

## Faith to Move Into Action

God has a way of bringing our options down to one. He has a way of securing the response to His Word down to one. God did not lead the children of Israel through the land of the Philistines, lest they turn back altogether. He wanted instead to bring them to the place where they would have no choice but to turn utterly to Him. That was “the crunch”—not turning back.

There was nothing to do but to lift up that rod—and watch God do the rest. Moses may have thought, *I've never done this before. I may look like a fool, but here it goes!* Up the rod went. Across the wind came. God did the rest.

They didn't swim across. They walked. They didn't run. They walked. They enjoyed the spectacular sight up close. Some were given the honor of carrying the bones of Joseph. They had pockets full of

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*By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned.*

—HEBREWS 11:29

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loot, jewels, valuables. Parents would say to their children, “Take a close look at this. This is our God at work. Don't ever forget it.” Pharaoh, in the meantime, made the most unwise calculation to be seen among the Egyptians yet. What was it? The Egyptians thought that they could do what the children of Israel had done.

Their most fatal error was trying to continue the pursuit of Israel across the Red Sea, but they realized it too late. For the same pillar of fire and cloud that had been Israel's guidance became Egypt's confusion.

The rod that was used to deliver Israel was used to condemn the Egyptians. The same Word that saves some will condemn others. Faith does what cannot be done by those who do not believe. And yet, faith also does what crying to God cannot do. There comes a time that we must act, do, obey. Lift up your rod. If that is what God has told you to do, nothing else will happen until you do it. Doing it is faith.

Excerpted from *Believing God* (MorningStar Publications & Ministries, 1997).

## God Loves Failures

**J**acob is one of the most important characters in the Old Testament. He was the grandson of Abraham, the son of Isaac, and the third of the patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. If we look at Jacob's life, we soon recognize that the Bible does not cover up the weaknesses and frailty of its heroes. Jacob, whose name was later changed to Israel, was not a particularly attractive person.

If ever there was anyone who knew the guilt of failure, then Jacob is your man. The name *Jacob* means "heel" (or possibly "deceiver"). Jacob was the world's greatest manipulator. He wanted to control people. He was a terrible parent and brother.

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*For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.*

—1 CORINTHIANS 1:25

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He stole his twin brother Esau's blessing, and, by cunning, he tricked him into selling his birthright.

Jacob may have been a complainer, a controller, but God loved him. "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated" (Rom. 9:13). Jacob,

though not a very nice guy and not a very attractive person, was loved by God. When it came to the end of Jacob's life, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews chose one event, which says that "Jacob... worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff" (Heb. 11:21). It shows him in his old age before he died, looking back on his life, a life riddled with guilt, but a life that, when it was all over, turned out as if it were perfect. He got his son back. He learned to appreciate Leah and the things God had done for him.

The "Jacobs" of this world aren't very pleasant, but God loves them.

God loves failures. Do you know why? It's because He wants to take your life, turn it into a trophy of grace, and bring you to the place where you see that His hand has always been on you. He wants to turn that failure into a blessing.

Excerpted from *All's Well That Ends Well* (Authentic Media, 2005).