

Small Group Study Guide, Week of June 29, 2025

Genesis 48-50:14, "How to Die Well"

Ice Breaker: What major, non-material blessing have you inherited from your parents or grandparents?

Dig:

1. In Genesis 48, based on cultural norms, which of Joseph's sons should have received the most favorable blessing from Jacob? What actually happened? How does this compare to the blessings Abraham gave to his sons? To the blessings Isaac gave to his sons? To the blessings Jacob gave to his other sons? What do you make of this pattern of breaking with cultural norms? Of all the events in Jacob's life, why do you think his act of blessing Joseph's sons is singled out in Hebrews 11:21, as an example of outstanding faith?
2. In Genesis 49:1-28, as you read through the deathbed blessings Jacob bestows on his sons, list and explain the metaphors Jacob uses to describe each of them. What surprises you? Pick one (or more) of Jacob's predictions about his sons and investigate how that "blessing" plays out later in scripture. What lesson(s) do you take from your research?
3. In Genesis 49:29-50:14, what details of Jacob's death and funeral surprise you? Why is it so important to Jacob that he be buried in Canaan? What impact does Jacob's death have on Joseph? On the Egyptians?

Apply:

4. As you study Jacob's preparation for his death and burial, what reflections do you take away for your own preparation for your future and your death and funeral? What is one step you will take to act on your reflections?

Adapted from Serendipity Bible (1988), This Morning with God (1978), Search the Scriptures (1978)