

WEEK OF  
**FEBRUARY 28,**  
**2010**

# JOURNEY GROUP QUESTIONS



**GROW.**

**OUR MISSION:** *Leading people on a life-changing journey to follow Jesus Christ. [Matthew 11:28-30]*

**JOURNEY** OUR WEEKLY JOURNEY TAKES FOUR STEPS IN FOLLOWING JESUS CHRIST:

**Love** God. [matthew 22:37] through **WORSHIP** **Grow** in God. [2 john 1:6] through **GROUPS**

**Serve** God. [1 peter 4:10] through **TEAMS** **Share** God. [acts 1:8] through **OUTREACH**

## TITLE: HOW TO SURVIVE THE AVERAGE IMPERFECT FAMILY

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Please note the following guide is a suggested discussion guide, you may not be able to cover every question in your time together. However, it is important to make sure you allow time to read over the Scripture passages and time to pray together.

- Icebreaker:** Briefly, tell a story from your childhood or adolescence that gives insight into your family background.
- Question:** Since Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, have there been any perfect families? Is it normal then to live in an imperfect family? How does this make you feel?
- Take a moment and review the paternal family tree for Joseph below.

<b>ABRAHAM</b> AGE 75 To Canaan*		
	Birth of	
<b>100</b>	<b>ISAAC*</b>	
<b>140</b>	AGE 40 Isaac married*	Birth of Esau and
<b>160</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>JACOB*</b>
<b>175</b> Abraham's death*	<b>75</b>	AGE 15
	<b>100</b>	<b>40</b> Esau's marriage*
	<b>137</b>	<b>77</b> Jacob to Paddan Aram
	<b>151</b>	<b>91</b> Birth of <b>JOSEPH</b>
	<b>157</b>	<b>97</b> Jacob's return to Canaan
	<b>168</b>	<b>17</b> Joseph to Egypt*
	<b>180</b> Isaac's death*	<b>29</b> Joseph enters Pharaoh's service*
		<b>120</b>
		<b>121</b>
	<b>130</b> Jacob to Egypt*	<b>39</b>
	<b>147</b> Jacob's death*	<b>56</b>
		<b>110</b> Joseph's death*

Note: The ages marked with (\*) are expressly given.

The story of Joseph is a type of literature found in the Bible that we call "narrative". The Bible contains more of this type of literature than it does any other literary type. Narratives are stories. It also tends to mean a

single story with a single set of characters and a single plot. The "narrative" of Joseph is the longest narrative in the Bible and is found in Genesis 37 and 39-50. Read through these chapters over the coming weeks and you will see that Joseph is the central human character at nearly every point. Indeed, he dominates the story.

Old Testament narratives are not just stories about people who lived in Old Testament times. They are first and foremost stories about what God did to and through these people. Also, Old Testament narratives are not allegories or stories filled with hidden meanings. There may be aspects of narratives that are not easy to understand. The ways that God works in history, the ways he influences human actions and implements his own will via human beings are not always comprehensible to us. Often we are not told precisely all that God did in a certain situation that caused it to happen the way the Old Testament reports it. And even when we are told what he did, we are not always told how or why he did it. In other words, narratives do not answer all our questions about a given issue.

So, the narrative of Joseph is all about what God did with an unlikely candidate for success. The entire process of Joseph's fall and rise to power was God's doing. Even his brother's evil intent toward him will be used in God's strategy. The focus is on God. God is the hero of the story. Don't miss the hero as we cover the story of Joseph over the next few weeks.

**Read** the beginning of the narrative of Joseph found in **Genesis 37:1-36**.

❖ **Notes:**

- Through the life of Joseph the covenant family descending from Abraham, becomes an emerging nation (Israel) in Egypt, thus setting the stage for the exodus.
- **Verse 2** – "a bad report". The text does not indicate what Joseph said. Whatever it was, it only fueled his brothers' hatred and his father's favoritism for Joseph. Perhaps the brothers were not doing their job or were scheming against their father. This is the first indication of a strained relationship between Joseph and his brothers.
- **Verse 3** – "richly ornamented robe". A mark of Jacob's favoritism. Joseph knew he was his father's favorite. As a teen, he may have succumbed to pride on occasion or perhaps Joseph was telling the truth frankly. If so, Joseph's guileless reporting of his dreams to his brothers would explain his apparent disregard for tact.
- **Verse 19** – "dreamer". The Hebrew for this word means "master of dreams" or "dream expert" and is used here with obvious sarcasm.

4. **Understanding the text.**

- ❖ **Question:** What is the other name used for Jacob in these verses?
- ❖ **Question:** How did Joseph's brothers feel about him?
- ❖ **Question:** Why do you think God would give these dreams to Joseph and not the other brothers? Based on the text, was it based on any higher moral standard Joseph possessed that his brothers didn't?
- ❖ **Question:** Why do you think Joseph's brothers were plotting to kill him?

5. **Making it personal.**

- ❖ **Read Romans 3:23:** "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God".
- ❖ **Question:** Does the verse above help you better understand your parents, spouse, siblings, kids, or other family members? Do you think sometimes we expect perfection from our parents, kids, spouse, or other family members?
- ❖ **Read Acts 17:26:** "From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live."
- ❖ **Question:** How does the verse above affect your view of the family God placed you in? Why is it important to understand God's sovereignty in relation to your family history?
- ❖ Envy and jealousy can negatively impact our family relationships. **Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7:** "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. <sup>5</sup>It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. <sup>6</sup>Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. <sup>7</sup>It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always

- perseveres.”
- ❖ **Question:** How can you apply the verses above to the people in your family? Is there any relationship in particular you need to apply the above verses?
  - ❖ We need to learn to find acceptance and love from our heavenly Father and then in turn accept others. **Read Romans 15:7** – “Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.”
  - ❖ **Question:** Have you learned to receive love and acceptance from your heavenly Father? What prevents you from receiving that love and acceptance and giving love and acceptance to others in your family? Are you willing to remove those barriers?
  - ❖ Forgiveness may be needed as you think of some of the dysfunction and wrongful treatment you received in your family. **Read Colossians 3:13:** “Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”
  - ❖ **Question:** Is there anyone that you haven’t forgiven in your family that you need to forgive?
  - ❖ **Question:** While you may forgive people in your family, often you may need to keep healthy boundaries in place. How do you practice forgiveness and place healthy boundaries around you, your spouse, or children?
  - ❖ **Question:** How can the group pray for you based on this discussion?

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## OTHER INFO

- (Verse comments and notes are taken from gotquestions.org, the NIV Study Bible, Life Application Study Bible by Zondervan, and Christian Theology by Millard Erickson.)

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### Meditate and Memorize

**Acts 17:26:** *“From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.”*

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