

No More Strutting

While in Argentina two years ago I passed an old man who was hobbling down the street with a bag of vegetables. His face was worn, and his clothes were tattered. But what made me feel so sorry for him was his limp.

His right leg was at least a foot shorter than his left, so he rocked awkwardly back and forth as he struggled to get home. He had no cane, no wheelchair and no one to hold his arm when he stepped off the curb. I wanted to pick him up and carry him, but I didn't know enough Spanish to ask if he wanted help.

The image of this pitiful man came to my memory months later when I was reading about Jacob's encounter with the angel of the Lord in Genesis 32. The Bible says Jacob was permanently disabled after his all-night wrestling match with God at the place called Peniel. The resulting limp must have been noticeable to everyone because God "touched the socket of Jacob's hip in the muscle that shrank" (v. 32, NKJV). Ouch!

This was the ultimate sports injury. A man was crippled by almighty God and lived to tell about it. I don't think any ancient form of Middle Eastern physical therapy could have helped the poor guy walk normally again. He was maimed for life.

Jacob had been an arrogant, manipulative, self-sufficient guy before God pinned him to the dusty desert floor. But after he was blessed (v. 26) during this face-to-face contest with his heavenly Conqueror, he was reduced to a humble servant. He had surrendered. His limp was a daily reminder of his total

frailty, yet he knew that because God had shattered his strength he possessed true power.

Jacob had decreased. God had increased. Would you like God to “bless” you like that?

We charismatics are a lot like Jacob before his wrestling match. We are so cocky and sure of ourselves. We are so confident in our anointing and so certain of our formulas for success, prosperity and healing.

We’ve learned how to rebuke debt, overcome sickness and resist doubt. We teach seminars on how to overthrow demonic principalities and shake nations for Christ. Then we pat one another on the back and believe our own publicity.

But have we been broken by God? I don’t hear brokenness in our judgmental attitude toward sinners. I don’t see brokenness in the way we treat one another. I don’t sense brokenness in the way some of our leaders strut across the stage, screaming and yelling as they “throw” the anointing at the audience—as if it were a commodity to be packaged and sold for a love offering of \$50.

It’s time for a wrestling match. It’s God vs. us. We’ve arrived at Peniel, and we must wrestle with the Mighty One of Israel. We think we know Him now, but after He pins us to the ground we will understand why His strength is so much more powerful than ours.

And after we have submitted to His loving but crushing blows, our pride will be shattered—and the world will see the true anointing of Christ rather than empty charismatic hype.

I hope all of us are willing to go to the mat with the Lord.
True revival won't come until our strut becomes Jacob's limp.