

We get out of a spiritual slump by responding obediently to God's Word.

1. Obey God's commands.

Genesis 35:1 (ESV) God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there. Make an altar there to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau."

One way you'll know that the Lord has spoken to you is that you'll recognize the need for personal and family cleansing.

Genesis 35:2-4 (ESV) ²So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods that are among you and purify yourselves and change your garments. ³Then let us arise and go up to Bethel, so that I may make there an altar to the God who answers me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone." ⁴So they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods that they had, and the rings that were in their ears. Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree that was near Shechem.

An idol is anything that takes the place of God in your life and blocks you from growing in the Lord and doing His will.

2. Keep your past commitments.

3. Remember God's love for you is continual.

God's past mercy in protecting Jacob from Esau is mentioned 3 times (35:1, 3, 7).

See Genesis 35:5-15

See Genesis 35:23-26

Sometimes we think that to get out of a spiritual slump we've got to discover some new spiritual truths. That's seldom the case. Usually all we need is to be reminded of the old truths we already know.

4. Trust God with your present concerns.

Genesis 35 records four tragedies which bring sorrow into Jacob's life.

- The first is the death of Deborah, Rebekah's nurse. (Genesis 35:8)
- The second sorrow is the death of Rachel. (Genesis 35:16-20)

Genesis 48:7 (ESV) As for me, when I came from Paddan, to my sorrow Rachel died in the land of Canaan on the way, when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath, and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem)."

- Jacob's third sorrow: Reuben, his firstborn son, committed incest with Rachel's maid, Bilhah.

Genesis 49:3-4 (ESV) ³“Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might, and the firstfruits of my strength, preeminent in dignity and preeminent in power. ⁴Unstable as water, you shall not have preeminence, because you went up to your father's bed; then you defiled it—he went up to my couch!

- Jacob's final sorrow is the death of his father, Isaac. (Genesis 35:27-29)

See Genesis 35: 21-22

Trials can either make us self-focused or God-focused.