Gen. 33

We let God confront and we repent; we don't want this in our lives anymore; we are grieved by it; we are repulsed. We work to make things right with those who have been affected by our thinking, but the battle is not over!

Thinking a wrong way for a long time is not easily overcome; those thinking patterns are natural for us and our sin nature is always looking for a way back into the spotlight.

**Broken strongholds will battle to be rebuilt.** They are torn down through repentance, but I still have to choose regularly, sometimes every day, to walk in repentance to walk in thinking differently.

This is why we must be careful to take our thoughts captive; we need to memorize those verses in II Cor. 10:3-5.

33:4 Jacob is afraid and is trying to appease his brother; looks like a successful reunion, though.

V. 14 Jacob says he will pass on slowly and go and meet up with his brother soon, but Jacob lies here and doesn't do what he tells his brother he'll do.

We fall back into our strongholds; we do, we need to stay on top of this. Simply letting God confront you and repenting doesn't mean it's over yet. You are finally on the right road, but you are going to have to keep your wits about you and remain dependent on the Lord to stay on this road.

When we fail to think differently, we must return to repentance. As soon as we find ourselves lapsing back into our old ways of thinking, we need to turn and repent; striving to take those thoughts captive because we have been their captives far too long!

It's not a question if we will fall; it's a question of how long we stay down; don't stay down! Get up, repent, and take thoughts captive, maybe multiple times a day if need be.

You have authority to tread on the things of the world and the devil, but you must take that authority!

"I'm not that person anymore"; "I'm not submitting to that line of thinking and living anymore"; "I'm free in Christ to be enslaved to righteousness, not sin and sinful patterns." "Old things have passed away in me and I'm living and walking in a new way." "Sin shall not reign over me because no longer am I under the curse, but am free in Christ."

"I'm not excusing this anymore; I'm walking away from it by God's power and grace."

Strongholds are still lurking out there for Jacob looking for an opportunity, and they raise up next in his kids.

**What do we do when we've fallen back?**

Gotten back into same old ruts that were hard to steer out of and our wheels have clunked back into them; what do we do?

CH. 34 is so crazy; I forbid you to read it! His sons lie and there is another crisis, but the strongholds are still there still trying to raise their ugly heads.
1. Remove stronghold supports from your life. It's not just a matter of repentance taking captive our thoughts; we have to also change our environment such as friends, places, circumstances, etc. These included things that you've got in place that help you think in the way of your stronghold(s).

**Gen. 35:1** Jacob is limping and changing, but still has many issues, but God is relentlessly pursuing him, being gracious to him. V. 2, 3

If and when we fall back into our old strongholds, we need to ask ourselves 3 questions:

1. Where did I go wrong? Jacob repented, but things got easier and he slipped back. This event, this circumstance occurred. Bad day, person you hadn't seen/talked to, trial of life, time of year, event, etc.
2. What tripped me up? For Jacob it was the foreign gods in his family and in his life. What are you turning to other than God to crutch on? Jacob does a moral inventory of his life and home to see what other than the true God was being turned to.
3. What needs removal? Jacob got rid of the gods and the stuff that pointed them in that direction (earrings, etc.) Influences that need to be silenced: Friends, relationship, access to the internet, places you go, lack of accountability, music you listen to, etc. Tearing down strongholds requires thorough and/or radical action. You cannot piecemeal this process; you have to cut, pare, and remove. Family is what you're born with, but friends are optional. Certain people should not have access to your life; others need to be kept at arms length.

   **Whatever feeds your stronghold must be put out of reach!** You won't think differently completely until you live differently.

2. Reconcile your view of God with reality. The battle is over what you believe about God at the end of the day. Satan attacked Eve's view of God, and she was deceived from that point on! "God is not telling you the whole story. He's holding out on you. He's tricking you."

   If we have darkness in our lives, it is either constructed or perpetuated (or both) by your misconception of who God is.

   **Jn. 8:32** Truth about God is going to be the condition of heaven and eternity; that's part of the reason it will be great!

   A wrong view of God leads to a wrong way of thinking which leads to wrong behavior.

   **Gen. 35:3 — CH. 33** Jacob has a life-altering experience with God and bears the marks of it in his person to this day. CH. 34 His passivity with his daughter's situation brings on trouble; he begins to falter because of circumstances and again doesn't act as the leader in his home. CH. 35 God comes to him again, and he turns away from the tangent he was headed off on and turns back to God and his correct position as head of his family.

   **V. 5** God continues to provide.
Six faulty views of God:

1. God is a kill-joy. Deut. 30:19 The idea is that rules limit joy; fences keep us from experiencing the best; obeying God will keep me from being happy.

2. God is a prison warden. He is always watching for you to mess up. Jn. 8:32 There is such freedom in following Christ; bondage is anything away from Him.

3. God isn't fair. God is a cranky boss; God's not like that!!
   Zeph. 3:17 He's got a tambourine and a microphone and is excited over you even in your fallen condition.
   We are on a roller coaster of ups and downs, difficulties and misconceptions, do's and do-overs. God is not on that roller coaster! He stands outside of time and sees us in Christ and in eternity and is caught up in the mood swings of our lives.

4. God is an absent father. Rom. 8:32-39 (That's what is actually true; out with the lies and in the truth.)

5. God is a moody grandpa..1121r4UC

6. God is a score keeper. God is not the umpire who is counting the strikes.
   Mic. 7:19 He's not keeping a record. God has never-one time been diminished in His love for you. It has always been at the maximum, nothing earns it or changes it.

3. Raise reminders to think differently. V. 6-8 (Gen. 28:18 deja vue) His mother's assistant passes away, so there are some major changes in Jacob's life; a fixture in his life moves on.
   He raises a visual cue to keep his thinking on track; "I've changed", "I don't think like that anymore."
   A picture, a verse on the mirror, plant a tree, (buy yourself a special gun), a time to meet with God daily to thank Him and ask for help.

4. Review your identity and calling in the Lord. VV.9-10 Your view of God and yourself has to change; you aren't who you were anymore!
   God came straight back to him to remind him of His new creation in this man.
   You're not a liar, cheat, drunk, drug addict, worrier, pornographer, angry person.