

## Weekend

Over these 10 studies on Genesis, several themes have turned up again and again. Look back over your notes and check that you have grasped them all.

1. God had a plan for Abraham's family, which would have far-reaching implications. Through him, all the families of the earth would be blessed.
2. The promises that God made formed part of this plan — and they placed certain conditions on Abraham and his family.
3. Abraham needed to remember that he was not chosen because of anything that he had done but simply because God loved him. He just had to believe.
4. Being part of God's plan did not guarantee an easy life. It involved much heartache and sorrow. Yet God was still in control.
5. These men did not always behave as though they believed God would work things out his way. Nor were they sinless. But God remained faithful. Having made his promises about the shape of things to come, he keeps his word.

Read through Hebrews 11:8-22, a brief summary of the early days of God's people. Do you have a similar faith in such a God?

## Notes



## Meeting With God Bible Reading Notes

*"This extract from Meeting With God published by Inter-Varsity Press,*

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**21<sup>st</sup> October 2013**

### Week 8: Genesis 12-50 part 2 (A bird's-eye view)

#### Day 1. I did it my way

##### **Genesis 25:19-34 & 27:1-46**

In Genesis 25:23 God promised that Jacob, the younger son, would rule his elder brother.

1. As you look at these chapters, and in the light of your weekend reading, make a note of the ways in which Jacob tried to make things happen his own way and in his own time. What were the consequences of his behaviour?
2. In what ways have you ever been like Jacob (in searching for a marriage partner... in resorting to dishonest practices, arguing that the end justifies the means)? Have you suffered from the consequences?

Such behaviour must grieve God, although Jacob did not appear to be particularly aware of this.

**Pray:** Pause to ask God for forgiveness and for strength to face the consequences of our mistakes and wrong behaviour.

#### Day 2. Jacob's conversion

##### **Genesis 28:1-22**

Despite Jacob's deviousness he was not deserted by God; like Abraham, he received God's blessing.

1. What do you think Jacob's thought and felt as he made this journey?
2. Look at 28:16-22 and in your own words describe Jacob's response to the Lord.

Jacob has often been accused here of bargaining with God. Yet he was very conscious of the awesomeness associated with being in God's presence (vv.16-17). So it is probably fairer to say that he was taking the promise of v.15 and translating the general into the particular.

**Praise and Thanksgiving:** Acknowledging that you are now in the presence of a mighty God, thank him that he has a plan for you and for his world, and in his own time his plans will become reality.

**Pray** for patience to wait *with* God, and an awareness of his willingness to bless.

### **Day 3. God's faithfulness**

#### **Genesis 32:1 – 33:20**

In some respects Jacob was the same man here as the fugitive of 14 years before, in ch.28. Yet there had been some change.

1. Reading these chapters, what changes can you detect in Jacob?
2. What promises, made at Jacob's encounter with God at Bethel, had been fulfilled? What does that say about the kind of God we have?

**Praise:** Pause to praise God that he did keep his promises to Jacob and that over a period of time he had been changing Jacob. Thank him that he can and is doing the same in you, if you let him.

One of the similarities that you probably noticed when comparing Abraham and Jacob was that these two men were men of prayer. They can provide us with insights into how we can pray.

3. What can we learn from Jacob's prayer in 32:9-12 about showing our gratitude to God and persistence in prayer?
4. Look again at Abraham's prayer in 18:16 - 33. Write down what you notice and see how you can use it in your own prayer time today.

Jacob was a different man as a result of his night-long encounter with God.

**Consider:** Are you marked out from others because you have met with the living God?

### **Day 4. God overrules man's sin**

#### **Genesis 37, 39 & 40**

Almost all the people mentioned in these chapters illustrate the fact that man is basically sinful.

1. Make a note of all the sins committed. In what ways did God use these sinful acts to good purpose?

This is a common theme in the Bible and it is probably an experience with which you yourself are familiar.

2. What reassurance is it to you that God can overrule man's sin? Think of times when you have needed to be reminded of this truth.

Joseph himself may frequently have wondered why he was going through so much hardship. Why had God allowed him to be sold as a slave into a foreign country? Why was he even reduced to being a prisoner in Egypt? You have no doubt asked God similar questions about the things that have gone wrong in your own life.

3. How was God preparing Joseph for the future?
4. How conscious are you that in the future God has a task that only you can do and for which preparation is necessary now?

**Meditate:** Read Ephesians 2:8-10 and meditate on those verses.

- What does it mean to you personally that you are God's workmanship?
- How should that affect your approach to your life now?
- What place for grumbling is there in the behaviour of a Christian?

**Pray** that you will be willing to be used by God in the future, even though the training school may seem unattractive.

### **Day 5. A lifetime of trusting God**

#### **Genesis 41:41-57; 45:1-46:4; 49:29-50:21**

Over Joseph's lifetime he had matured from the seemingly conceited boy into a man of impeccable behaviour. As an old man he could look back over his life and understand far more clearly God's plans and purposes.

1. Looking particularly at 41:51-52; 45:4-8; 50:19-20, how would you explain his understanding in your own words?

Age, experience and a daily encounter with God over the years do indeed help God's people to see life from his perspective. You don't build up this sort of relationship with God overnight.

2. What patterns and habits are you establishing with God so that in time to come you will be able to see things from God's viewpoint?

**Action:** Get to know a godly, older person in your church. Find out how they maintain a living relationship with God and how they have come to trust God and understand his plans and purposes.

*"There are no expressions majestic enough to tell of the glory I have seen or of the wonder of finding that I, a neurotic, unstable, middle-aged man, have my feet firmly planted in eternity and breathe the air of heaven. And all this has come to me through a careful study of Scripture." John White, The Fight (IVP)*

God always works through individuals even though they sometimes don't even acknowledge his existence.

3. The story of Joseph illustrates that God has his man for each moment and can use secular authorities for His purposes. What encouragement is that to you?

**Pray** for Christians you know who are in positions of influence in the secular world.