

**Lesson Title:** Failed Expectations - Leah

Key Concept: The Bible is filled with people for whom God did not do what they expected. Leah was unloved, unwanted, and unfavored, but not forgotten by God.

**Scriptures:**

There was no sparkle in Leah's eyes, but Rachel had a beautiful figure and a lovely face.
(Genesis 29:17 *New Living Translation*)

¹⁵ But Leah angrily replied, "Wasn't it enough that you stole my husband? Now will you steal my son's mandrakes, too?" Rachel answered, "I will let Jacob sleep with you tonight if you give me some of the mandrakes." ¹⁶ So that evening, as Jacob was coming home from the fields, Leah went out to meet him. "You must come and sleep with me tonight!" she said. "I have paid for you with some mandrakes that my son found." So that night he slept with Leah.
(Genesis 30:15–16 *New Living Translation*)

Context Scriptures: Genesis 29, 30, 33:1–2, 34, 49:29–31; Exodus 2:1–10, 4:14; Ruth 4:11; 1 Samuel 17:12; 1 Chronicles 6:16; Matthew 1:1

**Lesson Thoughts:**

Life is hard. We miss opportunities and lose what we value. When we do something good, we don't get enough appreciation. And we're told, "God is faithful." How is he faithful? How are we supposed to hear that and believe? We expect him to be good to us, and he doesn't seem to come through.

When we turn to the Bible, we see many examples of people who experienced this problem, but few compare with Leah. Leah's story starts with a comparison with her far more beautiful sister Rachel, and with not being wanted. Within nine verses, Jacob has been conned into marrying her, and her married life begins with Jacob fighting with her father because Jacob doesn't want her.

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The failed expectations only increase. When Leah has children, this should be the start of her happiness. In Leah's culture, a wife with children can expect to be loved. But no, Jacob still loves the childless Rachel. And when Leah has had four children, Rachel won't let her sleep with Jacob anymore. Even when Leah manages to have additional children, Jacob still doesn't love her as he should. When Esau is coming with an army, Jacob sends Leah and her children ahead, but he keeps Rachel protected at the back. If Esau attacks, Leah will die first.

Leah's expectations are repeatedly disappointed. God never makes Jacob treat her right. After Rachel's death, Leah disappears from the story, unrecognized. Her death is unrecorded.

But God didn't fail Leah, even if he didn't meet her expectations. When Jacob died, he was buried with Leah. And while Leah gained no recognition in life, she gained importance after her death. She was the ancestor of 5 of the 12 tribes of Israel, and the mother of the priest-tribe, Levi, which God claimed for himself. Every priest, and every Levite, including Moses, Aaron, and Samuel, came from her. And beyond this, one of the tribes she gave birth to was Judah. This meant that David, the kings descending from him, and Jesus, were all from Leah. God didn't meet Leah's expectations, but he didn't forget her.

**Discussion Questions:**

- 1) When have you imagined the future will turn out one way, and the reality has disappointed you?
- 2) Have you ever felt like you didn't get appreciated when you should have been? What happened?
- 3) Why doesn't God meet our expectations?
- 4) God lets bad things we don't expect happen, but he also does good things we don't expect. What are some examples?

Next Lesson: Failed Expectations: Abraham

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Notes and Reflections

- 1) Make a list of some influential people in your life. (Parents, teachers, leaders, etc.)
- 2) Did they get enough recognition or appreciation?
- 3) Think about the effect they had on you. Was it worth what they went through?
- 4) Failed expectations come when we expect things from God he's never promised.
Ask God to point out these things in your life, and then think about why you expect him to do these things.
- 5) Through prayer and reading the Bible, see if you can find out what God's promises to you ARE. Those promises are the things he won't fail to do.