

**Genesis 29:31-30:24**  
Maternal Manipulation

*Despite dysfunction ...*

- I. Jacob's Significant Others
  - A. Two Wives
  - B. Two Concubines
- II. Unsanctified Competition
  - A. The Blessed and the Barren
  - B. Bartering For Babies
- IV. Exponential Growth
  - A. A Dozen Plus One
  - B. A Formula for Success?
- V. The People of God
  - A. The Patriarchs
  - B. The Tribes
  - C. The Line
  - D. Natural Branches
  - E. Ingrafted Shoots?

*...meet the family of God.*

**Children, Listen ...**

1. How many wives did Jacob have?
2. Why was Leah sad?
3. Why Rachel Jealous of Leah?
4. Does this sound like a healthy family?
5. Do you know the name of the nation Jacob's sons will be known as?

**Bless this Mess?!**

It is hard to imagine a more dysfunctional family – and here it is, highlighted in God's Holy Word. Not only does this story reflect the fact that there were big problems in Jacob's household, it also a portent of intra-family conflict for generations to come. You don't have to read long into the Old Testament to discover that the establishment of God's people can sometimes be an ugly, messy ordeal. But the Bible does not mask the twistedness or sinfulness of even its most notable "heroes." Out of this mess come the twelve tribes of Israel, the object of the special affection and providential attention of the Almighty God over all other nations. There was nothing comely about the nation (read Ezekiel 16) and as a people they could often be downright obstinate. But it is God's grace, not Israel's attractiveness that saves the day as it always does. The Lord takes this mess, makes what will rise to be a mighty nation for His glory out of it, and preserves it in such a way that the Messiah, the Savior of the World would come through this family line. Perhaps we can take comfort in this as we look at the world around us and see messed up lives, messed up households and even messed up churches. God can and does heal when, in His sovereign mercy, He "steps into" a mess and turns it around for His glory. There is no excuse for sin and there is no peace or comfort with dysfunction – but there is always hope that God can restore broken lives, bring peace to volatile families and unity to fractured churches though His grace and by his power, despite ourselves.