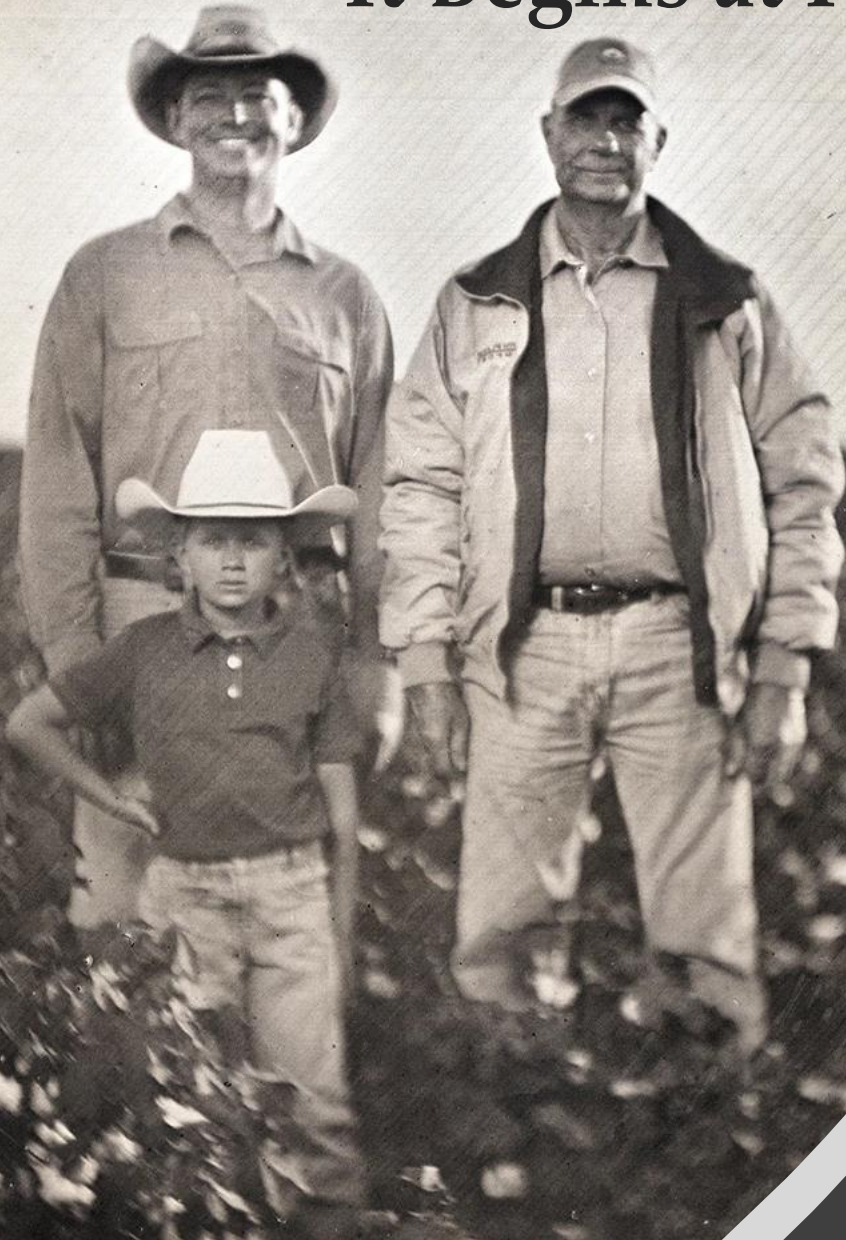


THE POWER OF A FATHER



## The Power of a Father: It Begins at HOME!



## The Power of a Father!

As men, in a culture under attack, we need an understanding of mature masculinity—a vision and direction we can pursue with our sons! We need tools, methods, and ideas to help us become Godly men and from which to equip our sons. We need to grow up!

Jacob – the patriarch of Israel – the father of a nation—is a troubling character in the Old Testament. He is a so much like us -- with very human strengths and weaknesses, but a man with a striving for spiritual things. From this imperfect man we learn important lessons of faith. Especially, we learn about God's grace. Time to engage—enjoy the Adventure!

# The Power of a Father – FAMILY DYNAMICS – Genesis 25:19-34.

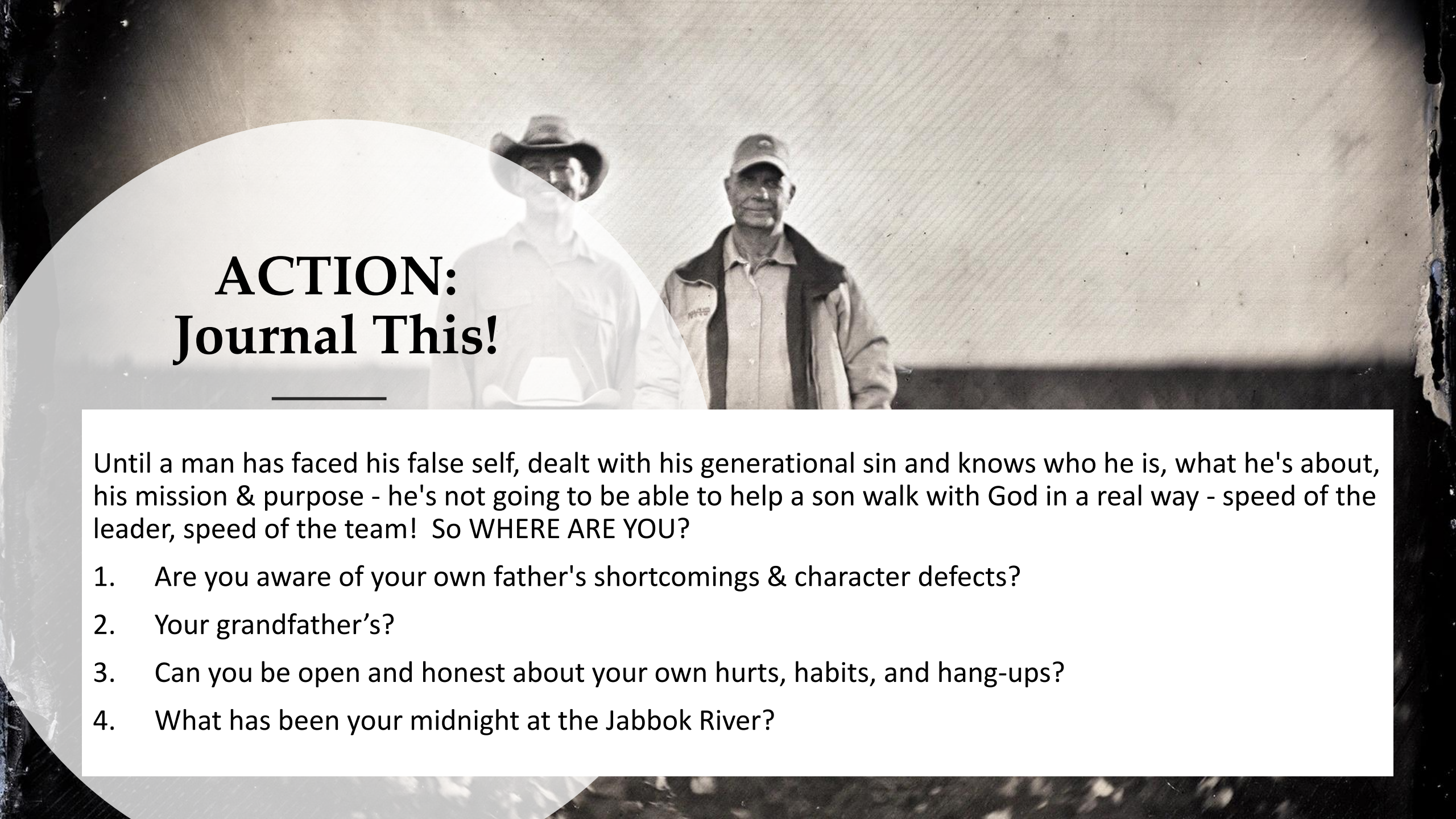
1. **Something Deeper** → It only happens three times - the text says that God is the God of Abraham, the father of Jacob. But we all know that Abraham is *not* the father of Jacob. For some reason, God's account skips Isaac. In 32:10 Jacob refers to both Abraham and Isaac as father, but in 28:13 God names Abraham as Jacob's father and in 26:24 Isaac is simply absent. This is especially significant when *God is the speaker*. The references to grandfather in biblical Hebrew are typically "father's father." These verses don't use "father's father." They suggest something deeper, that somehow Jacob is next in line after Abraham. It is apparent the text is hinting at deeper family dynamics.
2. **Epigenetics** → The field of epigenetics is discovering that descendants of trauma survivors carry the physical and emotional symptoms of traumas they have not directly experienced. The mother's emotions, such as fear, anger, love, hope among others, can biochemically alter the genetic expression of her offspring. In a sense, a child who experienced a stressful in utero environment can become reactive in a similarly stressful situation.
3. **Passed On & On** → Jacob is a descendent of a trauma survivor. Who experienced the initial trauma? Isaac, of course. Never suspecting that his father intended to slaughter him in a religious ritual, Isaac instantly discovers that his father can't be trusted, his father's God can't be trusted, and his father lied to him all his life about how important he was. So Isaac flees from his father, joining the other family his father Abraham left to die in the wilderness. In fact, Isaac's relationship with God is permanently fractured by the event, so much so that Isaac never really recovers. Now the trauma is passed on to Isaac's son, Jacob, and it is Jacob who is directly linked to the trauma event in his biological father's life. The emotional connection is not to Isaac, the father whose **absence** in Jacob's life created the generational rift. It's Abraham. Abraham is the one that Jacob mimics. The deception, the manipulation of circumstances, the negotiating, the attempt to forge his own destiny, the spiritual vacuum—these Jacob shares with Abraham, not with Isaac.
4. **True Self vs False Self** → *Then Jacob was left alone, and a man **wrestled with him** until daybreak.* Genesis 32:24 / This very unusual story has a deep psychological element. No explanation of who this strange opponent is really satisfies until we recognize that Jacob is in an intense battle with himself. It is his new persona who fights for control while Jacob wrestles to regain the world that is slipping away. Unexpectedly, we find that Jacob must be defeated in order to progress. If you've ever felt the pull of your past clawing to keep you in the rut you've lived with while you hope to step across your Jabbok, then you'll identify with Jacob's night long battle.

# The Power of a Father – FAMILY DYNAMICS.

**Purpose, Meaning, & Destiny** → It took a midnight struggle for Jacob to understand his own story, and when he understood it, his life didn't suddenly get better. In fact, in many ways it got worse. What Jacob gained was not peace and tranquility. What he gained was purpose. When we finally discover that we too are left alone, the fight isn't about getting back what we think we have lost. The fight is about realizing why we are here, what we are about, who we are in God's scheme of things. But it takes a particular kind of midnight struggle to deal with our defenses, to deal with the way we want the world to work. *Not my will but Yours!* Luke 22:42

Most men will do virtually anything to avoid this place. It is unraveling and uncomfortable. We are hardwired for connection, and Jacob has come to an emotional, mental, and physical state of being isolated, alone, and disconnected. Addiction is simply humanity's attempt to avoid Jabbok (the river symbolizes the dark night of the soul). Perhaps that's why the story is crucial. Israel does not exist without the internal fight and ultimate surrender of Jacob. No man can find his purpose until he faces the stranger in the night.





# **ACTION: Journal This!**

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Until a man has faced his false self, dealt with his generational sin and knows who he is, what he's about, his mission & purpose - he's not going to be able to help a son walk with God in a real way - speed of the leader, speed of the team! So WHERE ARE YOU?

1. Are you aware of your own father's shortcomings & character defects?
2. Your grandfather's?
3. Can you be open and honest about your own hurts, habits, and hang-ups?
4. What has been your midnight at the Jabbok River?