



my grandma time

...doing simple things together!

Week 4, Day 1 --- Genesis 30-31

Week 4, Day 2 --- Genesis 32-34

Week 4, Day 3 --- Genesis 35-37

Week 4, Day 4 --- Genesis 38-40

Week 4, Day 5 --- Genesis 41-42

Week 4, Day 6 --- Genesis 43-45

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Week 4, Day 1 --- Genesis 30-31

Sons were very important to a man in Jacob's day. The more sons a man had the larger he could build his farm or flocks. Rachel was his most beautiful wife, but it was Leah who provided Jacob with sons. It might seem that having 4 wives would be fun, but keeping these 4 women happy was a big challenge. The family that resulted was a mess. Rachel even brought idols into the family so that her sons learned to worship both God and idols. This would be a problem for Israel for most of their history.

Neither Jacob nor Laban understood the science of genetics. At first it appears that Jacob is being really devious and that there is power in the sticks. What is really going on is that God is blessing Jacob and preparing him for a return to his homeland. Even though Jacob knows this he is still a coward and a liar at heart. Rather than dealing with Laban directly Jacob runs away. The only reason that Jacob is not killed is because God intervenes.

God is in control. He is able to bless with material wealth and He is able to provide physical protection. Eventually, Jacob would learn to trust God, but it would take many years.

Week 4, Day 2 --- Genesis 32-34

The Jordan River is both a physical boundary of the land of Israel and a symbol of spiritual decisions in the life of Israel and individuals. For Jacob crossing over the Jordan was a decision to be where God had called him to be, to obey God. When he crossed the Jordan his life and the lives of all his family would be at risk. The land was filled with foreign peoples who were powerful and much more numerous. He was also returning to the land of his brother who he had stolen from. In a sense we all go through what Jacob went through at various points in our lives. We wrestle with God. God wants us to surrender and we don't want to. In Jacob's case he wrestled with a physical representation of God. This may have been an Old Testament appearance of Jesus. Jacob finally surrenders, but only because he is completely overpowered. His new name is Israel and the nation of Israel will struggle with the issue of surrender throughout its history.

Jacob is shrewd and he plans well for his reunion with Esau. They greet each other and Esau does not attack Jacob. They are pleased to see each other, but they are not reconciled. Esau returns to his home and Jacob heads another direction. In the future their families will become bitter enemies.

Jacob's sons proved to be as shrewd as their father and more violent. There is no question that Dinah was abused when she was raped by Shechem. Shechem's father was the law of the land, so there was

little way to punish him beyond what they did. From this time on the children of Israel will rarely experience peace.

#### Week 4, Day 3 --- Genesis 35-37

Family descriptions are very important in the Old Testament. The lists of names establish the relationships of peoples and nations to their ancestors. All of chapter 36 is a description of what happens to Esau's family. You will see the Edomites come up again and again as enemies of Israel.

Multiple wives are definitely a problem. There is no way one man can meet the needs of multiple women. I don't know who initiated the affair, but Reuben sleeps with one of his father's wives. It is possible that because of his shame Reuben was willing to go against his brothers and rescue Joseph from death.

There are several stories in the Old Testament that provide a shadowy picture of what is coming in the New Testament. The story of Joseph contains many things that look a lot like the story of Jesus. He isn't like Jesus in that he is apparently a little arrogant and his brothers certainly don't like him. He is his father's favorite. This is one case where Jacob isn't very smart. He sends Joseph to check on his brothers and almost gets him killed. His brothers toss him into a cistern, a big hole in the ground for storing water, and they sell him into slavery for a small amount of silver. The brothers betray Joseph and he will turn out to be their savior.

#### Week 4, Day 4 --- Genesis 38-40

You might wonder why this first story is included in Genesis. Take a look at Matthew 1:3 and you'll get an idea. It would seem to us that if God was preparing to send His son that He would make certain that all of His ancestors were the best people. Not only would they be the best people, but they would all be children of Israel. We might think that, but this isn't what God did. Jesus came from a line of the best and the worst. What Judah and Tamar did was wrong, but God uses the sons who were the result of their sin to build a line of kings. We often try to help God out and the amazing thing is that He is able to take our help and make something good out of it.

Joseph is a much better example. There is one key principle to learn from his encounter with Potiphar's wife. When temptation, especially sexual temptation, appears ready to trap you then turn and run. There is no glory in sin. Even when Joseph ran he ended up suffering, but his suffering was with a good conscience. As you'll see, God was working through all of this for Joseph's good and His glory.

The story ends in a gruesome way. One of the gifts Joseph had been given by God was the ability to interpret dreams. His interpretations came from God and were always right. At this time the king was the law and the king decides to forgive the cupbearer and execute the baker. For the baker's sake I hope they cut off his head before they stuck him on the pole. I know this wasn't always the case. Being impaled on a pole seems like a horrible way to die. The worst part of this story is that the cupbearer doesn't remember the kindness that was done for him. How often have you forgotten to do what you promised?

#### Week 4, Day 5 --- Genesis 41-42

Famine is still common in many parts of the world, but it is something that we don't experience in our country anymore. We have the resources to get food from wherever it is produced in the world and to produce food even when the weather does not cooperate. This isn't true in many parts of the world and it was not true in Joseph's day.

When Joseph interprets the dream it seems obvious to us. It may have been that God hid the meaning of the dream from Pharaoh's advisors so that Joseph could be brought to the position he was. Joseph went from prison to prince in a single day.

The rest of Genesis will be the story of Joseph's interaction with his family. Why do you think Joseph keeps asking his brothers to bring Benjamin to see him? What should the brothers have done when they found the money in the sack on the way out of town? What do you think it will take for a family so divided to be reconciled?

Week 4, Day 6 --- Genesis 43-45

Some stories have very happy endings. However, before the happy ending Joseph's brothers have to pass a test. They have to demonstrate that they really care about their family, including Rachel's son Benjamin. They pass the test and the whole family ends up moving to Egypt. Do you remember the dreams that began this story? Have they come true?

Rick Warren who wrote *The Purpose Driven Life* says this, "God never wastes an experience." Whatever you have gone through God can use for good. You may not see how at this point in your life, but if you continue to seek God and follow Him you'll begin to see how He can work in your life just as He did in Joseph's life.

Week 4, Day 7 --- Genesis 46-47

You may have noticed that God's people go back and forth between Egypt and Canaan. Egypt is the land of preparation and it is also the land of slavery. Canaan is the Promised Land, the land of rest. Seventy people in Jacob's family travel from Canaan to Egypt. They will become a nation of millions, but they will also become slaves.

The list of names in this reading is not the first you have seen and you will see many more before you finish reading through the Bible. Names are important and these lists are important because they provide a link between generations. You will see many of these names again as various groups of people are assigned different roles within the nation of Israel based on their family or tribe.