

SUMMER STAFF DEVOS

2012

RETURN OF THE KING



Welcome

We are so excited you will be serving with us this summer! In your hand is the devotionals we will all be working on. Each day we are asking that you set aside time to spend with Jesus. Talking, praying, reading and thinking about the questions asked in this book. You will meet weekly with your covenant group to discuss the things you learned as you read. There is an expectation on our part that you are spending intimate time with Jesus during the week and we are excited to hear what He is teaching you. This daily spending time with Jesus may be new to you but it is really essential if we want to serve in the power of the Holy Spirit and not in our own weakness! So don't be afraid to ask questions if you need help. We want to see you grow deep roots in your faith throughout your summer.

We will be reading through the book of Genesis and it is packed with interesting stories, real people growing in their faith as well as some stories that will cause you to shake your head (at least that what they do to me!).

Know that you have been prayed for and will continue to be. We are blessed to serve alongside you this summer!

Serving together-

*Mike, Shawn, Susan, Joel, Bekah, Jake, Kristen, Max, Keren, Liz,
David & Alyssa*

PS- This summer we will be memorizing verses from the Navigators "B" pack- you will have about 2/week to work on. Verses are in the ESV. There has also been one verse substitution per the author of the devotional books preference ☺

Last summer we did the "A" pack- and if anyone can come and recite them to Susan you will win a free Saturday lunch

How to Have a Quiet Time

Why Have a Quiet Time?

- To enjoy fellowship with God and get to know Him better (Phil. 3:8-10; Matt. 22:37,38).
- To delight God (Proverbs 15:8b).
- To discover principles to direct our lives (Psalm 119:105).
- To develop perspectives on life from God's point of view (Romans 12:2).

Practical Suggestions:

Set aside a regular time each day to spend with God and make it a daily priority.

Find a quiet place where you can be alone and free from distractions. (Mark 1:35)

Come with an attitude of expectancy and a hunger to meet God. (Luke 10:38-42)

Quiet Time Ideas

Use the ACTS acrostic during your quiet time

A=Adoration:

Spend time praising the Lord by praying the Psalms back to Him (Psalm 28:7 & 100:4).

Sing hymns, listening to a praise tape or praise Him for His attributes.

C=Confession:

Ask God to search your heart (Psalm 139:23,24). Confess any sins the Holy Spirit reveals to you (Psalm.

66:18, I John 1:9). Make certain that you're filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:15-20).

T=Thanksgiving:

Thank God for all that He's done and is doing in your life and the lives of others. Write a list of what

you're thankful for.

S=Supplication:

Pray for specific things each day such as personal concerns, family, upcoming events, friends, missionaries, etc. Write down your requests so you'll have a record of God's guidance and faithfulness.

Spend time in the Word

- Have a schedule for your daily reading and read slowly and thoughtfully.
- Ask questions about how it relates to your life.
- Reread and substitute your name in appropriate places addressing the passage to God.

Try this using

Philippians 2:13.

- Occasionally read out loud.
- Record your thoughts and the verses that stand out to you in a notebook.

Action Point: Select a definite time and place for your quiet time for each day of the next week. Start with a short period of time that's comfortable for you. Try 10 to 15 minutes.

Staff Training

These beginning chapters may be very familiar- but try to read it slowly and really take in the enormity of what is taking place. Let the Holy Spirit teach you about creation.

Monday

Read chapter 1:1- 2:3

Describe what happens on each day (I know, a classic question- but really envision it)

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

The Hebrew word for created (bara) refers to something brought from nothing- an act only God can perform.

When God commands the physical world to do something: how does it respond? Why do you think this is so?

Romans 3:23

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Isaiah 53:6

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

What do you learn about God & His character from this chapter?

What was man given to eat? What were the animals given to eat?
What do you think it would mean to have dominion over the animals? Or
what does it mean to subdue the earth?

Explain what you think it means that the man & the woman were created in
God's image.

Why is this significant for your work here this summer?

Periodically, you will see a box like this at the end of a day's study. It will ask you a reflective type question about what you hear the Holy Spirit saying to you, what you sense God is saying to you through His word. It is meant to cause you some pause. God wants to speak to us, He wants us to be quiet and listen for Him. Take time daily to ask Him to teach you and to wait to see what He is saying. He is a relational God, He wants relationship with you.

Tuesday: Staff Training

Read Genesis chapter 2

I love this chapter!

Describe how the man is formed by God:

In His creating the atmosphere of the garden- how does God demonstrate His care for man?

Romans 3:23

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Isaiah 53:6

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

What was the man's primary job in the garden?

From verses 16-17 what was an additional responsibility given to the man?

Why was the woman created?

How can both maleness & femaleness be part of "image-bearing"?

How can you tell that Adam liked the woman?

What can you learn about God's character from this chapter?

What can you learn about how we were created to function in relationships from this chapter?

Wednesday: Staff Training

Read Genesis chapter 3

What part of God's character does the serpent question?

How does he lie to Eve?

Romans 3:23

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Isaiah 53:6

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Why do you think Adam is so quiet in the beginning of this chapter and just takes the fruit Eve gives him?

Why do you think they noticed their nakedness after their sin?

How are Adam & Eve's excuses about their sin similar to ones that you use?

What is the curse for Adam?

For Eve?

Why do you think they are cursed so uniquely?

God sews clothes for Adam & Eve. This is seemingly the first animal that was killed. How does this foreshadow what Christ's death does for us?

Thursday: Staff Training

Read Genesis chapter 4

What was different in the offerings made by Cain & Abel?

Why do you think God rejected the one and accepted the other?

In what ways do you make an offering to the Lord? (financial, time, talents, gifts, etc...)

How is the Lord patient & loving with Cain?

What sin is crouching at your door? And how?

What do you think this means?

How does Cain respond to his judgment from God?

Read Hebrews 12:22-24

How does the blood of Jesus speak a better word than Abel's blood?

How is that encouraging to you as you head into serving this summer?

Romans 3:23

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Isaiah 53:6

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Friday: Staff Training

Read Genesis 4:25- chapter 5

Why do you think that the scripture mentions Seth replacing Abel? What do you think God is hoping for from these two men?

How does 4:26 work into this?

Romans 3:23

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Isaiah 53:6

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

As you read through these descendants list things that stand out to you :

What part of (speculation) being Methuselah's father would drive Enoch to walk with God?

Describe what you see in your mind when you think of the phrase "walk with God"? What does that look like?

What in your life has driven you to walk with God?

Read Hebrews 11:5-6

What is faith? And why is it important to us?

Saturday: Staff Training

Read Psalm 104

Describe creation from this vantage point:

Romans 3:23

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Isaiah 53:6

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Follow the lead of the Psalmist and sing praise to God- yes sing out loud right now!

What do you hear God saying to you today?

Sunday: Staff Training

Read Psalm 139

We read this week about God's designing man & woman in His image. He also designed you, fashioned you and created you to be His.

What does He tell you about yourself in these verses?

Romans 3:23

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Isaiah 53:6

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

What do you learn about His love for you in these verses?

Spend some time in prayer asking the Lord to search you and know you (vs.1) and to lead you in His everlasting way (vs.24).

Week 1

We learned at the end of last week that faith pleases God. Enoch's faith pleased God so much He took him away! Throughout Genesis we are going to have the chance to read the faith stories of many, many people. With each new life- ponder how you can grow in faith, what opportunities can you use to stretch your faith?

Monday

Read Genesis chapter 6

Describe people at this time:

How does it impact or hit you to hear that God was filled with pain over His creation?

Why did Noah find favor with God?

Read Psalm 19:13 and define what it means to walk blamelessly:

How is this different from Noah (or you & I) being sinless?

Can we be sinless?

Romans 6:23

*For the wages of sin is death,
but the free gift of God is eternal
life in Christ Jesus our Lord*

Hebrews 9:27

*And just as it is appointed for
man to die once, and after that
comes judgement.*

Can we be blameless?

How does Noah respond to God's OUTRAGEOUS command to build the ark?

How would he be able to collect the animals?

When has God asked something outrageous of you?

How has He provided to help you accomplish what He has asked?

What do you feel the Holy Spirit impressing on your heart today?

Tuesday: Week 1

Read Genesis chapter 7

Describe what happens:

So Noah & his family enter the ark- how long does it take for the rain to begin?

What do you think they might be thinking during this waiting time?

How would this grow their faith?

Imagine seeing all the animals arrive. How would you be feeling?

How does verse 16 demonstrate the Lord's tender care for Noah?

How have you seen the Lord care for you?

Romans 6:23

*For the wages of sin is death,
but the free gift of God is eternal
life in Christ Jesus our Lord*

Hebrews 9:27

*And just as it is appointed for
man to die once, and after that
comes judgement.*

What do you feel the Holy Spirit impressing on your heart today?

Wednesday: Week 1

Read Genesis chapter 8

Retell the events in your own words:

How does the phrase “but God” in verse 1 change the events?

How long has Noah been in the ark?

What is their first response when they exit the ark?

What are some things in your life/events/people that draw you to praise God?

Revelation tells us that our prayers are like incense rising to the Lord. Spend some time right now praising God in prayer.

Romans 6:23

*For the wages of sin is death,
but the free gift of God is eternal
life in Christ Jesus our Lord*

Hebrews 9:27

*And just as it is appointed for
man to die once, and after that
comes judgement.*

Thursday

Read Genesis chapter 9

What are some of the commands God gives Noah and his family in this new season?

What is different about their eating?

Romans 6:23

*For the wages of sin is death,
but the free gift of God is eternal
life in Christ Jesus our Lord*

Hebrews 9:27

*And just as it is appointed for
man to die once, and after that
comes judgement.*

Explain the covenant God made with Noah, his descendents (us) and all the living creatures:

Why do you think God gives them a sign of His covenant?

What does it mean to you that God makes a plan to always remember His covenant?

How have you seen God remember you?

OK- we can't ignore this weird story at the end of the chapter ☺ Why do you think it's included?

What should we be learning from it?

Friday

Read Genesis 10-11

A side note: The Japhethites become what we call the Gentiles; The Hamites become the Canaanites (also Gentiles) and the Semites become the Israelites (Jews).

What part of the people building the tower does God object to?

Romans 6:23

*For the wages of sin is death,
but the free gift of God is eternal
life in Christ Jesus our Lord*

Hebrews 9:27

*And just as it is appointed for
man to die once, and after that
comes judgement.*

How does He intervene to stop their sin?

Where in your life have you built something to “make a name for yourself”?

Why do you think Terah up and leaves Ur?

Why do you think he stops moving and settles in Haran?

How could 12:1 answer some of this question?

How does God speak to us today?

Saturday & Sunday: Week 1

OK- onto some interesting fun! We are going to look up a string of verses that begin with the words “but God...” or “but” when it implies God has done something! and we are going to see how God interrupts, saves, challenges & moves into our lives. Hopefully we will be encouraged and it will grow & stretch our faith. We may also be surprised by God Himself ☺ I have to admit that I stole this idea from a friend who shared about how much these phrases meant to her. And I thought, “How cool!” (all taken from the NIV translation)

Romans 6:23

*For the wages of sin is death,
but the free gift of God is eternal
life in Christ Jesus our Lord*

Hebrews 9:27

*And just as it is appointed for
man to die once, and after that
comes judgement.*

Read the following verses and write out next to each what happens:

Genesis 3:3

Genesis 8:1

Genesis 20:3

Genesis 21:12

Genesis 31:42b

Genesis 45:7

Genesis 45:8

Genesis 48:21

Genesis 50:24

1 Samuel 6:19

1 Samuel 23:14

Psalms 9:18

Psalms 66:19

Psalms 73:26

Psalms 74:12

Jeremiah 10:12

Mark 2:7

Luke 16:15

Acts 2:24

Acts 3:15

Acts 7:42

Acts 10:40

Acts 13:30

Acts 26:22

Romans 5:8

1 Corinthians 1:27

1 Corinthians 3:6

1 Corinthians 6:11

1 Corinthians 12:24

1 Corinthians 15:38

2 Corinthians 7:6

Galatians 3:18

Galatians 4:7

Ephesians 5:3

Hebrews 3:4

Hebrews 8:8

Hebrews 10:12

Hebrews 12:10

1 Peter 2:9

1 Peter 2:10

Revelation 11:11

What has God shown you about Himself in these verses?

How does reading this grow your faith?

Monday: Week 2

Read Genesis chapter 12

What is the command God gives to Abram?

What does He promise? (7 things)

Romans 5:8

But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

What strikes you as amazing about this whole thing?

What do you think motivates God to bless Abram so greatly?

What do you think it looks like to call on “the name of the Lord”?

How are you reminded in this chapter that Abram is not perfect- in fact he is fairly flawed just like us?

In verse 17 there is a “but” that we did not look up! Why do you think God intervenes?

When has there been a time that you made your own mess but God intervened to help?

Tuesday: Week 2

Read Genesis chapter 13

Abram keeps building altars. What is the purpose of this?

What do you learn about Abram's character from his discussion with Lot?

Romans 5:8

But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

What do you learn about Lot's character?

Lot pitches his tent near the wicked town of Sodom. It seems like he knew it was wicked from the text.

What is dangerous for him in this choice?

When have you camped out close to sin? Where are you camping out now close to sin?

Pray and ask God to show you where you may be in danger.

What do you feel the Holy Spirit impressing on your heart today?

Wednesday: Week 2

Read Genesis chapter 14

What do you think Abram is feeling as he heads out to rescue Lot?

What is amazing about this rescue story?

Romans 5:8

But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Melchizedek is an interesting character. You can look up references to him in Psalm 110:4 & Hebrews 7:1-4 to see the little that is known about him. He is significant as he functioned as both a king & a priest- giving us a picture of how Jesus would later function.

How is Abram honoring God with his choice to accept no gifts from Melchizedek?

What, right now, do you trust solely in God to provide?

What are you learning about God as you read & pray?

Thursday: Week 2

Read Genesis chapter 15

God reassures Abram in vs. 1 and tells him to not be afraid. What do you think would be making Abram fearful?

Picture being Abram during this amazing conversation with God. What stands out to you?

Romans 5:8

But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Abram knows that God has already promised to make him into a great nation. But he cannot figure out how God can do that with Sarai being barren. Does God rebuke Abram for his questions?

How does He respond to him?

How does this encourage you?

In ancient times, two parties would guarantee a covenant by walking through animals cut in half as written here. In effect they were saying; "do to me as has been done to these animals if I do not keep my end of this covenant." It literally means "to cut a covenant". As Abram watches, God Himself becomes both parties. In the smoke & the fire God promises Abram that He alone is responsible to honor the covenant He has made.

How is this similar to what is offered to us in relationship with Jesus?

Friday: Week 2

Read Genesis chapter 16 (another one of my faves ☺)

What is wrong with Abram's response to Sarai in this story?

What is he forgetting?

Romans 5:8

But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Sarai then gets angry with Hagar and the situation and becomes nasty. When have you gotten angry even when it has been your own sin that has gotten you into the mess you are in?

How does God's response to Hagar encourage you?

In calling God "the God who sees me" - what is Hagar saying?

What do you want God to see about your situation/ about you?

How has He shown you that He does see?

Saturday: Week 2

Read Romans chapter 4

What do Romans 4:3 & Hebrews 11:6 have in common?

Why do you think faith is so special to God?

What do we learn about God from this chapter?

Find out the definition of justifies/justified:

Do you believe that God has the power to do what He says He will do?

Really think about this- what has God said that He will do in your life (purify you/finish the work He has started...)? Do you believe Him?

Is there an area of sin that the Holy Spirit is confronting in you?

Sunday: Week 2

We are going to spend some time today looking up some verses that talk about God's name and see what we learn. Abram was constantly calling on the name of the Lord. Why? What is special about His name?

2 Chronicles 2:4

Psalm 7:17

Psalm 20:7

Psalm 25:11

Psalm 29:2

Psalm 68:4

Psalm 103:1

Psalm 113:3

Psalm 115:1

Psalm 118:25

Psalm 124:8

Psalm 148:13

Proverbs 18:10

Jeremiah 51:19

Acts 2:21

Romans 10:13

Why do you think the Lord's name is special?

Spend some time in praise. Yep, sing some out loud!

Romans 5:8

But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Monday: Week 3

Read Genesis chapter 17

In light of the events in chapter 16- why do you think God comes to reaffirm His covenant with Abram?

What does God promise Abraham?

1 Peter 3:18

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.

Why do you think He changes his name now and not earlier in the story?

Read again Psalm 19:13 and define what it means to be blameless:

What was Abraham's responsibility in this covenant?

This might seem like a strange question- but of all the ways God could have chosen to "mark" Abraham and his descendents as His own- why circumcision?

Picture yourself talking to God face to face- what comes to mind? How do you think His voice sounds? How does He look at you? Incredible to think about, huh?

Reread verse 22- what happens?

Abraham's quick obedience in verse 23 seems to be his pattern.

Are you a quick obeyer when you sense God is asking you to do something?

Stop right now and ask God to help you have a desire to hear His voice clearly and quickly obey. This has been a great prayer for me and keeps me focused on the fact that God is the one in charge (He's the boss). My job is to listen and obey.

What do you hear God saying to you today?

Tuesday: Week 3

Read Genesis 18:1-15

Who does it seem like the 3 men are?
Why do you think this?

Sarah gets rebuked for laughing at the idea that she would have a son. In chapter 17, Abraham also laughs and gets a patient explanation. Why the difference?

1 Peter 3:18

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.

In your life right now, what seems to hard for the Lord to accomplish?

Why do you think Sarah lies about laughing?

When your sin is exposed, how do you typically respond?

Why do you think God works to expose our sin?

How does it benefit us to acknowledge our sin?

Wednesday: Week 3

Read Genesis 18:16-33

What are some of the amazing things happening in verse 16-19?

Read verse 19- which came first: God choosing or Abraham following?

Why do you think the Lord decides to discuss the situation with Sodom with Abraham?

What is amazing about this conversation?

Why do you think God wants us to pray and dialogue with Him about things that matter to us?

From this passage- do you think God changes His mind about what He is going to do with Sodom?

1 Peter 3:18

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.

Thursday: Week 3

Read Genesis chapter 19

If you haven't read this before- does it surprise you that such a story is in the Bible?

OK- think back to the 3 visitors that came to see Abram in chapter 18. Who exactly were they?

1 Peter 3:18

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.

So Lot (that we met in chapters 13 & 14) has apparently moved into this wicked city. Based on this decision what can we surmise about his character?

How do you feel about Lot's care for his daughters?

Why do you think he is so concerned for these visitors?

Why do you think the looking back was judged so severely?

According to verse 29 why does God spare Lot?

What is sad to you as you read about the decision Lot's daughters make?

Are you aware of any famous Moabites? (If not- stay tuned for the weekend.☺)

Friday: Week 3

Read Genesis chapter 20

Arghhhh! Another sad story!

Why is this account surprising about Abraham? What should he know by now?

Why do you think God intervenes again?

1 Peter 3:18

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.

In relation to Abraham's covenant with God- why is this such a foolish plan (saying Sarah was his sister)?

What foolish choice have you made recently?

Have you asked the Lord to intervene and show you His wisdom?

What do you feel the Holy Spirit impressing on your heart today?

Saturday & Sunday: Week 3

Read Ruth chapters 1-4 over the next 2 days along with Matthew 1:1-6
What seems to be special about Ruth's character?

What are the things in this story that surprise you?

1 Peter 3:18

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.

Where does the Moabite line originate?

What is surprising about Ruth winding up in the lineage of Christ?

What does this tell you about God's character?

What does this teach you about God's ultimate control over events/people/times/places(His sovereignty)?

Monday-Week 4

Read Genesis chapter 21

The name Isaac means “he laughs”- why is this an appropriate name in many ways?

What does the birth of Isaac teach us about God?

Titus 3:5

He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.

How do you feel about God’s response to Abraham regarding Ishmael?

Hagar had initially been given to Sarah as her maid and therefore Sarah could dismiss her. But because Sarah had given her to Abraham and she had bore a son she had elevated to the status of a wife and sending her away would be similar to divorcing her though she would gain her freedom as well.

What can we learn about Abraham’s character by (1) his distress over sending Ishmael away as well as (2) his prompt obedience to the Lord?

God again comes to comfort & reach out to Hagar. He tells her to not be afraid.

What in your life causes you to fear right now?

Have you asked God into this situation and feeling of fear? Where is He at in the midst of it?

Spend some time praying right now.

Tuesday- Week 4

Read Genesis chapter 22

From the early verses in the chapter what kind of dad do you think Abraham was to Isaac?

The region of Moriah would be about 3 days journey.

We don't know exactly how old Isaac was- but he was old enough to carry the wood for the fire.

In earlier weeks, I talked about how each new story in Genesis would give us an opportunity to see that person's faith legacy left to us. Where do you see evidence of Abraham's faith in this chapter?

Where can you see evidence of Isaac's faith?

In verse 8 the Hebrew word for 'will provide' is Raah which literally means "to see to" or "to attend to". From Hebrews 11: 17-19 what can we speculate was going on in Abraham's head?

What aspects of God's character do you see in this chapter?

How does the ram ultimately foreshadow what Jesus does on the cross for you & I?

What are you looking for God to provide in your own life right now? Do you think He sees your situation and will provide? (what do you believe about Him)

Titus 3:5

He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.

Wednesday- Week 4

Read Genesis chapter 23

It seems that Abraham had a great reputation amongst these people. What would people around you say about your reputation?

What would your family say?

Your friends?

Bystanders around you?

Your teachers/boss?

Why do you think Abraham insists on buying the tomb?

I can only imagine how painful it is to lose your spouse of many, many years. Has there been a loss of someone in your life that causes(ed) you grief? How have you processed this?

Titus 3:5

He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.

Thursday- Week 4

Read Genesis chapter 24:1-27

What are some of the cool things to you in this story?

How does God respond to the servant's prayer?

Have you ever seen God answer a prayer you had barely prayed- or maybe even not said aloud? What happened?

Read Mark 10:46-52

Why do you think God wants us to ask Him specifically what we want?

Jesus tells the man that his faith healed him. How does he demonstrate his faith?

List out some specific things you are praying for, or could begin to pray for:

How does verse 27 show the servants accurate view of God's authority in his situation?

Spend some time praying about your specific concerns.

Titus 3:5

He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.

Friday- Week 4

Read Genesis chapter 24: 28-67

Eliezer (probably the servant that was sent) is so excited about his answer to prayer that he refuses to eat until he tells the whole story!

Why do you think Abraham is so concerned about the person Isaac marries?

Titus 3:5

He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.

Have you thought about the character of the person you would want to marry? What are you looking for? Spend some time thinking through this.

Make a list of "Must Have's" and "Can't Stands"

How does Rebekah demonstrate faith in this chapter?

How is this decision similar to Abraham's when he first set out from Haran in chapter 11 & 12?

Describe Isaac from verses 66 & 67:

What are your thoughts on this arranged marriage?

Why do you think the author points out that Isaac loved her?

Saturday- Week 4

Read Genesis chapter 25

Do you think that polygamy is what God intended? Why?

What do you think Rebekah's prayer shows about her relationship with the Lord?

Titus 3:5

He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.

God had said that He would bless Abraham and that through His offspring/descendants many nations would be blessed. I would assume that Abraham passed this information onto Isaac. And for this to happen, there needed to be descendants.

Why do you think Rebekah is unable to have children for nearly 20 years of their marriage?

Describe Esau & Jacob from this chapter:

How do you think the parents favoritism affected Jacob & Esau's relationship (verse 28)

Why do you think God changed the natural order of things and pronounced that Jacob would rule over Esau?

Have you ever had lentil stew? If you want to try some- let me know and I'll make some this Fall 😊

Sunday- Week 4

Read Genesis chapter 26

Describe Isaac's faith as evidenced in this chapter:

Describe his apparent lack of faith:

Titus 3:5

He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.

In your own life where do you see times of great faith and times of disbelief & doubt?

What seems to govern whether or not you respond in faith or doubt?

How does Isaac let Esau down in his choice of a wife? How should he have parented him?

Take some time now and call on the name of the Lord as Isaac did in verse 25 and ask Him to grow your faith.

Monday-Week 5

Read Genesis chapter 27

This blessing they were seeking is one that would transfer leadership of the clan to the next generation

(Zondervan's Bible Commentary). The administrator (usually the firstborn) would preside over family events as well as determine the timing of the division of the inheritance. Though Esau had traded away his birthright

earlier, he could retain control of the estate through this blessing. The blessing would also be a proclamation of destiny for the sons. It was believed to be binding once the words had been spoken- hence Isaac could not take them back even when it was revealed he had been tricked.

Ephesians 2:8-9

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

What do you think is going on in this story for Rebekah?

Does Jacob seem to have his own relationship with the Lord? Why or why not?

How does Rebekah's manipulation of the situation reveal her lack of trust in God's sovereign control?

Where do you see, in your life, a need to control people and events?

When do you choose to manipulate/control situations & people around you?

What does this say about how you see God/what you believe to be true about Him?

Pick one of these situations and explain what it would look like to trust God rather than your own devices:

Lord, I am listening and I hear You saying to me....

Tuesday- Week 5

Re-read Genesis chapter 27

How do you think Esau is feeling as he learns of Jacob's trick?

Though Esau has been legitimately wronged this time, how does he re-write what happened with his birthright in verse 36?

Ephesians 2:8-9

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Has there been a time in your life when something rightfully yours has been taken?

What do you think it would look like for Esau to trust or have faith in God in this situation?

Esau chooses self-pity versus Jacob & Rebekah's choice of controlling. What does self-pity reveal about how we see God in our situation/life?

*As we examine the faith stories of the lives in Genesis it is important to realize that what we really believe is worked out in what WE DO much more than in what we say. We can say all day long that we have complete faith in God, but when we resort to control or self-pity we reveal what we really believe.

Why do you think it matters that we bring what we really believe into the light to be examined?

Share with someone today where you are struggling in this.

What do you feel the Holy Spirit impressing on your heart today?

Wednesday- Week 5

Read Genesis chapter 28

What is sad about Rebekah in this story?

What do we learn about Esau's character? How does he try to make a right choice in the wife department?

Ephesians 2:8-9

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

How do you see Jacob's faith grow as a result of his vision?

Why do you think God continues to honor His promise even though Jacob is less than sterling in his character?

What do you think of Jacob's "if" "then" for the Lord?

Before you get all self-righteous thinking about Jacob think of times you have responded to the Lord in a conditional way. What have been your conditions for following Him?

Thursday- Week 5

Read Genesis chapter 29

How can you see the Lord working through these circumstances to shape Jacob's character?

Verse 25 cracks me up! "When morning came, there was Leah!" Oooooops! (I am left wondering why it took till morning for Jacob to notice.)

How do you think Rachel & Leah might have related as sisters before Jacob came on the scene?

Describe how you think the relationship between Leah & Rachel probably turned after their marriage to Jacob?

What can we learn about Leah from what she names her children?

This does not seem to be "home sweet home". What is similar or dissimilar on your home/sibling situation?

Ephesians 2:8-9

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Friday & Saturday- Week 5

Read Genesis chapter 30
Woah...the saga continues.
Describe what is happening in the beginning of this chapter:

Ephesians 2:8-9

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Although bearing children was a huge honor during this time period and bareness was despised it seems both Leah & Rachel were looking to their children & their husband to meet their needs for security & love. Do you think this is a true statement? Why or why not?

How do you look to your friends of the same sex for approval & love?

What happens inside you when they do not meet your needs?

Do you ever see yourself reacting in a demanding, possessive way towards them?

What about opposite sex friends & people you are attracted to. How do you use them to meet your need to be loved & accepted?

We are all created with legitimate needs for love, security & significance. But often times we try to meet those honest needs in sinful, idolatrous ways.

How did both Leah & Rachel treat Jacob idolatrously?

Anytime we are looking to someone to completely meet our needs we have turned that person into an idol in our lives. God gives us friends, spouses, families to meet our needs. But some of them will only be met in our relationship with Him. We cannot be complete without Him.

Do you see evidence of any idolatry in your relationships?

BTW: mandrakes were thought to induce fertility 😊

Lord, I am listening and I hear You saying to me...

Sunday- Week 5

Read Colossians chapter 3:1-17

We talked a bunch the last couple of days how people can become an idol in our lives. Today we are going to take a look at the characteristics God wants us to be developing in our lives.

How is setting your heart on things above different than setting your mind?

Ephesians 2:8-9

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

What does this really mean in your life?

What does it mean that we are God's chosen people?

Describe what it means to be dearly loved by God:

Because if this Paul says we can "clothe" ourselves with different actions towards those around us. How should we be relating to each other?

Ask the Father to show you where you need to grow in these characteristics.

Spend some time being thankful to God today. Perhaps write out a prayer of thanks, maybe a list of what specifically you are thankful for... Tell one person today what you are thankful for about them.

Monday-Week 6

Read Genesis chapter 31

How does Jacob see God involved in his life personally?

In this chapter, how does Jacob respond in a godly way?

How does he respond in an untrusting way?

John 1:12

But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.

Acts 4:12

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

Does Laban have a legitimate gripe with Jacob?

Why do you think Rachel stole the idols?

Jacob says with his voice in verse 9 that God has taken care of him. What do you think his actions show that he believes about God?

As we have look at these faith stories this summer I hope you have been encouraged to see real people that struggle to work out their faith in God just like you and I do.

How have you seen your actions reflect a growing faith in the past couple of weeks?

Tuesday- Week 6

Read chapter 32:1-21

Jacob seems, to me, to have genuinely grown in his faith. Where can you see evidence of this?

How does God reach out to Jacob?

In verse 9 Jacob reminds God of His promises. Why do you think he does this?

John 1:12

But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.

Acts 4:12

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

Has there been a relationship in your life that is fractured the way that Esau & Jacob's relationship was?

In light of what we read on Sunday in Colossians how can you love this person?

Assuming this is a safe relationship for you to begin to mend, what steps can you take to see things mended? (If you have questions about whether or not a relationship is safe you can ask your CG leader, Mike, Shawn or Susan.)

Wednesday- Week 6

Read Genesis 32: 22-32

What do you make of this story? What happens here?

Why do you think Jacob stays alone purposely?

What kind of blessing do you think he was looking for?

John 1:12

But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.

Acts 4:12

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

I recently listened to a Beth Moore teaching. She tells the story of her young daughter saying to her, "Mommy, will you do me a favor?" and she replies, "What favor do you want?" The daughter replies "Just do me a favor." She meant that she wanted Beth to do something special for her, to think about what she would want and do it!

What kind of blessing do you think Jacob was looking for?

What blessing would you ask God for today?

Why do you think that although God does bless him He also leaves him weakened?

The name Israel means 'striver with God'. How does this name foreshadow what the nation of Israel would experience in their future?

How can we strive with God in a good way? What does this look like?

What do you feel the Holy Spirit impressing on your heart today?

Thursday- Week 6

Read Genesis chapter 33

Why do you think Jacob sends such an abundant gift to Esau?

Sometimes when I read Jacob's story I sigh and want him to respond differently. But all of us are mixtures of good & bad motives/actions. Where does Jacob reflect faith in this chapter?

Where does he fail in this?

What can you surmise from Esau's response about how he has grown/not grown?

Do you lie?

What motivates you to lie?

How does this reflect a lack of faith in God?

John 1:12

But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.

Acts 4:12

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

Friday- Week 6

Read Genesis chapter 34

What is your opinion of Shechem in this story?

How does Jacob let his daughter down throughout this chapter?

Where do you think Jacob has failed his sons?

John 1:12

But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.

Acts 4:12

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

What is your response to the sexual sin you see around you?

All of us come from imperfect places, imperfect families. Sometimes issues in a family can breed ungodly behavior. What sort of issues do you see in Jacob's family?

Are there areas of your family you would like to see the Lord change? What are these?

What are you learning about God as you read? How does this impact your thinking about Him?

Saturday- Week 6

Read Genesis chapter 35

How does God step in here to change Jacob's direction?

How is Jacob fulfilling the vow he made to God in chapter 28?

Finally we see Jacob doing some leading with his family in an honoring way! Jacob had obviously allowed the influence of the foreign gods into his house. By removing them, what was he saying to his family?

How does God reveal Himself to Jacob in this chapter?

This summer, how has God revealed Himself to you in new ways this summer?

Throughout these chapters we have seen various people name places for how God revealed Himself to them.

If you had to give a name to the spot where you do your devotions that would sum up what God has been for you this summer, what would it be?

Of the characters we have studied thus far, who do you think had the deepest/most real relationship with God?

John 1:12

But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.

Acts 4:12

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

Sunday- Week 6

Parents have an incredible impact on their children- both for good & bad. Mothers nurture and provide a safe space for their children to grow. Allowing their unique personalities to bloom and directing them to seek the Lord both by their example and their words. Fathers create a safe atmosphere by providing strong leadership- both to their wives (so that they can relax back and be mothers) and their children. In unique ways, both a father and a mother teach & model what it means to be a man or a woman to both sexes of their children.

Boys & young men need the influence of both a godly mother and a godly father to develop security and a sense of what it looks like to launch out with impact into the world. In the same ways, both a father and a mother teach a young girl how to respond in trust and an ability to respond to leadership.

God reveals Himself in the scriptures as male. He also shows the *qualities* of both a mother (Isaiah 49:15) and a father (Matthew 6:9 & Romans 8:15). What qualities of a mother does God attribute to Himself:

Of a father:

How do you see the Lord growing you to eventually be a godly wife/mother or husband/father?

Suppose you never marry. Is developing these qualities a waste of your time? Why or why not?

Spend some time praying today about qualities you want to see the Lord develop in you as you prepare to be a parent.

John 1:12

But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.

Acts 4:12

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

Monday- Week 7

Read Genesis chapter 37 (You can skim through chapter 36 but we are going to move on in the story!)

Israel (Jacob) had obviously not learned the lesson of favoritism from his own childhood. He repeats the sin with his own children.

How does this sin work itself out in the sibling relationships?

John 5:24

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life. He does not come into judgement, but has passed from death to life.

Describe the two dreams Joseph had?

Why do you think God gave Joseph these dreams?

Should Joseph have shared the dreams with his family? Why or why not?

Describe your relationship with each of your siblings:

Based on recent events, why would Israel be concerned about the sons grazing near Shechem?

No doubt Reuben lost some of the respect due the first born when he arrogantly slept with Bilhah (his father's concubine). Why do you think he tries to intervene here?

Joseph receives this horrible treatment from his brothers following his obedience to his father. When has it seemed to you that obedience to God has brought you trouble?

How do you respond in times like that?

What do you feel the Holy Spirit impressing on your heart today?

Tuesday- Week 7

Read Genesis chapter 38

Woah... talk about dysfunctional families and sad stories!

How would you describe Judah as a father?

How does it seem that the pagan culture has infected Israel's family?

What is good about Tamar's actions?

What is bad?

Reading Matthew 1:1-3 you can see that Tamar is one of the 5 women recorded in the lineage of Jesus.

Why do you think she is recorded there?

What can you surmise about God's character through this story?

John 5:24

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life. He does not come into judgement, but has passed from death to life.

Wednesday- Week 7

Read Genesis chapter 39

Which verse in this chapter show God's involvement in Joseph's situation?

Why do you think God lets hard- even horrible- things happen in people's lives?

How does Joseph demonstrate growing maturity in the midst of these hard situations?

What can we surmise about his relationship with God from his actions & words?

What do you think you would need to believe about God's character to not turn away from Him in such a hard time?

Does Joseph whine about his situation?

Genesis 42 tells us that Joseph pleaded with his brothers for his life. We know that he did not want to be in this situation and yet he still seems to want to honor God with his actions. Cool.

What is a hard situation you are facing right now?

How can you honor God with your actions as well as your thoughts here?

John 5:24

Truly, truly, I say to you,
whoever hears My word
and believes Him who
sent Me has eternal life.
He does not come into
judgement, but has
passed from death to life.

Thursday- Week 7

Read Genesis chapter 40

Write out the two dreams:

John 5:24

Truly, truly, I say to you,
whoever hears My word
and believes Him who
sent Me has eternal life.
He does not come into
judgement, but has
passed from death to life.

Describe Joseph's character from
Genesis 39 & 40:

How does Joseph's life in these chapters illustrate the truth from John 12:24?

Think back to Joseph's family and their issues. How does Joseph illustrate that you do not have to come from a godly family to become a godly man or woman:

What are some godly qualities in your family that you want to keep:

What are some things from your growing up/family that you want to lose:

Ask God to give you a vision of the man/woman He is growing you into.

What do you feel the Holy Spirit impressing on your heart today?

Friday- Week 7

Read Genesis chapter 41: 1-40

How do you think Joseph felt to be left in prison for two years?

How can you tell from his answer to Pharaoh about the dream that he had not grown bitter towards God?

John 5:24

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life. He does not come into judgement, but has passed from death to life.

Which verses in this section mention God?

What do you learn from each verse?

What is cool about God giving these dreams to Pharaoh?

How does this demonstrate God's sovereignty?

How does God being in control of events/people/etc. make you feel?

Saturday- Week 7

Read Genesis chapter 41:41-57

How do you think God prepared Joseph for this position while he was in prison?

Joseph could have looked at his prison time as just wasted time. Sometimes we look at our high school or college years as a “holding pattern” for when we enter “real life.” How is this thinking wrong?

John 5:24

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life. He does not come into judgement, but has passed from death to life.

How do you think God has prepared you this summer for the ministry He has for you in the fall?

What are some pictures of Joseph’s character as seen in this chapter?

What are you learning about God’s character? How does this impact your thoughts about Him?

Sunday- Week 7

Read Genesis chapter 42

How does Joseph's dream from chapter 37 become a reality?

Why do you think Joseph responds to his brothers like he does?

John 5:24

Truly, truly, I say to you,
whoever hears My word
and believes Him who
sent Me has eternal life.
He does not come into
judgement, but has
passed from death to life.

Why do you think Jacob doesn't trust Reuben to take Benjamin back with him?

What is odd about Jacob's words in verse 38?

I know the story is not primarily about Reuben, but he seems to have grown more faithful. Where can you see this?

So often I am thankful that God doesn't get so frustrated with me that He says "That's it. That's the last time I am putting up with that!" He is still growing and teaching me about Himself and about myself. Like the song says "If heaven ain't a gift then I ain't getting' in."

Where do you see the Holy Spirit at work patiently growing you?

Write out a way you see the Lord at work in each of the people in your covenant group. Be prepared to share 😊.

Monday-Week 8

Can you believe it's week 8. Our last full week together is here. This week we will finish reading the faith story of Jacob & Joseph. But our faith stories are still continuing.

Read Genesis chapter 43

Where do you see growth and maturity in Jacob (Israel)?

1 John 5:13

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.

What view of God do you see in Israel's words?

What do you enjoy about Judah's speech? How does he demonstrate his manly responsibility to leadership?

How do you think Joseph's steward comes by his thoughts in verse 23?

Why do you think Joseph is so emotional?

What do you feel the Holy Spirit impressing on your heart today?

Tuesday- Week 8

Read Genesis chapter 44

Why do you think Joseph goes through the deceit a second time with the bags?

What could he be trying to accomplish by giving the cup to Benjamin?

1 John 5:13

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.

Do 'mind games' like this ever happen in your family?

What is encouraging about the brother's response to the steward? How have they changed?

How does Judah's speech reflect his love for his father as well as his own leadership?

What do you sense God is saying to you today through His word?

Wednesday- Week 8

Read Genesis chapter 45

Why were Joseph's brothers rightly terrified?

What is amazing about Joseph's perspective on his situation?

1 John 5:13

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.

What phrases show that he recognizes God's sovereign control of the events in his life?

What has happened in your life that has caused you to wonder why God allowed it?

How do you feel towards God about this? (Be honest- He already knows)

What would it look like for you to trust God right now in the midst of this?

Pray and ask Him to grow your faith & trust.

Thursday- Week 8

Read Genesis chapter 46- 47:12

I know this is utter speculation;but how do you think the explanation to Israel about Joseph actually being alive went down?

1 John 5;13

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.

God comes to Jacob and tells him to not be afraid. What does he have to be afraid of?

What four things does God promise him?

Skim Genesis 50-Exodus 12 and write how each is fulfilled:

Why was it good for Israel and his family to settle in their own region and not be intermingled with the Egyptians?

How do you think Joseph is able to forgive so completely?

Forgiveness is not forgetting what happened to you. It is not acting like it doesn't matter that you were hurt. It is not denial. It is not ignoring your woundedness & brokenness over what happened. It is acknowledging what happened honestly and agreeing with God to not hold that person responsible.

Forgiveness brings us freedom. Wholeness. Peace. Identification with Jesus. It reveals God's grace. It is hard when done correctly.

We are commanded to forgive because we have been forgiven. Only the Holy Spirit at work in us can enable us to offer genuine forgiveness to those who have wronged us. But the Holy Spirit wants access to the hurt parts of you, the broken parts, the parts that we think will never be whole or joyful again.

Has the Lord brought anyone to your mind that you need to pray about forgiving?

Ask someone to pray with you about this. I dare you to ask someone.

What do you feel the Holy Spirit impressing on your heart today?

Friday- Week 8

Read Genesis chapter 47:13- 48:22

What do you think of Joseph's land policies from chapter 47?

What is reminiscent in the way the Jacob blesses Joseph's sons?

1 John 5:13

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.

Israel spends time sharing with Joseph what had been promised to him by God and giving him a vision for God fulfilling His promises. Who, in your life, has helped you see some of God's vision for your life?

How has this looked? Did they share with you, pray for you, walk with you? What did you learn about God's vision for you from this person?

How has this helped your faith grow?

How does Israel describe God in 48:15?

How have you seen God be a shepherd to you?

What do you feel the Holy Spirit impressing on your heart today?

Saturday- Week 8

Read Genesis 49 & 50

Which of the brothers receive what you would call a blessing?

What is interesting in what he says about the other brothers?

1 John 5:13

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.

It is interesting to see how the prophecies about the brothers are fulfilled. Simeon and Levi are told they will be scattered. The tribe of Simeon eventually gets absorbed into Judah and the descendants of Levi are given the priesthood and scattered throughout the land. Levi does not seem to be a praised son yet it is from his tribe that God sets apart the priests. How can this encourage you?

Read Phillipians 1:6

What does God promise concerning you?

How is God's character shown in these chapters? What is said about Him?

How does Joseph again demonstrate his faith in God and his trust in His plan?

Ask God to show you His plan for you this Fall.

Sunday- Week 8

Sit and imagine someone close to you writing a blessing about you and your life- what would they say?

1 John 5;13

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.

What do you feel the Holy Spirit impressing on your heart today?

We hope that you will continue to seek to know God better each day. The only way to accomplish this is to spend time with him.

Spend a week reading each set of verses. Get a journal and answer the following questions:

- What does this teach me about God
- What does this teach me about myself?
- What are these verses telling me to do?
- What is one thing God wants me to change about myself and my life from these verses?

Hopefully- somewhat in chronological order as you read the account through Acts ☺

Acts 5:1-8:1	1 Corinthians 10-11	1 Timothy 3-4
Acts 8	1 Corinthians 12	1 Timothy 5-6
Acts 9-10	1 Corinthians 13-14	2 Timothy 1-3
Acts 11-12	1 Corinthians 15-16	Titus & Jude
Acts 13-15	2 Corinthians 1-3	Hebrews 1-2
Galatians 1-3	2 Corinthians 4-6	Hebrews 3-4
Galatians 4-6	2 Corinthians 7-9	Hebrews 5-6
James 1-2	2 Corinthians 10-11	Hebrews 7-8
James 3-5	2 Corinthians 12-13	Hebrews 9-10
Acts 16-17:15	Acts 19-20	Hebrews 11
Phillipians 1-4	Ephesians 1-3	Hebrews 12-13
1 Thessalonians 1-2	Ephesians 4-6	1 Peter 1-3
1 Thessalonians 3-5	Colossians 1-2	1 Peter 4-5
Acts 17:16- 18	Colossians 3-4	2 Peter 1-3
2 Thessalonians	Philemon	1 John 1-3
1 Corinthians 1-2	Acts 21-23	1 John 4-5
1 Corinthians 3-4	Acts 24-26	2-3 John
1 Corinthians 5-7	Acts 27-28	
1 Corinthians 8-9	1 Timothy 1-2	

OK- so you may have to bust it to finish... but there's a lot there