



Discipleship Study Questions

For use from 06/11/23 through 08/27/23



The Good, The Bad, & The Ugly

Sometimes people assume that God only works through cleaned-up people who have it all together. But when you read about the families in Genesis, you discover a whole different story! God uses the families of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob through the good, the bad, and the ugly.

Read the Scripture:

Individual: Read the passage from two or three different translations.

Group: Have two different group members read the passage using different Bible translations.

Speak the Scripture:

Individual: Recite the story aloud from memory (as best you can) or tell it to a friend or family member. The goal here is to get the essence of the passage in your heart.

Group: Have someone volunteer to recite the passage aloud in their own words as best they can.

Understand the Scripture:

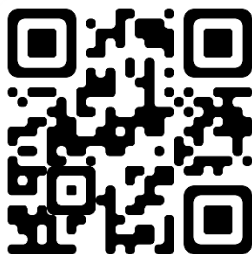
Individual or Group: Use the Discovery Questions to help ensure you understand the passage.

Dig Deeper into the Scripture:

Individual: Work through the Digging Deeper questions and pray about what God reveals to you through His word. Discuss with a Christian friend or family member if you choose.

Group: Work through the Digging Deeper questions as a group, celebrating the work God is already doing in each person's life, and encouraging each other to trust Him in the places that need growth.

If you are an individual who would like to join a Discipleship Group, please scan the QR code below or email Cortney Ascher at cascher@christtherock.org





Small Group Guidelines

This is a Safe Group

Confidentiality is key—what is said in the group stays in the group. Be aware how you are affecting the environment with your words, actions, and non-verbal communication. This needs to be a place where people feel comfortable opening up and sharing.

No Crosstalk

Be considerate of others as they are sharing. No side conversations, phone time, texting etc.

Listen

Let's value one another by listening to what is being shared. Allow a pause after someone shares to allow them to finish and others to consider what was said. Eye contact and body posture play key roles in creating a positive or negative group environment.

No Rescuing or Fixing

We are not here to fix each other; Jesus does that part. Avoid the tendency to rescue when someone is struggling to get the words out or shares a struggle or conviction.

Use "I" Statements

It's easy to talk about the issues of others, or respond with "we," "us," or "the church," but for us to grow as disciples and build relationships, we want to use "I" statements.

Don't Over-Talk

We want to create time for all members of the group to participate in the discussion. Be careful not to always be the first responder or regularly give long responses.

Fight for Relationship

It's not *if* conflict or hurt feelings will happen, but *when*. We commit to fight for relationship with each other. Go to the person and share your struggle or seek wise advice if you are not sure how to handle the conflict.

The Call and The Covenant

Week 1: Genesis 12 & 15



Transition:

Welcome to the beginning of The Story! Before this point, Genesis records Creation, the Fall of Man, Noah and the Ark, and the Tower of Babel. All of this leads up to the moment God begins to call a people to be set apart, the calling of Abram.



Read the story:

Read Genesis chapters 12 and 15 out loud. Reread it in a different version.



Tell the story:

Closing the Bible, share the story from memory, using your own words to retell what happened in this passage.



Rebuild the story:

Going back to the Bible, look for any parts of the story that you left out and review the main events. Examine what helped you learn this story.



Questions?

1. What do we learn about God in this passage?
2. What does this passage teach about being a follower of Christ?
3. What is the Holy Spirit teaching you personally through this passage?
4. What is God leading you to do after reading this passage?



Life Application:

1: God calls every believer to step out in faith to participate in His Kingdom wherever He calls you to be. What is God calling you to do? Are you saying yes and being obedient, like Abram?

2: Like Abram, when we obey, we can become tempted to protect ourselves instead of trusting God. What fears do you need to surrender to God today?

3: When Abram obeyed God to go, Sarai and Lot also left home. His obedience affected their lives. When Abram acted on his fear, who paid the consequences? How does fear or obedience in your life affect those around you?



Discipleship Tips:

Take note of the calling each group member hears from the Lord. What is the next step you can encourage them to take toward their calling? If they don't know their calling, what opportunities can you provide for them to explore?

Abram and Lot

Week 2: Genesis 13-14



Transition: As Abram left Egypt at Pharaoh's command, he and Lot settled with all of their many possessions and wealth, but the land could not support them both. Read on to see how Abram displays his character in his relationship with Lot.



Read the story:

Read Genesis chapters 13 and 14 out loud. Reread it in a different version.



Tell the story:

Closing the Bible, share the story from memory, using your own words to retell what happened in this passage.



Rebuild the story:

Going back to the Bible, look for any parts of the story that you left out and review the main events. Examine what helped you learn this story.



Questions?

1. What do we learn about God in this passage?
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Life Application:

1. Abram prioritized his relationship with Lot over their conflict. What Godly characteristics did Abram show through their interactions?
2. Even though it looked like Abram received the lesser land, it was actually the Promised Land. How have you seen God bless a sacrifice you made?
3. Grace can be defined as getting what you don't deserve, while mercy is not getting what you do deserve. How did Abram display grace and mercy when he rescued Lot and the other captives?



Discipleship Tips

Discipleship happens in a relational context where conflict is bound to arise. Is there any conflict between anyone in your group that needs help to be resolved? Encourage group members to fight for relationships under the small group guidelines.

Hagar and Ishmael

Week 3: Genesis 16 and 21:8-21



Transition: While waiting on God's promise to come to pass, Sarai shows a lack of character, as does Abram. Despite their choices, God redeems everything for His purposes.



Read the story:

Read Genesis chapters 16 and 21:8-21 out loud. Reread it in a different version.



Tell the story:

Closing the Bible, share the story from memory, using your own words to retell what happened in this passage.



Rebuild the story:

Going back to the Bible, look for any parts of the story that you left out and review the main events. Examine what helped you learn this story.



Questions?

1. What do we learn about God in this passage?
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Life Application:

1. How did encountering "The God who sees me" transform Hagar's life despite how Abram and Sarai treated her?
2. What do Sarai's actions show about her character and relationship with God?
3. Ask God if there are situations where you need to repent of how you've treated others. Are there steps God is calling you to take as an act of repentance?



Discipleship Tips

Past wounds we have received or inflicted can be areas needing intentional attention. As group members process any experiences, make time for one on one conversations to follow up and listen to their stories. For situations needing pastoral care or professional counseling, visit <https://www.christtherock.org/counseling/>.

Sodom and Gomorrah

Week 4: Genesis 18:16-33 and Chap 19



Transition: This week, we read about Abram's child-like faith, asking God boldly to hear him in a way that moves God's heart.



Read the story:

Read Genesis chapters 18:16-33 and 19 out loud. Reread it in a different version.



Tell the story:

Closing the Bible, share the story from memory, using your own words to retell what happened in this passage.



Rebuild the story:

Going back to the Bible, look for any parts of the story that you left out and review the main events. Examine what helped you learn this story.



Questions?

1. What do we learn about God in this passage?
2. What does this passage teach about being a follower of Christ?
3. What is the Holy Spirit teaching you personally through this passage?
4. What is God leading you to do after reading this passage?



Life Application:

1. What does Abram's "negotiation" with God show about their relationship? Do you have this child-like confidence in your prayers?
2. Despite Abram's pleas and God's agreement, Sodom and Gomorrah were still destroyed. How have you experienced God saying "No" to something you've asked for?
3. How does God display His love, grace, and mercy even in the destruction of these cities?



Discipleship Tips

Challenge your group members to keep investigating the scripture beyond the sexual sin of Sodom and Gomorrah. Help them find how God is using this passage in their own personal life.

The Birth of Isaac

Week 5: Genesis 18:1-15 and 21:1-7



Transition: Waiting has taken a toll on Abraham and Sarah. Now, three visitors arrive to remind them once again that God will be faithful to His covenant promises.



Read the story:
Read Genesis chapters 18:1-15 and 21:1-7 out loud. Reread it in a different version.



Tell the story:
Closing the Bible, share the story from memory, using your own words to retell what happened in this passage.



Rebuild the story:
Going back to the Bible, look for any parts of the story that you left out and review the main events. Examine what helped you learn this story.



Questions?

1. What do we learn about God in this passage?
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3. What is the Holy Spirit teaching you personally through this passage?
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Life Application:

1. How are Sarah's and Abraham's responses different? What does this show about the effect of waiting on their faith?
2. When Sarah was caught doubting God's promise, she responded by lying. Compare this to John 20:24-29 and how the disciple Thomas acted when he doubted. When you experience doubt, do you tend toward shame like Sarah or run toward God with your doubts like Thomas?
3. God displayed his faithfulness regardless of Sarah's doubt and also regardless of Abraham's belief. How does God's faithfulness provide a firm foundation for you?



Discipleship Tips

As a discipleship group, we ask members to commit to making this group a safe place. That includes being a safe place to share doubts. Remind group members to protect the group's safety by not fixing anyone's doubt but letting Jesus do His work.

The Sacrifice of Isaac

Week 6: Genesis 22



Transition: The waiting is over, and Isaac is born! God's promise has come true! And yet just "some time later," God calls Abraham not to idolize the fulfilled promise but to continue to obey God.



Read the story:

Read Genesis chapter 22 out loud. Reread it in a different version.



Tell the story:

Closing the Bible, share the story from memory, using your own words to retell what happened in this passage.



Rebuild the story:

Going back to the Bible, look for any parts of the story that you left out and review the main events. Examine what helped you learn this story.



Questions?

1. What do we learn about God in this passage?
2. What does this passage teach about being a follower of Christ?
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Life Application:

1. What is a promise God has fulfilled in your life? If God were to ask you to sacrifice that fulfillment, what struggles would you face in order to obey?
2. Verse 8 says, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." How does this foreshadow the sacrifice Christ would make?
3. We often focus on Abraham's obedience in this story. How did Isaac show faith and obedience?



Discipleship Tips

While identifying and discussing obedience this week is important, accountability is where transformation will take place. This week, focus on action steps each group member is called to take to show obedience. Create an accountability structure to share your actions.

Jacob and Esau

Week 7: Genesis 25:19-34 and 27:1-41



Transition: As God promised, Abraham's line began to multiply and now we begin the story of his first grandchildren - Jacob and Esau. While Jacob would become the line that leads to Jesus, he didn't get that title by honest means.



Read the story:
Read Genesis chapters 25:19-34 and 27:1-41 out loud. Reread it in a different version.



Tell the story:
Closing the Bible, share the story from memory, using your own words to retell what happened in this passage.



Rebuild the story:
Going back to the Bible, look for any parts of the story that you left out and review the main events. Examine what helped you learn this story.



Questions?

1. What do we learn about God in this passage?
2. What does this passage teach about being a follower of Christ?
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4. What is God leading you to do after reading this passage?



Life Application:

1. Why would God bless Jacob's family line even though he gained his birthright dishonestly?
2. Did Jacob or Rebekah face consequences for their deception?
3. Like Esau, we can be so overwhelmed with our current needs that we lose sight of the bigger story. Esau ran to Jacob for help at any cost instead of trusting God to provide. Share your needs with fellow believers to seek their support while waiting for God's provision.



Discipleship Tips
Are there practical needs your group members could meet for each other? Are there ways you can offer support for problems that can't be solved? Encourage group members to support each other this week.

Jacob Starts a Family

Week 8: Genesis 29-30



Transition: Even Jesus' family tree has some twisted branches! This week, discover how Jacob walks in honor despite a strange family dynamic.



Read the story:

Read Genesis chapters 29 and 30 out loud. Reread it in a different version.



Tell the story:

Closing the Bible, share the story from memory, using your own words to retell what happened in this passage.



Rebuild the story:

Going back to the Bible, look for any parts of the story that you left out and review the main events. Examine what helped you learn this story.



Questions?

1. What do we learn about God in this passage?
2. What does this passage teach about being a follower of Christ?
3. What is the Holy Spirit teaching you personally through this passage?
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Life Application:

1. What character traits did Laban display in this passage? What character traits did Jacob show in this story? How do these characteristics differ from Jacob's earlier life?

2. Think of a time when someone has deceived or manipulated you. Did you respond like Jacob?

3. How did Jacob, Rachel, and Leah repeat the sins of Abraham and Sarah? Take time to look at your family history. Are there struggles that seem to repeat? How can you seek God's help to change this pattern going forward?



Discipleship Tips

Some generational sin patterns can be more problematic than others. Help group members find resources for any ongoing struggles they may be facing.

Jacob Wrestles with God

Week 9: Genesis 32-33



Transition: Jacob hasn't seen Esau since the day he took his birthright away, but now it's time to return. Fearful of the conflict ahead, Jacob starts on his way, but first, he has an encounter with God.



Read the story:

Read Genesis chapters 32 and 33 out loud. Reread it in a different version.



Tell the story:

Closing the Bible, share the story from memory, using your own words to retell what happened in this passage.



Rebuild the story:

Going back to the Bible, look for any parts of the story that you left out and review the main events. Examine what helped you learn this story.



Questions?

1. What do we learn about God in this passage?
2. What does this passage teach about being a follower of Christ?
3. What is the Holy Spirit teaching you personally through this passage?
4. What is God leading you to do after reading this passage?



Life Application:

1. God called Jacob to return, knowing it was time for him to face Esau. Are there relationships that God is telling you it's time to reconcile? What preparations do you need to make beforehand?

2. Jacob portrayed some typically negative characteristics as he wrestled with God, such as stubbornness. How can your "negative" also traits be blessed by God?

3. Like Jacob and his limp, encounters with God leave all of us forever changed. What is your limp or the way God's touch has forever changed you?



Discipleship Tips

Not every group member may have encountered God in a life-transforming way. Set aside time to intentionally pray for group members who need to have an experience with God.

Dinah and the Shechemites

Week 10: Genesis 34



Transition: Jacob's children experience a dark time that includes sexual sin, generational sin, blood, and carnage. **Warning:** This story can be triggering for victims of sexual violence. If you have experienced sexual trauma, please reach out for professional support or visit <https://www.christtherock.org/counseling/>.



Read the story:

Read Genesis chapter 34 out loud. Reread it in a different version.



Tell the story:

Closing the Bible, share the story from memory, using your own words to retell what happened in this passage.



Rebuild the story:

Going back to the Bible, look for any parts of the story that you left out and review the main events. Examine what helped you learn this story.



Questions?

1. What do we learn about God in this passage?
2. What does this passage teach about being a follower of Christ?
3. What is the Holy Spirit teaching you personally through this passage?
4. What is God leading you to do after reading this passage?



Life Application:

1. How did Joseph's sons display God's nature in this story? How did they veer away from God's nature in this instance?
2. While the sin of raping Dinah is obvious, what other "lesser sins" did Shechem also show? Are there sins you inadvertently justify, blurring the line between right and wrong?
3. While Shechem takes what he wants, the brothers act on what they want, and Jacob sits back in silence until the end, no one asks Dinah or the Lord. Is there anyone you need to stop and listen to? Is there a decision you need to pause and pray about before acting?



Discipleship Tips

Over half of women and almost 1 in 3 men have experienced sexual violence. If someone in your group speaks up, please help them contact the church for resources to get help.

Joseph and His Dreams

Week 11: Genesis 37 and 39-41



Transition: IN this part of the scriptures, we see how the favoritism shown by Jacob to Joseph causes his own brothers to hate him, harm him, and things get even worse in Egypt! But even through this pain, God reveals a larger purpose for Joseph.



Read the story:
Read Genesis chapters 37 and 39 through 41 out loud. Reread it in a different version.



Tell the story:
Closing the Bible, share the story from memory, using your own words to retell what happened in this passage.



Rebuild the story:
Going back to the Bible, look for any parts of the story that you left out and review the main events. Examine what helped you learn this story.



Questions?

1. What do we learn about God in this passage?
2. What does this passage teach about being a follower of Christ?
3. What is the Holy Spirit teaching you personally through this passage?
4. What is God leading you to do after reading this passage?



Life Application:

1. What events led Joseph's brothers to nurse bitterness and resentment in their hearts?
2. How can you stay faithful like Joseph amidst adverse circumstances caused by others?
3. Joseph was catapulted from the dungeon to the highest position in the land, but his character remained unchanged. How can blessings in your life also cause temptations?



Discipleship Tips
Intentional leadership includes identifying a person's spiritual maturity and helping them grow into God's purpose for their life. What does each of your group members need in their walk right now?

Joseph and God's Big Plan

Week 12: Genesis 42-45



Transition: As we enter the last week of this series, we approach what feels like a grand finale. We'll see how all the things meant for harm in Joseph's life will be used by God for good.



Read the story:

Read Genesis chapters 42 through 45 out loud. Reread it in a different version.



Tell the story:

Closing the Bible, share the story from memory, using your own words to retell what happened in this passage.



Rebuild the story:

Going back to the Bible, look for any parts of the story that you left out and review the main events. Examine what helped you learn this story.



Questions?

1. What do we learn about God in this passage?
2. What does this passage teach about being a follower of Christ?
3. What is the Holy Spirit teaching you personally through this passage?
4. What is God leading you to do after reading this passage?



Life Application:

1. How has their sin against Joseph haunted the brothers throughout their lives?
2. Despite their treatment, Joseph weeps at the reunion with his brothers multiple times. How can you maintain compassion toward those who have hurt you?
3. How did God show his heart for the whole world through Joseph?



Discipleship Tips

As you wrap up this series, review highlights that stick out with each group member and celebrate the growth that each person has experienced.