



# Sermon Discussion Guide

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## Theophany: The Dark Night

Genesis 28:10-22

Ray Cortese, November 7 & 8, 2015

### Step 1: Reflect on the Text

Why do we do this first? We always want to start with the Bible. The goal is to meditate on the Word and read it with an ear sensitive to the Holy Spirit's promptings. Look for words or phrases that stand out through logic, repetition, layout, etc.

-  Read Genesis 28:10-22. What stood out to you? What did you find interesting and/or important? What was challenging or caused you to have questions?

### Step 2: Reflect on the Sermon

#### INTRODUCTION

- 1 Have you ever experienced a dark night of the soul?
- 2 What was your one big/main takeaway from the service? If someone had arrived as everyone was leaving, and they stopped you in the parking lot and asked, "What was the sermon about?" what would you have said?

#### THE DARK NIGHT: GOSPEL CLARITY

- 3 How does the ziggurat epitomize every world religion? Why is Christianity the end of religion? How was this pictured in Jacob's vision? Read John 1:50-51. How are these words of Jesus connected to Genesis 28?
- 4 What is wrong with the statement, "God helps those who help themselves"?

## THE DARK NIGHT: DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY

- 5 How do you typically react when things start to fall apart around you? Do you strive all the harder? Do you act any different from a non-Christian? Discuss the following quote from Kara Tippets:

We love strength, we pet it, we live for it, and when it is gone we question the goodness of God. But, as I have seen in my own story, the taking of strength is grace—huge grace to draw me to Jesus.

- 6 Ray said, “On the worst day of your life God is at work.” Have you experienced that to be true?
- 7 What comfort does it give you to know that God is with you and will never leave you?

## THE DARK NIGHT: MISSIONAL DIRECTION

- 8 Is Christianity just about not going to hell one day when you die?
- 9 How was Jacob’s life changed by his encounter with God?
- 10 Ray said, “You have been invited to be a personal assistant to the God of the universe.” What do you think he wants you to do with the talents and resources he has given you?

## **Step 3: Final Reflections**

- † How has your understanding, appreciation, and love for Jesus and the gospel grown as a result of this study?
- ♥ In what areas of faith and practice are you feeling convicted by the Holy Spirit to act as a result of this study?