



Big Idea: You don't have to stay like you were.

Primary Scripture: Genesis 32:22-32

Supporting Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:17, John 1:18, Romans 12:2

CAPTURE (Why should students pay attention to and care about your message?)

Have you ever tried using your computer, phone, or device and found that it's just not working like it should? Your heart probably starts racing, your mind might spiral, perspiration beads up on your forehead. How much is this going to cost? How much trouble am I going to be in with my parents? As you worry about what could be wrong, you discover that, thankfully, nothing is actually wrong. Your device just needs to be updated. You'd been putting off updating it for so long that your device is now refusing to do anything until you take care of the update.

It's a well-known fact that this only ever happens at the most inconvenient of times. You have a paper due? Time to force you to update your computer. You're trying to get into the queue to buy Taylor Swift tickets or a new Jordan drop? Sorry, your phone needs to update right now. How inconvenient! The truth is that updates are always inconvenient unless they happen while you're asleep. That's why we always put them off and leave them for another day. We don't want to be disconnected or inconvenienced while the update happens. The truth is...

Updates can be annoying. Updates take time, they drain your batteries, and force you to be off your device for as long as it takes to update. And then when the update is done, sometimes you have to relearn how to do things, because some things have changed. Updates are all about change. Your operating system downloads an update and installs it onto your device. The outside of the phone, computer, or tablet looks the same, but things have changed inside. And after things change inside, it might function differently. And you don't always understand why that change even had to take place. Like, why did Apple move the search bar in Safari from the top to the bottom. I was perfectly comfortable with where it was, and I didn't need it to change. But then one day, it moved, and I had to get used to it. I kept messing up when I'd open Safari, reaching to press my screen

where there was no longer an option. Even little changes can be so pesky! But...

Updates are necessary. Updates allow a device to function at its best. The creators and engineers behind the device continually work to optimize your experience with it, so they constantly roll out updates. Sure, they sometimes roll out updates that you don't really understand the purpose of, but often, they put out updates to fix known issues. And even though they can be pesky and annoying at first, they typically streamline your experience with your device. Suddenly, what frustrated you makes perfect sense and gives you a better user experience.

SCRIPTURE (What does God's Word say?)

People get updates, too. We grow, we (hopefully) mature, and we change over time. One of the coolest things about the Bible is that we get to see how God has faithfully updated His people throughout history. They were this, but now they're this. We were this way, but God updated and changed us into this.

Even before Jesus, who is God, came to Earth in human form, He was in the business of updating His people. One of my favorite instances of this is the story of Jacob. I want to give you a little background on Jacob.

Jacob means "deceiver or trickster." His parents prayerfully chose that name for him, and back then, names and meanings carried greater weight. It was part of your identity. His parents started him out in life by saying he would be deceitful and tricky. And the truth is, they named him right. That's exactly who he was.

God had already promised that Jacob would be blessed. He would be the one through whom God would fulfill His promise to Abraham and the world. There would be no stopping that. But that wasn't enough for him. In Genesis 25, when he found his twin brother Esau, who was so hungry he probably thought he was starving to death, he convinced him trade his birthright for a bowl of stew. Not only would he have all that God had promised him, but he was also going to take his brother's rightful inheritance, too. And that still wasn't enough for him! In Genesis 27, he learned that his aging, blind father was going to pray a blessing over his

brother Esau. So, he made up a costume to make himself feel and smell like his brother Esau, went to his dad, and stole his brother's blessing, too. Trickster was the perfect name for him. He leaned fully into that identity.

Now, if you think we've reached the apex of who Jacob was before he met God, hold onto your hats. In Genesis 32, Jacob got wind that his brother Esau was looking for him. The last time he had seen his brother, Esau swore he would kill him once he was done mourning their father. Jacob was justifiably afraid. So, he sent gifts to Esau, so that by the time he encountered him, he hoped Esau would be pacified and full of forgiveness. But he sent the gifts with his wives and children, just in case Esau was still feeling murderous! He stayed at the back of the procession with his favorite wife—which is a super weird phrase to say—and his favorite children.

But on the way, he encountered God, and it changed him.

²⁴ This left Jacob all alone in the camp, and a man came and wrestled with him until the dawn began to break. ²⁵ When the man saw that he would not win the match, he touched Jacob's hip and wrenched it out of its socket. ²⁶ Then the man said, "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking!" But Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."

²⁷ "What is your name?" the man asked. He replied, "Jacob." ²⁸ "Your name will no longer be Jacob," the man told him. "From now on you will be called Israel, because you have fought with God and with men and have won." ²⁹ "Please tell me your name," Jacob said. "Why do you want to know my name?" the man replied. Then he blessed Jacob there.

³⁰ Jacob named the place Peniel (which means "face of God"), for he said, "I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been spared." ³¹ The sun was rising as Jacob left Peniel, and he was limping because of the injury to his hip. (Genesis 32:24-31, NLT)

This passage took place thousands of years before Jesus came to this Earth as a baby in Bethlehem, so the idea that he's just been changed by encountering Jesus may be a little weird for you. But I think there are some key things we can learn from this passage, and I'll throw in an extra thing we can know about this passage based on another part of the Bible.

INSIGHTS (What might this Scripture mean?)



Big Idea: God sees more than your weakness.

Primary Scripture: Matthew 16:16-18

Supporting Scripture: Matthew 16:22-23, John 10:27, James 4:7-10, Luke 22:61-62, John 20:3-9

SURFACE

Instead of thinking about what the greatest superpower would be to have, let's go the other way. Imagine you have whatever superpower you'd like. What would be the absolute worst weakness to have as a superhero with those powers?

SERIOUS

Think of someone you really admire. It could be someone you know or someone famous you know of. Describe that person.

When you described the person you admired, why didn't any of you talk about their weaknesses?

Do you tend to see yourself in light of your greatest strengths or greatest weaknesses? Why do you think you're prone to seeing yourself that way?

SPIRITUAL

How would you describe the Apostle Peter?

Why do you think Jesus called Peter "the rock" given everything He knew about him?

Why do you think God chooses to see us at our strongest instead of defining us by our weakest moments?

In James 4, we're told to humble ourselves, grieve our sin, and then allow ourselves to be honored by God. Which of these three things is easiest for you? Which is most difficult?

How can you get better at walking out all three steps as you attempt to walk in your God-given identity?

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Updated Parent Guide Week Three

Big Idea: God sees more than your weakness.

Primary Scripture: Matthew 16:16-18

Supporting Scripture: Matthew 16:22-23, John 10:27, James 4:7-10, Luke 22:61-62, John 20:3-9

By looking at the story of Peter, we discussed the following truths:

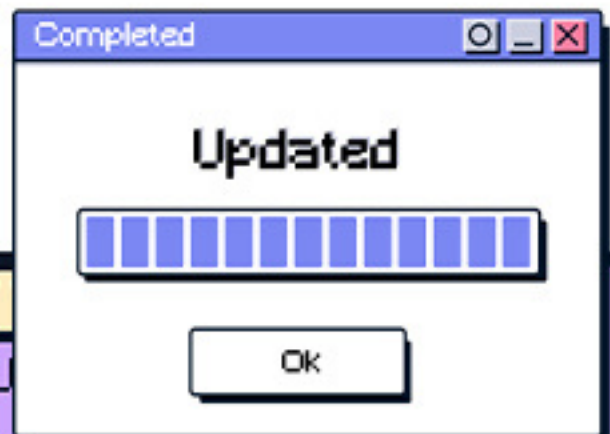
1. God sees more than your weaknesses.
2. God reveals truth to His people.
3. Your updated identity in Christ cannot be taken down by all the powers of Hell.

Because of these truths, we challenged the students to commit to the following actions:

1. Grieve your sin.
 2. Move on from your sin.
 3. Fight back against the enemy.
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Questions to spark discussion:

1. What would be the absolute worst weakness to have as a superhero with great powers?
2. When you described the person you admired, why don't we tend to talk about their weaknesses?
3. Why do you think God chooses to see us at our strongest instead of defining us by our weakest moments?



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