

How to Cope With Mistreatment

Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. **—Ephesians 6:6-8, KJV**

How do you cope with mistreatment? The story about Laban and the way he treated Jacob may have much to teach us.

Jacob worked for Laban fourteen years, keeping his agreement in exchange for Laban's two daughters. Then another six years elapsed before Jacob finally made the break, and it was after Joseph was born when Jacob turned his thoughts toward going home.

Maybe you can identify with the kind of mistreatment Jacob endured for so many years. I have known many people who have put up with so much from others, a controlling parent or a spouse, for instance, who makes life so unpleasant. It may be a boss. I dare say many reading this dread returning to work on Monday mornings.

I want you to see three ways in which Jacob coped with mistreatment.

1. Jacob was careful not to pick a quarrel with Laban. He knew that what was happening to him was God's way of breaking him. Jacob knew he had been a deceiver himself; now he had met his match. This is the way God may choose to break you: to let you meet your match.

2. Jacob preoccupied himself with what he did best. He gave himself to what God had called him to do. You may have been mistreated, but God has given you a gift. Use it well. One day your time will come and God will say, "Enough is enough."

3. Jacob didn't really break away until he had divine confirmation. "Then the Lord said to Jacob, 'Go back to the land of your fathers and to your relatives, and I will be with you'" (Gen. 31:3). Until then, it had been Jacob's idea, but God had been watching and He said, "Enough is enough. I am with you."

God knows how much you can bear, and He is coming to your rescue at this moment to remind you that the one who was mistreated the most was Jesus who died on the cross.

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