

Small Group Guide: Jacob's New Lease on Life

Genesis 45:16-28 | The Story of Joseph, Week 13

Opening Prayer (2-3 minutes)

Begin by asking God to open hearts and minds to receive His truth, and to help the group see His bigger picture in their own lives.

Icebreaker (5-10 minutes)

Question: Share about a time when something that seemed too good to be true actually turned out to be real. How did you initially respond to the news?

Review the Story (5 minutes)

Briefly recap where we are in Joseph's story:

- Joseph's identity has been revealed to his brothers
 - Pharaoh generously provides for Joseph's entire family
 - The brothers return to Canaan to bring Jacob the news
 - Jacob struggles to believe the good news about Joseph
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Discussion Questions

Section 1: God's Sovereignty Over Hearts (15-20 minutes)

Read Proverbs 21:1 and Genesis 45:16-20

1. **How does Pharaoh's generosity demonstrate God's sovereignty?** What examples from Scripture (or your own life) show God working through unexpected people or circumstances?
2. **The sermon mentioned several kings whose hearts God directed** (Cyrus, Artaxerxes, Darius, Nebuchadnezzar, Pharaoh). What does this teach us about God's power over earthly authorities? How should this impact our prayers regarding political or workplace leaders?
3. **Pharaoh offered "the best of the land" to Joseph's family.** How does this parallel what God offers us in Christ? In what ways do we settle for less than God's best?

Section 2: New Clothes, New Destiny (15-20 minutes)

Read Genesis 45:21-24 and Ephesians 4:22-24

4. **Joseph gave his brothers new clothes, symbolizing a change in destiny.** What "old clothes" (habits, mindsets, identities) do you need to take off? What "new clothes" is God calling you to put on?
 5. **The sermon listed many biblical examples of clothing changes representing transformation.** Which example resonates most with you and why?
 6. **Read Ephesians 6:10-17.** Why is it important to "daily put on the armor of God" rather than viewing salvation as just a ticket to heaven? Which piece of armor do you most need to focus on right now?
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Section 3: "Do Not Quarrel on the Way" (15-20 minutes)

Read Genesis 45:24

7. **Joseph told his brothers not to quarrel on the journey home.** Why do you think he felt this warning was necessary? What does this reveal about human nature, even after experiencing forgiveness?
 8. **The sermon states: "Guilt and shame are the playground of the enemy."** How have you seen guilt and shame keep people (or yourself) from fully embracing God's forgiveness and moving forward?
 9. **Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.** What does it mean that we've been made "the righteousness of God" in Christ? How should this truth change how we view our past sins and failures?
 10. **Joseph essentially told his brothers to focus on the good news, not the past.** What past situations do you need to "let go" and stop rehearsing? How can this group help you do that?
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Section 4: Jacob's Struggle to Believe (15-20 minutes)

Read Genesis 45:25-28

11. **Jacob's heart "became numb" when he heard the good news.** Have you ever struggled to believe good news from God? What made it difficult to trust?
12. **The sermon points out that Jacob interpreted life through his pain rather than through God's promises.** How do pain, disappointment, or betrayal cloud our ability to see God's work? What promises of God do you need to focus on instead of your circumstances?

13. **Jacob needed evidence—he had to see the wagons and hear Joseph's words.** Is it okay to need evidence for faith? How does God provide evidence for us today?
 14. **Read Ephesians 2:1-9.** Why do people struggle with the simplicity of salvation by grace through faith? What "works" are you tempted to add to the gospel?
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Key Takeaways (5 minutes)

Have group members share which of these truths spoke most powerfully to them:

- **God directs the hearts of leaders and circumstances for His purposes**
 - **In Christ, we receive a complete change of destiny—new clothes for old**
 - **We must stop rehearsing our guilt and shame; our debt is paid in full**
 - **Don't interpret life through pain and wounds; interpret it through God's promises**
 - **Salvation is a gift, not something we earn—we were dead and God made us alive**
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Practical Application (10-15 minutes)

This Week's Challenge:

Choose one of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: Put Off/Put On

- Identify one "old garment" (sin pattern, negative mindset, unhealthy habit) you need to remove
- Identify the corresponding "new garment" (Christ-like character, truth, healthy practice) you need to put on
- Share your commitment with one person in the group for accountability

Option 2: Stop Quarreling on the Way

- Identify one past hurt, failure, or sin you keep rehearsing
- Write down the truth of what God says about you in Christ
- Each time the enemy brings up the past, speak the truth out loud: "My debt is paid. I am the righteousness of God in Christ."

Option 3: See God's Bigger Picture

- Journal about a current difficult circumstance
- Ask God to help you see it from His perspective rather than through your pain
- Write down specific promises from Scripture that apply to your situation

Option 4: Daily Armor

- Each morning this week, pray through Ephesians 6:10-17, intentionally "putting on" each piece of armor
- Journal about which piece you needed most each day

Prayer Time (10-15 minutes)

Suggested Prayer Focus:

- **Praise God** for His sovereignty over all circumstances and hearts
- **Thank Jesus** for the complete transformation He's given us—from death to life
- **Confess** areas where we've interpreted life through pain rather than promises
- **Ask God** to help us fully embrace our new identity and stop rehearsing the past
- **Pray for one another's** specific struggles shared during discussion

Closing Thought

"What if we woke with little concern for what God has placed before us? Thankfully, Joseph was a do-all-to-the-glory-of-God man. These brothers have a new destiny... Did they deserve it? No, but God is gracious to sinners."

You have a new destiny in Christ. Walk in it!

For Next Week

- Read Genesis 46-47
- Come prepared to discuss how God continues to fulfill His promises to Jacob's family
- Continue practicing your chosen application from this week

