



*When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought,  
"Surely God was in this place, and I, I did not know."—Genesis 28:16*

As Jacob wakes up, he's confused by the barren wilderness surrounding him and shaken by the power of a vivid dream about a ladder reaching heaven, complete with messengers going up and down. Wiping the sleep from his eyes, Jacob whispers, "Wow! God must have been right here, in this place, and I did not know."

For Jewish scholars, God doesn't waste words. Every *jot and tittle*—the tiniest letters and marks in Scripture—are considered sacred, so for centuries, rabbis have debated the meaning of Jacob's redundant "I" in the Hebrew text.

Many believe the extra "I" (see verse above) indicates a preoccupation with self. In other words, "Surely God was here all along, and I did not know it because I was too busy paying attention to myself."

Jacob comes to the desert out of his own self-directed choosing. He is searching for a way to resolve his inner chaos and conflicts. Jacob is preoccupied and self-absorbed as he pursues a different future.

It's here in the "wilderness"—a dreadful place of nothingness, without the resources to sustain life—that God chooses to meet Jacob with an invitation to a new tomorrow.

In 21st-century America, perhaps the greatest obstacle to a relationship with God is creating the inner space to notice and welcome his invitations.

Heart's desire will continually point us back to a transforming friendship with Jesus. However, as long as we remain preoccupied and self-absorbed—busy and self-focused—we will likely miss what God is doing right under our noses.

### **Question**

Prayerfully ask Jesus how he is making himself known to you each day this week. You may be surprised! Keep a journal of what he shows you.