



Jacob Blesses His Family

FAMILIES IN TRUTH

Genesis 48 - 50

This week, we come to the end of Joseph's story and Jacob's life. Through the amazing twists and turns in Joseph's story, we can see that God works everything to fit His plan and purpose. This week, we'll look at what Joseph's story has to do with YOU!



Day #1: Come Praise

Go to one of the windows in your house. Can you find a spot of dirt on the window? Change your focus back and forth between the spot and the outdoors. Now, what is bigger - the spot or the great outdoors beyond it? When you look toward the window, you can focus on the spot, and complain about it, or you can look at the outdoors and talk about how beautiful and vast the sky is. It all depends on your focus.

Throughout Jacob's life, he had times of focusing on the Lord, and then times of focusing on his troubles. During the times when Jacob stopped focusing on God, he was miserable. When he did not turn his eyes to God, Jacob could only see the suffering he was in. (This is sort of like only seeing the spot on the window.)

During those times, Jacob complained, "Everything is against me!" (Genesis 42:36) And he asked his sons, "Why did you bring this trouble on me?" (Genesis 43:6) Jacob missed out on the joy of looking past his problems and seeing God's hand at work.

But when Jacob was reunited with his beloved son, Joseph, he finally understood that God was always with him, always working things out for good. Then, in his old age, Jacob praised the Lord (Genesis 47:31).

† Then Jacob said to Joseph, "I never thought I would see your face again, but now God has let me see your children, too!" - Genesis 48:11

***** In your own life, you have a choice: You can focus on your troubles, or you can look past your problems and look for God in your daily life. Like Jacob, you can complain or come praise!

Day #2: Flipped

Joseph was different than Jacob, because Joseph's trust in the Lord never wavered. Different people had tried to harm Joseph, but through it all, God remained with Joseph and Joseph abided in God.

Let's look back over all the hardships and trials in Joseph's life.

- His brothers hated him.
- His brothers threw him into a pit.
- His brothers sold him as a slave.
- The traders took him to a foreign land.
- Potiphar's wife lied about him.
- Joseph was thrown in prison.
- The cupbearer forgot all about Joseph when he got out of prison.

All of these difficult circumstances were caused by other people's sin. However, God flipped all these things around for good, because:

(God) works out everything to fit His plan and purpose. - Ephesians 1:11b

†* You may have to go through some really hard situations because of other people's sins. There are two VERY important things to remember. Remember that GOD IS ALWAYS WITH YOU just as he was with Joseph, and GOD CAN FLIP these things around for good, just as He did with Joseph's hard times.

Hold this up to a mirror:



Remember that God is the EXPERT at flipping bad things around to work for good!

Day #3: Greatest Promise

We have often looked at the wonderful promises that God made to Abraham.

God promised to give Abraham a huge family.
Abraham had Isaac; Isaac had Jacob. Jacob's 70 descendants were just the beginning of this family - which today has over 15 million members!

God promised to bless this family.
While everyone else was hungry, Pharaoh gave Joseph's family the best that Egypt had to offer.

Day #3 continued:



And God also promised: **All the families on earth will be blessed through you.** - Genesis 12:3b NLT

This was the very best part of God's promise to Abraham. But how could every person on earth - throughout all time - be blessed through Abraham's family?

All people have the same problem: their sin separates them from the holy God. So God was going to send a **Savior** who would take away the sins of the world. That Savior was Jesus, and He was going to be born into Abraham's family one day. Jesus would be the greatest blessing to all people, because He would be the **ONLY** way for them to come back to God.

When Jacob had come to the end of his life, he gathered his sons together to bless them. He spoke about the future of each son. To Judah (the brother who offered to give his own freedom for Benjamin's) Jacob proclaimed the right to rule. He said a King would come through him who would rule the nations (Genesis 49:10). Forty generations later, Jesus was born into the line of Judah! (Matthew 1:3, 16)



Read the promise above that is written in bold. Are YOU a part of a family on earth? Of course you are! This promise is about you! Joseph's entire amazing life was about God's love for YOU! God used Joseph to save Judah's life, and through Judah's line came the Savior, Jesus. Take a moment to thank God for having you in mind when He was with Joseph in the pit and the prison.

Day #4: Kingdom Eyes

At the ripe old age of 147, Jacob died with Joseph by his side, just as God had promised (Genesis 46:4). After Jacob died, Joseph's brothers became very frightened. They were afraid that Joseph was only being nice to them to keep his father happy. They feared that Joseph would take revenge on them now that Jacob was gone. One more time, they came to Joseph and bowed down in front of him. Joseph told them they had nothing to be afraid of. He said:



You planned to harm me. But God planned it for good. He planned to do what is now being done. He wanted to save many lives. - Genesis 50:20

Joseph saw with "Kingdom eyes." He knew that God works all things together for good (Romans 8:28), and he was honored to be used in God's amazing plan. From before the creation of the

Day #4 continued:

world, God had a plan to save people from their sin (1 Peter 1:20). Joseph was just one part of God's plan. Joseph saved Judah's life, and through Judah's family line came Jesus.

From there, every person has the opportunity to place his or her trust in Jesus, and enter the Kingdom of heaven.



Do you see with "Kingdom eyes," as Joseph did? Can you put aside your discomfort or your anger in order for God's plan to go forward? This may mean forgiving your brother or sister in order to show them God's love. Or it may mean letting someone have your seat in the lunchroom so they will know you care about them. "Kingdom eyes" see that people coming into God's Kingdom is more important than having everything go your way.

Day #5: Chain Reaction

Find a chain to look at. Perhaps you have a necklace that has a chain. (If you can't find a chain, just think about a big, sturdy chain.) See how each link is connected to the one before it and the one after it. This is very much like the "chain" of humanity. Each person's life is touched by someone, and goes on to touch others.

This was the case in Joseph's life. God used Joseph to impact the lives his brothers. Joseph's forgiveness and grace not only saved their lives, but it also taught his brothers about the grace of God. Many generations later, the Savior, Jesus, was born into this line. Joseph was an important link in the chain of God's plan.



Our lives are connected to one another. Who is it that told you the truth about Jesus' saving grace? Was it one of your parents, a grandparent, teacher, or friend? Who was it that told *that* person about the Lord? Do you know who told *that* person? If possible, take the time find out these names. These people are like a faith-chain, and you are a valuable link. But the chain should not end with you! Who have you told about the Lord? Who will you tell in the future? When you tell others, the chain of faith continues.



And how can they hear about Him unless someone tells them? - Romans 10:14b NLT

Make a "link" with your left hand by making a loop with your index finger and thumb. Now, add a "link" with your right hand. Have your mom or dad add their "links" to your chain. How many people in your family you can add to your "chain." Let this be a picture of one person sharing God's love and truth with the next person, and so on, and so on...