

## MARCH *God's Leaders are Tested*

*Read Genesis 32:22–28, Matthew 26:69–75, and Luke 4:1–13. What similarities do you see?*

By the middle of the year, Susan was ready to quit. As head of the congregation's building committee she had just about had it. The plans had been drawn, ground broken, and the new education wing seemed headed for completion. But between those who kept coming to her with "suggestions" and others complaining about every decision, Susan had begun to feel that she and her committee could do nothing right.

"I'm going to quit," she spluttered to her committee. "This just isn't worth it! It's like being in the middle of a battle—and you don't even know what the war is about."

Mazie, one of her steady committee members, spoke quietly. "Susan, do you think you are doing the right thing and what is best for the congregation as a whole?"

"Yes, I do. I think we have made each decision carefully and with good reason."

"And do you feel that you have served God in these decisions? Do you feel that we have followed God's will for this project?"

"Yes. I think we have spent wisely and planned well."

"Then there is no war—only some disgruntled people. They will come to terms with their whims and wishes. Our task is to be faithful and move ahead with what God wants done."

Wise words. As much as we would like to believe it, doing service among God's people is not always easy. Sometimes the more people care about the congregation and its mission the more conflict there is likely to be.

Conflict can be a real test. Jacob physically wrestled with the angel of God and seemed to win, even though he was wounded. Peter, on the other hand, wrestled with himself in the courtyard and failed. Even Jesus faced desperate conflict as he was tempted by Satan in the wilderness.

Following God's will can be difficult. That's the message we can hear so clearly in all of these experiences. Not by our own power and strength but by the power of the Spirit living and working in us we can prevail. We are not called to win every battle or be right in every decision. We are called to be faithful. Like Susan, we are called, not to please everyone, but to carry out the will of God as we see it. God will take care of the rest.

**Jesus said and continues to say, "You did not choose me but I chose you. . . ." (John 15:16) Listen, heroes of God: Because God chose us, we are free to be what God is calling us to be.**



### *For reflection and discussion*

**Recall a time when you were tested. What did that testing have to do with your being a chosen leader? What did God's promise have to do with the outcome?**

### *Prayer*

**Lord, send us the Spirit, the Comforter, to be with us in the time ahead. Inspire our decisions, and set our hearts on fire with your will so that we can be, not necessarily victorious, but faithful in all that we do in your name. Amen.**