

Immerse Day 11 by Karen Hinz

Jacob and Laban. Rascals both! They are both selfish and dishonest. And yet God speaks to both of them. They both resort to trickery when it comes to business. And yet ... God. They both fear God. And accept God as a "given," even Laban, who is an idol worshipper with "household gods." Both Laban and Jacob speak of God as "the God of Abraham," not so much as their own God. Jacob has not yet had an encounter with God that will draw him closer to claim God as his own. In this section of the story, both Jacob and Laban hear from God. Both Jacob and Laban appeal to God to be their witness when they make a covenant to each other. And both seem to recognize that God is the all-seeing judge. But when God calls Jacob to go home, out of fear of Laban he steals away, and out of fear of his brother Esau, Jacob plots to make himself look good. Does Jacob not think that God can orchestrate the complex human relationships encountered as Jacob obeys?

What about us? Do we relate to God as a faraway, all-seeing, judging force? As someone who was important to our parents or grandparents? Or do we see the miracle of God being with us? Guiding us? Loving us? Do we follow God while trying to take care of things ourselves – sometimes dishonestly? We are in good company, but hardly in the right. As Laban and Jacob demonstrate, trusting God does not come naturally to humanity, even to those who believe in him.