verses talk about the fear that was in his heart. Jacob even said "it is dreadful in this place". The reason that Jacob felt this way is because he had lost focus. He then took the stone that he was lying on, made a pillar and anointed this pillar. God had a purpose for Jacob's life but Jacob had to be awakened to see it come to pass.

Stepping stones can move you up, move you down, move you sideways, or just give you an opportunity to move to another location. God gives us opportunities in life...what we do with them is our choice. Moses chose to smite the stone and, as a result, was not allowed to go into the promise land. We must choose the right path that Jesus has set in front of us.

If you ever walk through a creek, you can see all kinds of stepping stones. They come in various sizes, shapes, and colors. Whether the stepping stone is fat, skinny, short, tall, round, flat, shiny, or mossy, it is our job to take the stepping stone that God has given us for this season in our lives.

Use this stepping stone at this time in your life and anoint it. Place a banner of victory on this place in your life. Let Jesus elevate you up the ladder to promise and use the stepping stones to move you from season to season. In everything give thanks and embrace the new stepping stones that are set before you.