

Small Group Guide: The Blessing

Series: The Story of Joseph: Seeing the Bigger Picture (Week 17)

Scripture: Genesis 48

Opening Prayer

Begin your time together with prayer, asking God to help you understand His faithfulness and to see how His promises remain constant even in changing circumstances.

Ice Breaker

Share: What is one of the most meaningful blessings or words of encouragement someone has spoken over your life? How did it impact you?

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. **God's promises outlast our lives** - Jacob was dying, but God's promise continued
2. **God's presence remains constant** - Jacob was leaving, but God stayed with his descendants
3. **God's provision transcends human ability** - Jacob couldn't take them back to Canaan, but God would
4. **God's grace doesn't follow human expectations** - The younger son (Ephraim) received the greater blessing
5. **Our testimony matters** - Jacob rehearsed God's faithfulness to the next generation

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

1. **Read Genesis 48:1-7.** Why do you think it was important for Jacob to rehearse God's promises to Joseph before blessing his grandsons? What does this teach us about passing on our faith?
2. **Read Genesis 48:15-16.** Jacob describes God in three ways: the God his fathers walked with, his shepherd, and the angel who redeemed him. Which of these descriptions resonates most with your own experience of God? Why?
3. **Read Genesis 48:17-20.** Joseph was displeased when Jacob blessed Ephraim (the younger) over Manasseh (the older). What does this reversal teach us about how God works? Can you think of other biblical examples where God chose the unexpected person?

Personal Reflection

4. Jacob's life was marked by failures, pain, and family dysfunction, yet at the end he could testify to God's faithfulness. How does this encourage you regarding your own failures or difficult circumstances?
5. The sermon states: "At the end of his life, Jacob had very little strength left, but he still had the promises of God...and that was enough." When have you experienced a time when God's promises were all you had to hold onto? What did you learn?

6. Jacob made preparations for his death and used his final moments to bless the next generation. If you knew your time was short, what spiritual truths or blessings would you want to pass on to those you love?

Application to Life

7. Jacob couldn't undo his failures, erase family pain, or personally fulfill God's promises—but he could testify to God's faithfulness. What limitations are you facing right now that you need to surrender to God's greater plan?
 8. The sermon emphasizes that "the blessing" comes through Jesus Christ, who bore the curse so we could receive God's blessing. How does understanding this change the way you view your own struggles or circumstances?
 9. Jacob "adopted" Joseph's sons into the covenant family. How can we, as believers, spiritually adopt or mentor the next generation in our families, churches, or communities?
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Practical Applications

Choose one or more of these action steps to complete before your next meeting:

Personal

- **Write Your Testimony:** Like Jacob, write down 2-3 ways God has been faithful to you throughout your life. Share this with someone younger in the faith this week.
- **Memorize the Promise:** Choose one promise from Scripture that speaks to your current situation and commit it to memory.
- **Evaluate Your Legacy:** Spend time in prayer asking God what spiritual legacy you're leaving for those who come after you.

Relational

- **Bless Someone:** Intentionally speak a blessing over a family member, friend, or someone in your small group this week. Be specific about how you see God working in their life.
- **Intergenerational Connection:** Reach out to someone from a different generation (older or younger) and ask them to share their story of God's faithfulness.

Community

- **Share the Blessing:** Discuss as a group how you can collectively invest in the next generation at your church (children's ministry, youth group, young adults).

Closing Reflection

Read Genesis 48:21 together:

"Then Israel said to Joseph, 'Behold, I am about to die, but God will be with you and will bring you again to the land of your fathers.'"

Consider:

- Jacob is dying, but God's promise is not dying with him
- Jacob is leaving, but God's presence remains
- Jacob won't take them back to Canaan, but God will

What does this teach us about trusting God beyond our own abilities and lifetimes?

Prayer Requests and Closing Prayer

- Share prayer requests related to areas where you need to trust God's promises
 - Pray for each other to have faith that God's purposes will prevail
 - Thank God for His faithfulness across generations
 - Ask God to help you be faithful witnesses of His goodness to the next generation
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Looking Ahead

Before next week, read Genesis 49-50 as we conclude the story of Joseph and see how God's bigger picture unfolds.

Challenge: Journal about one area where you need to trust that God's promise is bigger than your current circumstance.