

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

What It All Means
Genesis 45:4-15; 50:15-21

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a Unit of sessions needs to have access to the "Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study". That information is often provided at the beginning of that Unit of sessions. The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

You may want to look for a poem called "Just a Weaver" written by Benjamin Malachi Franklin (1882-1965) U.S. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Card # 20060727210211. The poem appears in a book written by the author's grandson, Bob Corley, entitled *Reflections in Time*, Rainwater Publications, 2006.

Bible Study Leader:

Worship Time Leader:

If you have youth who will meeting separately for application of the Bible study, ask them to prepare to read the three Bible verses given as a part of the “**Youth – Take Ten**”. If you do not have youth meeting separately you may want to ask three people to prepare to read these verses at the appropriate time in the Worship Time. Be creative in including others in the experience of worship.

Music Sources:

Surely the Presence of the Lord is in this Place, *The Worship Hymnal*, #158; CCLI #7909

Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us, *The Worship Hymnal*, #161, CCLI #5513848 or 4427375

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)***What It All Means*****Focal Text**

Genesis 45:4-15; 50:15-21

Main Idea

God seeks to weave what happens to us and what we do, including our difficulties and bad choices, into God's gracious, loving purpose

Question to Explore

How can we make sense of life?

Gathering together:

Sing **Surely the Presence of the Lord is in This Place.**

First thoughts:

The main idea for today's lesson is beautifully expressed. God seeks to weave what happens to us and what we do, including our difficulties and bad choices, into God's gracious, loving purpose.

This is a reality which should bring us much comfort as we think of our own lives and the lives of those we love. We have made mistakes and will make mistakes in the future. Our children and grandchildren will not do exactly as we might wish. Our friends will make choices with which we disagree. Our church may not always live up to the standards we would want for it. But through it all, God is in control and out of the good and the bad is weaving a pattern which we see only partially but will serve to extend His purpose and His kingdom in the world.

That does not take away from our responsibility to make right choices, but it does comfort us to know that, although there are consequences for poor choices, God works for good even in those poor choices.

Closing the Gathering Time:

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

What It All Means

Focal Text

Genesis 45:4-15; 50:15-21

Background Text

Genesis 45-50

Main Idea

God seeks to weave what happens to us and what we do, including our difficulties and bad choices, into God’s gracious, loving purpose

Question to Explore

How can we make sense of life?

Teaching Aim

To lead the class to testify of how they believe God has worked in their lives to bring good, including through their difficulties and bad choices

Introduction to your personal study:

As you prepare to lead this study, you will want to reflect on events in your own life which may have seemed difficult or unnecessary at the time but which, in retrospect, have added to your character or your understanding of the needs of others. You may want to share one of those situations with your pupils or if it is a particularly sensitive issue use it for your own heart preparation.

Background:

If you are leading the study for the first time in this series you may want to review earlier sessions or begin reading the story of Joseph in Genesis 37.

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study**”, found at the beginning of this Unit. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you, as well.

Faced with an apparent theft on the part of Benjamin, Judah pleads for his brother’s life. Joseph can no longer withstand the barrage of emotions and reveals his true identity to his dismayed and stunned brothers.

Focusing on the Meaning:

1. Believe it or Not! (Genesis 45:4-15):

Joseph, the proud, arrogant, isolated chief Egyptian official dismissed his attendants, motioned for his Hebrew guests to come near and to their astonishment reveals himself as their long lost brother. He was so overcome with emotion that his weeping was heard outside the room (1-2). Clearly, his brothers were distressed, yet Joseph reassured them that God had a hand in the circumstances (5-11).

2. Go Get Dad! (Genesis 45:9-15)

Once the secret was revealed, Joseph encouraged them to quickly return to Canaan to get Jacob (9). It was clear to Joseph that God would use him to deliver the house of Jacob, although such deliverance was humbling to the brothers. He first was reconciled with Benjamin then all the brothers accompanied by cleansing tears (12-15).

3. Pharaoh’s Provision (Genesis 45:16-24)

As is often the case, God’s plan for Jacob’s family was blessings beyond their imagination. See Malachi 3:10. Note that in spite of all the difficulties, Joseph still showed partiality to Benjamin. Joseph still had lessons to learn (22). Joseph did get one last dig in as the brothers left, “Don’t quarrel on the way!” (24).

4. Jacob’s Reaction (Genesis 45:25-28)

The brothers returned to Canaan with the wonderful news of Joseph. At first Jacob was stunned and could not believe them (26). After seeing the presents from Joseph, he finally allowed himself to believe and celebrated with them (27-28).

5. Immigration to Egypt (Genesis 46)

In Genesis 26:2, God told Isaac not to go to Egypt, but to remain in Canaan where God would bless him. Now God, Himself spoke to Jacob promising him that God would make him a great nation in Egypt.(46:1-4). Because of Joseph’s position, the family of sixty-six was transported in comfort and granted favour in Egypt, even though shepherds were detestable to the Egyptians (26-34).

6. House of Jacob in Egypt (Genesis 47-48)

Jacob's family was given land and settled in Egypt while Joseph continued to administer the food supply during the harsh years of the famine. Jacob grew older and asked Joseph to swear to take his body back to Israel when he died (29-31). Jacob claimed Joseph's two sons as his own and blessed them. To Joseph's displeasure he put his right hand on the younger and left on the older as he blessed them, noting that the younger Ephraim would become greater than the older Manasseh (12-20). He reminded Joseph that he too was over his older brothers (22).

7. Jacob's Blessings (Genesis 49)

Jacob uniquely blessed each of his twelve sons before he died (1-28). He extended the blessings to their descendants within one nation as God's chosen people. Some were blessings of restraint especially for Ruben, Simeon and Levi (3-7). He gave lengthy blessings over Judah and Joseph (8-12 & 22-27).

8. Jacob's Burial (Genesis 50:1-14)

Joseph was deeply moved with grief at Jacob's death. As when he saw Benjamin and revealed his identity to his brothers, Joseph wept (1). After having Jacob embalmed he got Pharaoh's permission to return to Canaan to bury Jacob (2-14).

9. Facing Joseph (Genesis 50:15-21)

With Jacob dead, Joseph's brothers feared that he would now take revenge on them. So they asked him to honour his father's wishes and forgive them (15-17). At this, Joseph again wept. His brothers humbled themselves before him, saying they were his servants (18). Joseph reassured them saying, ***"Am I in the place of God?"*** For although they meant to harm him, God used it for good (See Genesis 45:5-10). Twice he told his brothers not to be afraid (50:19,21).

10. Joseph's Death (Genesis 50:22-26)

Joseph continued to live and work in Egypt, seeing his great grandchildren. He told his brothers that God would come to their aid and when He died, to take his bones with them back to Canaan (25) He died at the age of 110.

The entire story of Joseph is a picture of God's working in our lives. Like Joseph and his brothers, each individual is faced with choices. Some make positive, wise decisions; others make selfish, sinful choices. Yet God is not limited by our choices. He can work to bring good to His people. Could He have redeemed Israel without Joseph's slavery in Egypt? Certainly! He blessed the family of Jacob in spite of their selfish choices because of His greater purposes. God's desire is relationship. His work in our lives is a mystery. We cannot always tie up the pieces into neat little packages; nor can we distill it into a no-fail three-step formula. God deeply desires to be an integral part of every

aspect of our lives, even when we fail, choose selfishly or disobey. He longs for us to throw ourselves on His mercy and love. Remember Ephraim: fruit in the land of suffering. When things are hard or don't make sense, turn to the God who walks with us through the best and worst days, knowing we can trust Him for the best even in the darkest times.

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

Your goal is to help each participant understand that God is sovereign. He is working in every aspect of our lives for our good.

For Personal Reflection:

What have I learned from this study?

What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?

What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

What It All Means

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

Begin by helping the group locate the ***Focal Text*** in their Bibles. Also, share with them the ***Main Idea*** to be learned from the Scriptures, and the ***Questions to be Explored*** by the group.

Focal Text

Genesis 45:4-15; 50:15-21

Background Text

Genesis 45-50

Main Idea

God seeks to weave what happens to us and what we do, including our difficulties and bad choices, into God's gracious, loving purpose

Question to Explore

How can we make sense of life?

Teaching Aim

To lead the class to testify of how they believe God has worked in their lives to bring good, including through their difficulties and bad choices.

Important note to the Leader: The events of today's study cover several chapters. You will need to read the chapters carefully and be prepared to summarize events. No verse by verse study can be done with so much material although some verses will, of course, be read by the group.

Because of the large amount of material, it is suggested that you use the following outline on a whiteboard or large piece of paper or copy the outline given at the end of the Worship Time materials for each participant.

Connect with Life:

Open with this comment: The definition of an “epic” story is a narrative or story that spans vast amounts of time or numbers of events, people, or generations; or scope of history. It also relates to the intensity of emotions which the story generates in it’s participants, observers, or future readers or listeners. An epic story may be historically true, completely fictional, or something in-between.

Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, World War II, the events of September 11, 2001, Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* trilogy all fit into the definition of epic stories.

Request the group to share titles of stories or names of events that they would consider to fit the definition of an epic story and to say whether their choice would be fiction, historical, or in-between.

Share: Today we will continue to study a true epic story. Moreover, even this small part of the story is an epic in itself. It is far too big a story to investigate all of it. So, much of what we will do will be to look at summaries of the events and analyse a few of the Biblical teachings and truths.

Guide the Study:

Say: Use the “read or tell—then identify or discuss” method for teaching this epic story today. That is, we are going to briefly identify each of the major events or highlights of the epic. Brief comments are wanted. However, we will hold our discussion of the teachings we find until after we have reviewed the epic through to it’s end.

Leader: Help the group to learn or recall this interesting story of a family in crisis through these 10 parts. Then continue by opening the discussions offered below. It will be very helpful if each person has a copy of the outline. You can make copies for the group from the multiple copy page found at the end of this session.

What It All Means **Genesis 45:4-15; 50:15-21**

- 1. Believe it or Not! (Genesis 45:4-15):**
- 2. Go Get Dad! (Genesis 45:9-15)**
- 3. Pharaoh’s Provision (Genesis 45:16-24)**
- 4. Jacob’s Reaction (Genesis 45:25-28)**
- 5. Immigration to Egypt (Genesis 46)**

6. House of Jacob in Egypt (Genesis 47-48)
7. Jacob's Blessings (Genesis 49)
8. Jacob's Burial (Genesis 50:1-14)
9. Facing Joseph (Genesis 50:15-21)
10. Joseph's Death (Genesis 50:22-26)

Ask: Can healing occur from a distance?

Continue: Is it always necessary to confront the offenders?

Encourage the group to discuss how guilt can inspire self-hatred, grief and mental anguish.

Have someone read Romans 8:28.

Urge the participants to discuss the passage, emphasizing that the passage does not say that all things are good, but that God uses all things for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.

Ask: What do we do if someone does not want to reconcile? What is our duty?

Help create discussion on this: Why do we have such a hard time believing God's abundant blessing for our lives.

Note Jacob's blessing of Joseph's sons and his brothers. Discuss how God's choices are not always our choices of leaders.

Discuss the elements of blessing that Jacob used including: meaningful touch, pronouncement of future attributes, successes, individualized applications.

Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

Youth!!! Take Ten

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

What It All Means **Genesis 45:4-15; 50:15-21**

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

“Faithing” God to See the Future (Yes, “faith” is a verb!, Really!)

1 Corinthians 13:11-12 “When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.”

Romans 8:28 “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him who have been called accord to his purpose.”

Malachi 3:10 “Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the flood gates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.”

These verses are not easy verses to understand, but are ones which it is good to have in our hearts and minds when difficult things come our way. We cannot understand or explain many of the difficult things which happen to us or to others in life. Christians sometimes feel they must explain to others why bad things are happening around them. We cannot do that, but we can affirm our own faith that God will work things for good in our lives if we allow Him to do so.

Prepare to read one or more of the above verses as a part of the Worship Time. Read with conviction in your voice. Let the verse become a part of your preparation for the difficult things you may face in your life.

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***What It All Means***
Genesis 45:4-15; 50:15-21**Beginning the Service:**

Sing “**Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us**”

Offering:**Praying for the World:**

Pray for Nsenga (n-SANG-uh) of Zambia and Mozambique. The believers in Ukhose have continued meeting and the congregation has grown. They have planted a church at Chjikumba village, where previously a missionary was called a Satanist and was stoned.

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God’s call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

The Big Picture
Genesis 49: 22-26**Introduction:**

At the end of Jacob's life, he gathered his 12 sons around him and gave to each a blessing. Genesis 49:1 tells us "Then Jacob called for his sons and said: 'Gather around so I can tell you what will happen to you in the days to come.'" These sons were to later be known as the twelve tribes of Israel and their descendents featured prominently in the later history of Israel.

Joseph continues to be favoured by Jacob. However, it is obvious that this favour has been earned because of Joseph's forgiveness of his brother's treachery and his provision for his family's well being.

Jacob says:

***Joseph is a fruitful vine,
A fruitful vine near a spring,
Whose branches climb over a wall.***

***With bitterness archers attacked him;
They shot at him with hostility.
But his bow remained steady,
his strong arms stayed limber,
because of the hand of the Mighty One of Jacob,
because of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel,,
because of your father's God, who helps you,
because of the Almighty, who blesses you
with blessings of the heavens above,
blessings of the deep that lies below,
blessings of the breast and womb.***

***Your father's blessings are greater
Than the blessings of the ancient mountains,
Than the bounty of the age-old hills.
Let all rest on the head of Joseph,
On the brow of the prince among his brothers.***

Jacob begins by calling Joseph a fruitful vine. He is like a vine planted near a spring whose branches climb over a wall. This is a beautiful picture of Joseph's life and one which we might desire for ourselves. We would wish that our lives would be fruitful. We would desire an abundance of good to come from our service to God. This picture of the vine laden with fruit growing and climbing over the wall is particularly meaningful in the context of the famine years of Canaan and the desert conditions of much of Egypt.

When we remember Joseph, we often remember the multi-coloured robe of his early years. A more meaningful picture of Joseph is given in this picture of the fruitful vine climbing over a wall.

Jacob continues his blessing by referring to Joseph's steadiness when things in his life were difficult. Jacob had not known in the twenty years of Joseph's absence of the horrific act of his other sons toward Joseph, but by now he did know of it. He also had undoubtedly heard the story of Joseph's betrayal by Potiphar's wife and his years in prison. Jacob attributes Joseph's faithfulness to the hand of God – the Mighty one of Jacob; the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel; Jacob's God, who helped Joseph; the Almighty who blessed him.

Jacob's life was not always centered on God, but at one hundred and forty seven years of age (Genesis 47: 28), he had it right.

Joseph had it right too. After Jacob's death, his brothers became frightened that Joseph would finally get even with them. In Genesis 50:15-17, they wondered if Joseph would pay them back for their evil deeds and they sent word to Joseph that Jacob had left word that he was to forgive his brothers. Joseph wept when he received this message because he knew that his brothers had never understood his forgiveness. They had lived in Egypt for over 17 years and Joseph had provided for them. But now they wondered if he would do them harm. They came before him and said ***"We are your slaves"***.

"But Joseph said to them, 'Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don't be afraid, I will provide for you and your children' And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them" (Genesis 5: 19-21).

The attitude of the brothers reminds us of our own attitude toward God's forgiveness. At times we are able to accept it wholly and gratefully and live in the fullness of it. At other times, we wonder if God won't decide to punish us after all. A difficult thing comes into our life and we wonder if God is punishing us.

Joseph understood the truth that hard things are not God's punishment, but that through them God often works good in our lives. Joseph was able to see the big picture of his life- at least to some extent.

We may or may not be able to understand how the hard things in our lives have worked for good. Sometimes that is just a part of our faith experience. We believe that the ***"hand of the Mighty One of Jacob, the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel, the Almighty"*** is at work in our life and that life's setbacks and tragedies can serve to extend the Kingdom of God in our own lives and in the lives of others.

1 Corinthians 13: 11-12 tells us ***"When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known."*** Paul in these words expresses a reality of our humanness. We see only a part of the purposes of God; it will only be in eternity that we have a clear

understanding. Yet as we are sensitive to God's will in our lives, we often catch a glimpse of how some hard thing has helped us draw closer to Him or served to help another person grow in their faith.

Romans 8:28 is another New Testament verse which affirms that God is at work in our lives in every circumstance. It says, ***“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him who have been called according to his purpose.”***

An Old Testament promise in Malachi 3:10 declares ***“Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the flood gates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.”***

This was the story of Joseph's life. He suffered, but in the midst of that suffering and because of it, the Lord Almighty threw open the flood gates of heaven and poured out so many blessings that there was not room enough for it. It spilled out and blessed his entire family and the nation of Egypt.

Call to Commitment:

As we listen to the news this week, may we pray that God will use the difficult things which people are experiencing for good in their lives. Let us ask God to help us prepare for difficulties in our own lives by acknowledging daily the many good blessings we experience. May Jacob's affirmation of Joseph speak to us. We are sustained by the hand of the Mighty One of Jacob; by the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel; by the Almighty who blesses us with blessings of the heavens above, blessings of the deep that lies below.

Concluding the Service:

Choose a Biblical blessing, a hymn of thanksgiving, or simply close in prayer—thanking God for his working the struggles in our lives for ultimate good, even when we can't know it at the time.

Use the following outline to guide the study. You may write the outline on a whiteboard or a large piece of paper or, preferably, make individual copies for participants of the outline.

1. **Believe it or Not! (Genesis 45:4-15):**
2. **Go Get Dad! (Genesis 45:9-15)**
3. **Pharaoh's Provision (Genesis 45:16-24)**
4. **Jacob's Reaction (Genesis 45:25-28)**
5. **Immigration to Egypt (Genesis 46)**
6. **House of Jacob in Egypt (Genesis 47-48)**
7. **Jacob's Blessings (Genesis 49)**
8. **Jacob's Burial (Genesis 50:1-14)**
9. **Facing Joseph (Genesis 50:15-21)**
10. **Joseph's Death (Genesis 50:22-26)**

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