

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

Drawn from “The False Hope of Grit and Self-Reliance,” a Sermon on Genesis 29

Pastor Gutierrez @ Faith Pres Tacoma

April 26, 2026 AM

1. The sermon text tells the story of how Jacob and Rachel met. For those of you who are married, talk about how you first met your spouse. For those of you who are not, talk about a time a stranger did an unexpected, kind deed for you.
2. In the sermon, Pastor Gutierrez argued that Genesis 29 illustrates Jacob’s failure to trust God. How did he support this view from the text? Do you agree? Why or why not?
3. Look again at verses 23-25 and ponder how Leah participated in the deception of Jacob. What might have been some of the reasons she did so?
4. Look again at verses 31-35 with special attention to the names Leah assigns to her children. What can we learn about Leah based upon the way she names her sons?
5. As the father of Israel, Jacob’s life previews the trials and experiences which the entire nation of Israel will later endure. How do we see this theme in Genesis 29?

6. You are speaking with a man who makes a profession of Christian faith, but also believes that polygamy is an acceptable practice for Christians today. He says, “Just look at Genesis 29. Jacob was a hero of the faith, and God allowed him to have four wives. And there are lots of other examples in the Old Testament. Nowhere does God call it sin to have more than one wife, and we know that God is unchanging. So, it must be ok for us today also.” How would you respond to this?

7. The world around us highly values self-confidence and promotes it as one of the primary virtues, but in the sermon Pastor Gutierrez warned us that it is a dangerous and subtle sin connected with lack of dependence on God and pride. As a group, talk about this category of “self-confidence.” Is there any sense in which Christians can appreciate or sympathize with the category of “self-confidence” or is it simply a category that we must reject entirely? If the latter, is there a true Christian virtue that might replace, or be roughly equivalent to, what the world means by “self-confidence?”

8. In the sermon text, Jacob was deceived, betrayed, and trapped by his own family. Talk about a time when you had a similar experience and how it affected your walk with the Lord.

9. In the sermon, Pastor Gutierrez read a quotation from Tim Keller which aims to help us discern idols of the heart. As a group, read and discuss the quotation, with application to your own heart and life, “Look at your most uncontrollable emotions. Your most painful emotions, especially those that never seem to lift and that drive you to do things you know are wrong.” [These can help you see some of your idols.] “If you are angry, ask, ‘Is there something here too important to me, something I must have at all costs?’” [You can do the same thing with strong fear or despair and guilt] “Am I so scared, because something in my life is being threatened that I think is a necessity when it is not?”