

Falls Creek Youth Camp 2024

After-camp quiet time guide

We're so glad you spent last week with us. We hope that you have continued to think about and apply everything you learned and are excited to learn even more about the TOTALLY knowing, TOTALLY present, TOTALLY caring, and TOTALLY capable God Who loves you dearly.

To help, we are providing three more weeks' worth of quiet time guides. As with the guides provided last week, we encourage you to take your time and work through them in order so you don't miss anything God wants to say to you.

We also encourage you to continue to spend time with other people who are just as interested in learning the truth about God as you are. If you can't attend the church you came to camp with, we hope you'll get connected with another church that upholds the Bible as the source of God's truth and ultimate authority on all things. The Southern Baptist Convention is full of such churches, so we hope you will at least let the church you came with help you find one nearby.

When you do find one, let them know you're there and would like to get involved by filling out any visitor forms they offer you. If you put your faith in Jesus last week and need to be baptized, let them know so they can help you take next steps.

Much love, friends! Know that we are still praying for you!

Monday

Heart check:

- *If God's faithfulness to you depended on your faithfulness to Him, where would you stand with Him?*
- *Do you trust God to follow through on His promises? Why or why not?*

Study:

Remember to keep doing these quiet time guides in order. Finish each one before you move to the next!

Read Genesis 12:1-8.

While Abram was still living with his father and extended family, God called him to leave his country, his people, and his family to go to an unknown land that God would show him. God also made Abram a promise. We call this promise the Abrahamic covenant.

What all did God promise Abram?

Did this particular promise require anything of Abram that you can see?

Remembering what God knew to be true about people, why do you think God may have made this promise depend upon Himself alone?

Remembering God's purpose for creating people in the first place (see Isaiah 43:21), what do you think God planned to accomplish by keeping His promise to Abram?

As soon as Abram's father died, 75-year-old Abram did what God had told him to do long before. He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, their households, and their possessions and set out without knowing where God was taking him.

What do Abram's actions prove that he believed to be true about God?

It's important to note that Abram had grown up in a household where false gods were worshipped (see Joshua 24:2), but Abram believed in the One True God. What does this tell us about Abram's character?

When Abram and his entourage reached Canaan, God promised to give the land to Abram's offspring (his children), but Abram's wife Sarai was barren (could not have children). In spite of what seemed to be a big problem, Abram believed God's promise without question and built an altar to worship God in that very spot.

What does Abram's response to God's promise tell us about Abram's faith?

Read Genesis 15:1-21.

Time passed after God made His original promise to Abram. During that time, Abram rescued his nephew Lot from a huge military force. With God's help, Abram did it with a group of men that was tiny compared to their enemy. Not only did Abram win, but he pushed the enemy further back than where they had started. The king of Sodom, the place where Lot had chosen to live, offered Abram a reward for his efforts, but Abram turned the king down so no human could ever take credit for the blessings God chose to heap on him (see Genesis 14).

After this, how did God encourage Abram (verse one)?

Considering what you know to be true about God, is the reward God promised Abram enough? Explain.

Having just turned down a fortune from the king of Sodom, Abram responded to God's encouragement by asking God how He planned to keep His promise. After all, Sarai had still not had any children.

How did God respond to Abram's fair question and statements of fact?

What does the way God interacted with Abram in this honest and vulnerable moment reveal about God?

Look at verse six. What did Abram choose to do? How did God respond to Abram's choice?

Faith is belief in action. Righteousness is the state of being morally acceptable to God. Abram's faith, then, made him morally acceptable to God.

Look at verse seven. What more did God promise Abram?

How did Abram respond?

Why is Abram's response surprising considering the military success he had just experienced?

To ease Abram's mind, God confirmed His covenant with Abram in a covenant ceremony. Such ceremonies call attention to the solemn and binding nature of the agreement being made between two parties. For instance, wedding ceremonies are ceremonies that call attention to the solemn and binding nature of the marriage covenant. During this particular ceremony, God revealed His plans for Abram and Abram's people far into the future. He also offered insight into the reasoning behind His plan, which is far more knowledge than most of us are allowed to have.

What do God's actions in response to Abram's concerns reveal about His character?

What did God promise Abram in the covenant He made with him?

What did you learn about God today?

How is what you learned different from what some people say about Him?

How is God different from people?

How can you reflect His character?

Respond:

Read back over your answers to the questions above and any additional notes you may have made.

What do you have in common with Abram?

What do you think God is saying to you?

How will you respond to Him?

Spend a few minutes praying. Just talk to God. Tell Him what you're thinking and how you're feeling. Ask God for what you need.

End your time by giving God whatever compliments you think He deserves and thanking Him for speaking to you.

Tuesday

Heart check:

- *How do you usually respond when God makes you wait?*
- *Which emotions make it most difficult for you to trust and rely on God?*

Study:

Read Romans 2:4.

According to this verse, how does God encourage people to repent (start making choices that honor Him)?

Read Genesis 16:1-4.

Ten more years passed, and Abram's wife Sarai had still not had any children, so she took matters into her own hands. Because we know that Abram was a man of faith and that his faith made him acceptable to God, the fact that he would agree to Sarai's plan is surprising at first. Look back at Genesis 15:4. Abram's actions were definitely sinful because he did not wait on God and do things God's way, but why might Abram have thought that Sarai's plan was actually an option for him?

How did Sarai's plan backfire on her?

Read Genesis 16:5-6.

Do you agree with Sarai's accusation against Abram? Explain.

As Abram's first wife, Sarai had the legal right to reduce Hagar to servant status again. Do you think what Sarai did was right? Do you think the way she treated Hagar was right? Explain.

What is legally and culturally acceptable isn't always right. How can you tell for sure what's right and what's wrong? Where should you look (see Psalm 119:105)?

Read Genesis 16:7-16.

God approached Hagar, a servant, the same way He had approached Abram, a man of influence, wealth, and power. He came to her on her level and asked a simple question that He already knew the answer to. What does this reveal about God?

At first, God's instructions to Hagar may seem like He was siding with Sarai, but consider Hagar's options. Was it better for her and her baby to live in Abram's camp or try to make it alone in the wilderness? Could she live in the camp if she tried to compete with the woman who had every legal right to cast her out?

How did God promise to bless Hagar?

Keep in mind that Sarai's original plan was an opportunity for Hagar to better her standing in society. Giving Hagar to Abram was impulsive of Sarai, but it was also generous. Hagar was the first one to actively make things difficult between them. Hagar's behavior doesn't excuse Sarai's behavior, but it did factor into her current circumstances.

What does the fact that God showed such patience and kindness to someone who was partially to blame for their own circumstances reveal about Him?

What did you learn about God today?

How is what you learned different from what some people say about Him?

How is God different from people?

How can you reflect His character?

Respond:

Read back over your answers to the questions above and any additional notes you may have made.

In what way(s) can you relate to the individual people in this story?

What do you think God is saying to you?

How will you respond to Him?

Spend a few minutes praying. Just talk to God. Tell Him what you're thinking and how you're feeling. Ask God for what you need.

End your time by giving God whatever compliments you think He deserves and thanking Him for speaking to you.

Wednesday

Heart check:

- *What would have to happen for you to go back on a promise to someone?*
- *Do you let the actions of others affect your faith in God?*

Study:

Read Genesis 17:1-14.

When Hagar's son Ishmael was thirteen years old, God revisited the covenant He had made with Abram. This time, God required something of Abram. He told Abram to set his household apart from other people by requiring all of the men to be circumcised.

When God sets someone apart for Himself, we call this sanctification. The physical mark that the men in Abram's household wore on their bodies represented the fact that God had sanctified Abram's household in a covenant relationship with Him. Abram's cooperation with God's requirement was proof of Abram's willingness to be set apart by Him in covenant relationship.

The Bible tells us that God doesn't play favorites (see Romans 2:11). He loves the whole world the same (see John 3:16). God chose to enter into a covenant relationship with Abram for the same reason He does everything else—for His own glory. This choice also worked for our good. God's covenant relationship with Abram gives us a specific family to focus on as we consider God's character and nature and what He does in the lives of those who say yes when He invites them to belong to Him. The Abrahamic covenant is not favoritism because it is beneficial for everyone.

Read Genesis 17:15-27.

Knowing what you know about God and why He does the things He does, why do you think God chose to give Abram a son through his barren 90-year-old wife Sarai instead of working through Ishmael, the son of a younger woman with no history of infertility?

In Abram's day, inheritance was traditionally passed down through the oldest son. Why do you think God chose to ignore this tradition and make His special covenant with Isaac, the child He planned, instead of Ishmael, the child Sarai planned?

What evidence do you find that Abram loved Ishmael?

Why did God choose to bless Ishmael as well as Isaac?

What does this tell you about God?

Ishmael was circumcised along with Abram even though God planned to honor His special covenant with Abram through Isaac. As a member of his father's household, Ishmael remained under God's protection even though God knew that Ishmael would grow up to be a man who looked for trouble. God eventually blessed Ishmael just as God had promised Abram He would.

What does God's willingness to bless Ishmael even though Ishmael would cause trouble tell you about God?

What did you learn about God today?

How is what you learned different from what some people say about Him?

How is God different from people?

How can you reflect His character?

Respond:

Read back over your answers to the questions above and any additional notes you may have made.

In what way(s) can you relate to the individual people in this story?

What do you think God is saying to you?

How will you respond to Him?

Spend a few minutes praying. Just talk to God. Tell Him what you're thinking and how you're feeling. Ask God for what you need.

End your time by giving God whatever compliments you think He deserves and thanking Him for speaking to you.

Thursday

Heart check:

- *What do you think it would take to make God stop loving you? Why do you think this?*
- *Where would you be if God's love was as conditional as the love people typically show each other?*

Study:

Read Isaiah 40:11.

Everyone in Abraham's household was a member of God's "flock" because of His covenant with Abraham. According to this verse, what kind of treatment could they expect from God? Why?

Read Genesis 21:1-13.

Look at verse two. How far did God go to make sure everyone knew that He had been the one to give Abraham a son through Sarah? Why do you think He did this?

What evidence do you find in this passage that Ishmael was just the kind of person God said he would be (see Genesis 16:12)?

What kinds of things could have happened if God had allowed Hagar and Ishmael to stay in Abraham's camp?

In what way(s) was God's decision to let Sarai have her way kind to everyone involved? Who might not have considered it to be kind at the time?

Look at verse thirteen. Why was God willing to protect Ishmael?

Read Genesis 21:14-21.

We know that Abraham loved Ishmael, but he didn't send very many provisions with Hagar and Ishmael when he sent them away. Why do you think that is?

What reason(s) did Hagar have to doubt that God would take care of her and her son?

Did Hagar's doubt keep God from fulfilling His promises?

Look at verse 20. Ishmael grew up to be exactly the kind of person God had said he would be, but God stayed with Him anyway. What does this tell you about God?

What did you learn about God today?

How is what you learned different from what some people say about Him?

How is God different from people?

How can you reflect His character?

Respond:

Read back over your answers to the questions above and any additional notes you may have made.

In what way(s) can you relate to the individual people in this story?

What do you think God is saying to you?

How will you respond to Him?

Spend a few minutes praying. Just talk to God. Tell Him what you're thinking and how you're feeling. Ask God for what you need.

End your time by giving God whatever compliments you think He deserves and thanking Him for speaking to you.

Friday

Heart check:

- *What part of your life are you afraid to trust God with? Why?*
- *What would it take for you to trust God with everything and everyone you love?*

Study:

Read Genesis 21:1-2.

God already knows everything, so why do you think He chose to test Abraham?

What does testing do for those who love God (see James 1:2-4)?

We know that God's instructions to Abraham were only a test, but Abraham didn't know that at the time. God had promised Abraham that He would make a great nation through Isaac (see Genesis 21:12), so His instructions must have been very confusing to Abraham.

What questions do you think Abraham had? How do you think he was feeling?

Read Genesis 22:3-5.

Without asking any questions that we know of, Abraham set out to do what God had told him to do, but he didn't tell Isaac what the plan was.

Look at verse five. Abraham told his servants that he and Isaac would be back after they had worshipped God. Abraham either lied to keep the servants from interfering when he sacrificed Isaac or was telling the truth because he believed that God would either change his mind or raise Isaac from the dead. Which do you think is the most likely? Why?

Read Genesis 22:6-10.

It had already taken three days for Abraham, Isaac, and the servants to get to the place where God had told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, but the walk up the mountain had to have been the hardest part of the journey for Abraham. With every step, he chose obedience over common sense and personal feelings.

When Isaac asked about the lamb for the offering, Abraham told Isaac that God would provide the lamb (see verse 8). Do you think Abraham said this to spare Isaac the anticipation of his own death, or do you think Abraham said it because he believed God would provide another sacrifice? What makes you think so?

Regardless, what had Abraham learned to be true about God by then?

Abraham continued to obey God even when God's instructions were confusing, even when he had no idea how things would turn out, and even when it seemed like his obedience would cost him what he loved most. What does this tell you about Abraham's faith in God?

Read Genesis 22:11-19.

Look at verse 12. God knows everything. He already knew that Abraham would obey Him before He ever asked Abraham to obey, but he put Abraham through the test anyway for his own good.

What do you think Abraham learned about God through this experience?

What do you think Abraham learned about his own faith through this experience?

How do you think this experience prepared Abraham for the responsibility that God's promise to him would eventually bring with it?

When everything was over, God reassured Abraham that He would keep His covenant with Abraham not just because He had already promised, but also because of Abraham's act of faith. Then God raised the number of descendants He promised Abraham.

What does God's response to Abraham's obedience tell you about God?

What did you learn about God today?

How is what you learned different from what some people say about Him?

How is God different from people?

How can you reflect His character?

Respond:

Read back over your answers to the questions above and any additional notes you may have made.

In what way(s) can you relate to the individual people in this story?

What do you think God is saying to you?

How will you respond to Him?

Spend a few minutes praying. Just talk to God. Tell Him what you're thinking and how you're feeling. Ask God for what you need.

End your time by giving God whatever compliments you think He deserves and thanking Him for speaking to you.

Monday

Heart check:

- *Why is it dangerous to assume that you know what God is doing in someone else's life or why He's doing it?*
- *When have you been blessed as a result of someone else's faithfulness to God?*

Study:

Read Genesis 25:7-11 and Genesis 26:1-6.

What do these passages tell us about Abraham's faithfulness to God?

What do these passages tell us about God's faithfulness to Abraham?

What do these passages tell us about the impact that one person's faithfulness can have on future generations?

What does Isaac's response to God's instructions tell us about his character?

Read Genesis 25:19-34.

What reason did Isaac have to believe that God would hear his prayers and give his barren wife a child? What had God done for Isaac's mother, Sarah?

In Isaac's day, the family fortune went to the oldest son. Because birth order gave the oldest son the right to own the fortune, the fortune was called his birthright. What does the fact that Esau was willing to sell his birthright for a bowl of soup say about his character? Did he deserve the birthright?

What does the fact that Jacob was willing to trick his brother out of his birthright tell you about his character? Did he deserve the birthright?

Before Jacob and Esau were even born, God knew everything about them. Even so, God affirmed the covenant He had made with Abraham to Isaac. God planned to keep His promise to Abraham regardless of whether Jacob and Esau deserved to benefit from the covenant or not. What does this tell you about God?

What can we assume when God seems to bless those who don't deserve it?

What did you learn about God today?

How is what you learned different from what some people say about Him?

How is God different from people?

How can you reflect His character?

Respond:

Read back over your answers to the questions above and any additional notes you may have made.

In what way(s) can you relate to the individual people in this story?

What do you think God is saying to you?

How will you respond to Him?

Spend a few minutes praying. Just talk to God. Tell Him what you're thinking and how you're feeling. Ask God for what you need.

End your time by giving God whatever compliments you think He deserves and thanking Him for speaking to you.

Tuesday

Heart check:

- *What do you think God owes you? How do your words and actions prove this to be true?*
- *How do challenging circumstances affect the way you respond to God?*

Study:

When Isaac was old and could barely see anymore, he called his sons to him so he could give them his blessing. Isaac didn't know that Jacob had tricked Esau out of his birthright and still intended to give the birthright to Esau. With his mother Rebekah's help, Jacob tricked his father Isaac into giving him Esau's blessing and birthright by pretending to be Esau. Afterward, Isaac still blessed Esau, but it wasn't the same, and Esau despised his brother for the trickery (see Genesis 27).

After blessing Jacob by mistake, Isaac sent Jacob to his uncle Laban's land to find a wife. On the way, Jacob had a dream.

Read Genesis 28:10-22.

In Jacob's dream, God affirmed His covenant with Abraham and Isaac to Jacob. In addition to the original Abrahamic covenant, God also promised to be with Jacob.

Had Jacob done anything to deserve this huge blessing from God?

What does God's willingness to bless Jacob say about His character?

What does Jacob's response to God's blessing say about his faith in God at this point (see verses 20-22)? Was it as strong as Abraham's had been?

Jacob reached the land of his mother's brother Laban, who turned out to be just as tricky as Jacob and Jacob's mother Rebekah (Laban's sister). Jacob fell in love with Laban's daughter Rachel, but Laban gave Jacob Rachel's sister Leah in marriage instead. After working for his uncle Laban for a total of fourteen years, Jacob finally got to marry Rachel as well (polygamy was common practice in those days).

Jacob worked for Laban for six more years after marrying Rachel. Jacob hadn't grown up doing such hard labor, but he got good at it. During the twenty years that Jacob worked for Laban, he learned and grew. God stayed with Jacob and blessed his work so that Jacob became financially independent and was able to leave his father-in-law.

Finally, Jacob and his family snuck away from Laban because Laban was tricky, and Jacob was afraid that Laban would stop him. When Laban discovered that Jacob and his family had left, Laban chased them down (see Genesis 29-31:21).

Read Genesis 31:22-24.

How did God protect Jacob? What does God's willingness to protect Jacob in this way say about God's character?

In the end, Jacob and his father-in-law Laban agreed not to harm each other. They stacked a pile of rocks to serve as a barrier between them. Laban kissed his daughters and grandchildren goodbye and left Jacob in peace. Jacob's first act as a free man was to try to make peace with his brother Esau, whom he had tricked (see Genesis 31:25-55).

What does Jacob's desire to make peace with Esau tell you about what he had learned from living with and working for tricky Laban?

How was Jacob's experience with Laban a blessing? Why do you think God allowed Jacob to go through it?

Read Genesis 32:1-12.

What does Jacob's prayer tell you about his faith in God at this point? How had it grown?

What character trait(s) does Jacob demonstrate in this prayer that he hadn't demonstrated before facing the challenge of living with and working for Laban (see verse 10)?

How did Jacob's experience with Laban prepare him for the responsibility that would come with God's promise to make him a great nation?

Read Genesis 33:4-9.

What had God been doing in Esau's life during his time away from Jacob? How do you know?

What does this tell you about God's character and how He cares for us?

What did you learn about God today?

How is what you learned different from what some people say about Him?

How is God different from people?

How can you reflect His character?

Respond:

Read back over your answers to the questions above and any additional notes you may have made.

In what way(s) can you relate to the individual people in this story?

What do you think God is saying to you?

How will you respond to Him?

Spend a few minutes praying. Just talk to God. Tell Him what you're thinking and how you're feeling. Ask God for what you need.

End your time by giving God whatever compliments you think He deserves and thanking Him for speaking to you.

Wednesday

Heart check:

- *When things go wrong in your life, whom do you blame? Is this fair?*
- *Do you find it easy or difficult to believe that God is near and that He cares when He doesn't do what you want Him to do the way you want Him to do it? Explain.*

Study:

Read Genesis 35:1-3, 10-15.

What evidence do you find in these verses that Jacob had grown in his relationship with God, but had not yet learned everything there was to learn about leading well (see verse 3)?

God renamed Jacob Israel. The name *Israel* comes from combining the names *Sarah* and *El*. *Sarah* means “one who strives or persists,” and *El* means “God.” *Israel* means “one who persists with God” or “God strives.” This is not the first time that God called Jacob Israel (see Genesis 32:24-31). Jacob wrestled with God all night in prayer before his reunion with Esau.

In what way(s) was this an appropriate name for Jacob?

What plans did God have for Jacob’s future and the future of his family? What do you think that future would require of Jacob? What would it require of God?

Look at verse 11. Why do you think God began His promise to bless Jacob by reminding Jacob of Who He was?

How does remembering Who God is help us believe that He will keep His promises?

What word did God use to describe Himself? Why might He have chosen this word?

Read Genesis 35:23-29.

The twelve tribes of Israel came from Israel’s twelve sons, who are listed in this passage.

Read Genesis 37.

What evidence do you find in this story that Jacob still had much to learn about leading others?

What impact did Jacob’s poor choices have on his family?

What character traits do you see in Joseph that could have made it difficult for him to do a better job of leading people than his father had done? Who (all) was to blame for these character traits?

How did God protect Joseph in the middle of family drama?

Joseph was not the oldest son of Jacob. He was not in line to inherit the family birthright, but God watched out for Joseph anyway. What does this tell you about God?

Was does God's willingness to help Joseph, who was partially to blame for the mess he was in, tell you about God?

What did you learn about God today?

How is what you learned different from what some people say about Him?

How is God different from people?

How can you reflect His character?

Respond:

Read back over your answers to the questions above and any additional notes you may have made.

In what way(s) can you relate to the individual people in this story?

What do you think God is saying to you?

How will you respond to Him?

Spend a few minutes praying. Just talk to God. Tell Him what you're thinking and how you're feeling. Ask God for what you need.

End your time by giving God whatever compliments you think He deserves and thanking Him for speaking to you.

Thursday

Heart check:

- *When good things happen in your life, to whom do you give the credit? Why?*
- *Most often, do you do the things you do to please people or to please God? What is the result?*

Study:

Read Genesis 39:1-5.

What effect did God's nearness to Joseph have on Joseph's life? What effect did it have on those who were connected to Joseph?

Read Genesis 39:6-10.

To whom did Joseph give credit for all the blessings he had enjoyed in Potiphar's house? How do you know?

What evidence do you find that Joseph had grown and matured during his time in Potiphar's house?

What did God have to do with this change?

Read Genesis 39:11-29.

How did Potiphar respond to his wife's accusations? Do you think he did the right thing? Explain.

What does this story teach you about the dangers of putting your trust in people? What human limitations caused Potiphar to do what he did?

How did God respond to the accusations of Potiphar's wife? What character traits of God make it safe to trust God in all circumstances?

How did Joseph respond to being put in prison as a result of false accusations? How might he have responded if he had put his trust in Potiphar instead of God?

While he was in prison, Joseph proved that God had given him the ability to correctly interpret dreams. Two years later, Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt, had a dream that confused and bothered him, but no one in his household could interpret it. One of the men who had benefitted from Joseph's ability to interpret dreams while in prison remembered Joseph and recommended his help to Pharaoh (see Genesis 40-41:14).

Joseph was summoned to interpret Pharaoh's dream.

Read Genesis 41:15-16.

After two years in prison, Joseph could have used this opportunity to promote himself and/or force his God-given childhood dream to come true, but he didn't.

What did Joseph know to be true about God? What did Joseph know to be true about the role God had played in his life so far?

What character trait did Joseph demonstrate in his response to Pharaoh's request?

How had God used Joseph's difficult and unfair circumstances for Joseph's good? How had God used them for His own glory?

What did you learn about God today?

How is what you learned different from what some people say about Him?

How is God different from people?

How can you reflect His character?

Respond:

Read back over your answers to the questions above and any additional notes you may have made.

In what way(s) can you relate to Joseph?

What do you think God is saying to you?

How will you respond to Him?

Spend a few minutes praying. Just talk to God. Tell Him what you're thinking and how you're feeling. Ask God for what you need.

End your time by giving God whatever compliments you think He deserves and thanking Him for speaking to you.

Friday

Heart check:

- *How do you respond when God gives you power over your enemies? How do you use that opportunity?*
- *When God's plan for your life leads you down a path that seems to veer away from what He promised, do you keep trusting or take matters into your own hands? Why?*

Study:

With God's help, Joseph was able to correctly interpret Pharaoh's dream. He explained to Pharaoh that Egypt would experience seven years of abundant crops and then seven years

of famine. Joseph also suggested a plan for making sure that the people of Egypt didn't starve during the years of famine (see Genesis 41:17-36).

Read Genesis 41:37-41.

How did Joseph use the opportunity to interpret Pharaoh's dream to bring glory to God?

As second-in-command to Pharaoh, Joseph carried out the plan that he had suggested to Pharaoh. When the famine came, Egypt was prepared, and all the countries around Egypt came to Egypt to buy grain.

Read Genesis 42:1-6.

God's plan for Joseph's life did not follow the path Joseph might have expected when he had two dreams about his brothers bowing down to him (see Genesis 37:5-9), but God caused what the dreams had predicted to happen anyway.

What does the fact that Joseph's dreams came true prove about God?

Do you think Joseph would have been prepared to handle his brothers bowing down to him when he first had the dreams? Explain.

How did the challenges Joseph had faced in Potiphar's house and prison prepare him for this moment?

Because Joseph didn't know what to expect from his brothers, he pretended not to know them. Joseph wanted to see his little brother Benjamin, so he made his brothers bring Benjamin to him and tested them to make sure they valued Benjamin's life more than they had valued Joseph's. Once Joseph was convinced, he revealed his true identity to them (see Genesis 42:7-44:34).

Read Genesis 45:1-15.

Why were Joseph's brothers scared of him? What did they not know yet?

What had Joseph learned about the way God works while he was away from his brothers?

How would this scene have been different if Joseph had used this moment to punish his brothers or make them feel bad for what they had done? What opportunity would Joseph have missed?

When Pharaoh heard that Joseph's brothers had come, he welcomed them with enthusiasm and generosity (see Genesis 45:16-19). How might Pharaoh's response have

been different if Joseph hadn't proven himself to be faithful or given God credit for what he was able to do?

How did God use what Joseph's brothers intended for evil for Joseph's good, God's glory, and the good of others (see Genesis 50:20)?

What does this tell you about God?

What did you learn about God today?

How is what you learned different from what some people say about Him?

How is God different from people?

How can you reflect His character?

Respond:

Read back over your answers to the questions above and any additional notes you may have made.

In what way(s) can you relate to the individual people in this story?

What do you think God is saying to you?

How will you respond to Him?

Spend a few minutes praying. Just talk to God. Tell Him what you're thinking and how you're feeling. Ask God for what you need.

End your time by giving God whatever compliments you think He deserves and thanking Him for speaking to you.

Monday

Heart check:

- *Do you think God hears and answers your prayers? How does your prayer life reflect this belief?*
- *Do your actions prove that you trust God to protect you and the people you love? Explain.*

Study:

Read Genesis 46:1-7.

In spite of all the drama that Jacob's favoritism and poor choices had caused, God reassured Jacob that He still planned to make good on His covenant with Jacob and that Egypt was part of that plan.

What does God's willingness to reassure a likely confused and regretful man say about His character?

What does God's ability to work in spite of Jacob's mistakes tell you about God?

Joseph and his extended family settled in Egypt, and God did make a great nation out of Jacob's family.

Read Exodus 1:1-22.

As long as the Pharaoh who loved Joseph was alive, Joseph and his descendants enjoyed favor in Egypt, but as soon as a king who didn't know Joseph came to power, that favor was over. The new king was afraid of the Israelites (Jacob's descendants) and decided to destroy them so they wouldn't grow too powerful.

Thankfully, the Israelites hadn't put their hope in a king. What evidence do you find in this passage that Joseph and his brothers had done a good job of teaching their children and grandchildren about God?

What could have happened if they had failed to do this?

Read Exodus 2:1-10.

Most people have heard of Moses, so we already know that Moses turned out to be an important figure in the story of God's people. How did God protect Moses before Moses could protect himself?

What does this tell you about God?

We don't know when Moses found out he was a Hebrew (Israelite), but we know that he knew. He did not have the spiritual benefit of growing up in a Hebrew household, but he felt a strong connection to his own people, so much so that he murdered an Egyptian for mistreating one of them. When Pharaoh found out, he tried to kill Moses, but Moses ran away to Midian, where he met and married his wife, had a child, and worked for his father-in-law. While he was gone, that king of Egypt died (see Exodus 2:11-22).

Read Exodus 2:23-25.

God is TOTALLY knowing. He was never unaware of the condition of the Israelites. Why do you think God might have waited for the Israelites to cry out to Him for help before He sent help?

Read Genesis 15:12-16.

What had God told Abraham would happen to his people long before Abraham ever had Isaac, before Isaac had Jacob, and before Jacob had the twelve sons that would relocate to Egypt and become enslaved?

What does this tell you about God?

What did God plan to do for Abraham's descendants even then?

What role, then, do the prayers of God's people play in His plan for their lives?

What did you learn about God today?

How is what you learned different from what some people say about Him?

How is God different from people?

How can you reflect His character?

Respond:

Read back over your answers to the questions above and any additional notes you may have made.

In what way(s) can you relate to the individual people in this story?

What do you think God is saying to you?

How will you respond to Him?

Spend a few minutes praying. Just talk to God. Tell Him what you're thinking and how you're feeling. Ask God for what you need.

End your time by giving God whatever compliments you think He deserves and thanking Him for speaking to you.

Tuesday

Heart check:

- *How do you feel about the rules that God gives us in His Word, the Bible? Do you follow them?*
- *Do you think God owes you anything? Do you think you owe Him anything? Why?*

Study:

Read Exodus 3:1-22.

Moses was having a very ordinary day when God called him to perform a very special task. God could have appeared to Moses in any number of shocking ways, but He chose to appear in a burning bush instead (the “angel of the Lord” mentioned in this passage was the Lord Himself). God got Moses’s attention and stirred his curiosity before introducing Himself. Think about Moses’s reaction to that introduction for a minute. How might Moses have reacted if God had chosen to a more shocking, awe-inducing approach?

What does the fact that God approached Moses in a way that Moses could process tell you about God?

Remembering what you learned from the stories of Jacob and Joseph, why do you think God waited until Moses had spent some time in the wilderness working with his father-in-law’s sheep before calling Moses to this special task?

Look at verse 11. Consider Moses’s question. What evidence do you find that Moses was focused on the wrong thing?

Look at verse 12. How did God redirect Moses’s focus?

What proof did God offer Moses that He was God and that Moses’s mission was from God?

Why do you think God chose not to give Moses proof until the end of Moses’s mission?

How does acting on faith increase our faith? How does it glorify God?

Look at verses 14-15. God chose to identify Himself as *I AM* or *Yah-weh*, a name that emphasizes His unique and ongoing self-sufficiency. Why do you think God wanted His people to know Him by this name? How would it help them in the days ahead?

How would it help God’s people to remember that He was also the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? What had God done for these men?

Moses did what God asked him to do, and Pharaoh eventually set God's people free. Then Pharaoh changed his mind and chased God's people to get them back, but God parted the Red Sea for the Israelites so they could cross it and then let it fall down and drown the Egyptians who were chasing them. God delivered His people just as He had promised Moses He would, and He did it in a way that proved He was the One Who did it (see Exodus 4-18).

Read Exodus 19:1-6.

While dealing with Moses, God was actively keeping the covenant He had made with Abraham. He had grown Abraham's descendants into a great nation while they were living in Egypt, He had delivered them from slavery, and now He was taking them to the land God had promised to give Abraham and his descendants (see Genesis 15).

On the way to that promised land, God entered into another covenant. This time, God didn't just covenant with one person, but with an entire nation—all of the Israelites. This time, He didn't just offer His blessing; He also required obedience. God had saved His people, so He expected them to live like His people so anyone watching could tell they were His people. His interaction with them would show the world what He was like and earn Him the praise and recognition He deserved for being Who He is.

This Mosaic covenant—also known as the Old Covenant (see 2 Corinthians 3:14)—was conditional (see Genesis 19-24). As long as Israel lived up to God's expectations, God would treat them like His "treasured possession" (verse 5), but if they failed, they would experience the consequences of that failure. God would not disown them, but they would be disciplined for their rebellion against God (see Deuteronomy 28:58-64). Because people are just people, the Israelites did not keep up their end of the covenant very well. Eventually, God would exile His people from the promised land for their rebellion (see 2 Chronicles 36:14-21).

Does God owe anyone anything? What does the fact that He offered to cherish human beings and consider them to be His "treasured possession" at all tell you about Him?

God gave Moses the law in the form of the Ten Commandments (see Exodus 20). The purpose of the law was to show God's people what He was like and to set standards for their own behavior as His representatives. God is TOTALLY knowing. He never thought for a moment that His people could keep all of the commandments without fail. That's why He set up the sacrificial system that allowed His people to pay the penalty for their sin and right the wrongs they had committed (see Leviticus 1-10). God wanted His people to be able to stay in right relationship with Him. What does this tell you about God's character?

God never meant for His law to serve as a form of rescue or a pathway into perfect relationship with God. He meant for it to serve as an eye opener that reveals to us our own weakness and need for God to rescue us (see Romans 3:20).

Do you think you would understand your need for God if you didn't have God's law as it's recorded in His Word, the Bible? Would you ever turn to Him and be saved if you didn't see the need?

How is God's law a blessing?

What does the fact that God gave us the Bible tell you about His character? What does it tell you about His love for you?

What did you learn about God today?

How is what you learned different from what some people say about Him?

How is God different from people?

How can you reflect His character?

Respond:

Read back over your answers to the questions above and any additional notes you may have made.

In what way(s) can you relate to the individual people in this story?

What do you think God is saying to you?

How will you respond to Him?

Spend a few minutes praying. Just talk to God. Tell Him what you're thinking and how you're feeling. Ask God for what you need.

End your time by giving God whatever compliments you think He deserves and thanking Him for speaking to you.

Wednesday

Heart check:

- *What matters most to you, what people think about you or what God thinks about you? How does this affect the choices you make?*
- *What do you think sincere worship of God requires?*

Study:

Eventually, God did lead the Israelites into the promised land just as He had promised Abraham (see Genesis 15). He also provided judges to govern the people and lead them in military pursuits, but the Israelites eventually decided they wanted a human king like every other nation. God had already established Himself as their King when He entered into the Mosaic covenant with them, but they wanted a human king.

Samuel was one of the judges that God appointed. Samuel was a faithful servant of God, but his sons were not. When the Israelites saw this, they took advantage of the opportunity to ask for a king.

Read 1 Samuel 8:4-22.

God did not want the Israelites to have a human king, but He is TOTALLY knowing and had already provided the guidelines for a king in the law He gave Moses (see Deuteronomy 17:14-20).

What does the fact that Israel wanted a king even though they had God tell you about their understanding of God and/or their faith?

What does the fact that they wanted a king even after God told them what would happen tell you about human nature?

What does the fact that God provided guidelines to protect Israel from the consequences of their own poor choices before they even made those choices tell you about God?

God chose Saul to be the first king of Israel and deliver Israel from their oppressors, the Philistines. Saul was brave and really did want to do a good job as king, but he didn't follow God's instructions. Saul thought that he could do religious things his own way and still please God, but the only way to please God is to follow His instructions so He can get the glory He deserves. Saul may not have realized it, but he was more worried about getting God's help than he was about responding to God appropriately in true worship. Because Saul proved through his disobedience that he wasn't fully committed to God's glory, God chose a new king (see 1 Samuel 13-15).

Read 1 Samuel 16:1-13.

Look at verses 6-7. Samuel knew and understood God better than any of the other Israelites, and he still failed to predict God's choice of king correctly. According to these

verses, what is the difference between the way humans judge potential in people and the way God judges potential in people?

What characteristics of God make it possible for Him to make this judgement?

Why is it important to trust God with your future instead of people?

Look at verse 13. What does God do for people whose hearts are fully devoted to Him?

David was a very young man when Samuel anointed him king. He already had a reputation for being a brave warrior, but it would be some time before he took the throne. While David waited, he served in king Saul's court, where he suffered abuse from King Saul. David also defeated Goliath, a giant Philistine who had been humiliating Israel, with only a slingshot, and king Saul began to hate him. David became best friends with Jonathan, king Saul's son. Jonathan saved David from being killed by Saul, but Saul continued to pursue David. Time after time, God used people to protect David. Through it all, David never grew bitter. He could have killed Saul, but he didn't. He let God deal with Saul for him (see 1 Samuel 16:14-31:13).

Knowing all of this, why do you think God may have chosen David? What do you think God saw in him?

What do God's actions on David's behalf tell you about God's character? What do they tell you about how He works?

What did you learn about God today?

How is what you learned different from what some people say about Him?

How is God different from people?

How can you reflect His character?

Respond:

Read back over your answers to the questions above and any additional notes you may have made.

In what way(s) can you relate to the individual people in this story?

What do you think God is saying to you?

How will you respond to Him?

Spend a few minutes praying. Just talk to God. Tell Him what you're thinking and how you're feeling. Ask God for what you need.

End your time by giving God whatever compliments you think He deserves and thanking Him for speaking to you.

Thursday

Heart check:

- *How do you respond when God doesn't let you serve Him in the specific way you want to serve Him?*
- *How do you respond when it takes God longer to fulfill His promises than you think it should?*

Study:

After King Saul and his son Jonathan died, David became king of Israel. Although Saul had been cruel to him, David mourned King Saul and his son Jonathan with sincerity. God brought peace to Israel, and David settled into his palace (see 2 Samuel 1-6).

Read 2 Samuel 7:1-16.

King David wanted to build God a temple, and God appreciated the offer. He knew that David was a man after His own heart and wanted to see God glorified (see 1 Samuel 13:14), but God had other plans. This passage contains what we call the Davidic covenant, God's promise to King David.

Just as He had with Adam and Abraham, God once again entered into a covenant relationship with an individual man. God promised David that his son would become king after him and that God would establish his kingdom. God promised David that this son (Solomon) would build His temple. God promised that the throne of Solomon's kingdom would be established forever. God promised that even though David's family would sin and experience the consequences of that sin, God would not remove His love from them. Finally, God promised that David's house, kingdom, and throne would be established forever. God didn't promise that David's family would rule continuously without any interruptions, just that David's family would always have the right to rule.

King David had intended to bless God's heart by offering to build Him a temple, but God blessed David instead. What does this tell you about God's character?

What characteristics or abilities would God have to have to keep His promises to King David?

What does the Davidic covenant tell you about God? How does it make sure that God gets the glory He deserves instead of a single person or any group of people getting it?

God denied King David the opportunity to do what he wanted to do for God, but King David wasn't frustrated or upset. Instead, King David bowed before God and worshipped Him. He was grateful for the ways God had promised to bless him, but he was more grateful that God would be praised for it (see 2 Samuel 7:18-29).

King David made some terrible mistakes as king, but when he did, he showed genuine remorse for his actions and repented of his sin. King David's family was not perfect either, far from it. In fact, it might have seemed to people who were alive at the time that God had forgotten His promise to King David, but He didn't. God doesn't forget.

Many generations later, after time and exile had caused some of God's people to lose hope, God's Son Jesus was born into King David's family (see Matthew 1). He would be the fulfillment of every covenant God had ever made with mankind.

Read Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-56; Luke 2:1-20.

None of the "characters" in Jesus's birth story were notable people by the world's standards.

What does the fact that God chose to fulfill His promises through ordinary people tell you about Him and the way He operates (see 1 Corinthians 1:27 for a hint)?

When God appeared to each of the people you just read about, they were just doing what they did all the time. Their immediate cooperation shows that they were likely obedient to God by habit, but none were actively seeking glory for themselves or assuming they would ever be part of something so significant when God came to them.

What does this tell you about the importance of obedience on ordinary days? What does obedience accomplish in your heart?

What did you learn about God today?

How is what you learned different from what some people say about Him?

How is God different from people?

How can you reflect His character?

Respond:

Read back over your answers to the questions above and any additional notes you may have made.

In what way(s) can you relate to the individual people in this story?

What do you think God is saying to you?

How will you respond to Him?

Spend a few minutes praying. Just talk to God. Tell Him what you're thinking and how you're feeling. Ask God for what you need.

End your time by giving God whatever compliments you think He deserves and thanking Him for speaking to you.

Friday

Heart check:

- *Do you trust God to finish what He has started in your life? Why or why not?*
- *What would your life be like now if Jesus hadn't died and risen again?*

Study:

Jesus was fully God and fully man (see John 1:1,14). Jesus grew up in a home with human parents, but He always had His mind on God's purposes. By the time Jesus was twelve, He was able to have deep discussions with the religious leaders of His day (see Luke 2:41-52). When He was 33, He began His earthly ministry, performing miracles, preaching repentance, and announcing the coming of God's kingdom (see Mark 1:15).

Jesus was tempted in every way we are tempted, but never sinned (see Hebrews 4:15). Even so, He died on a criminal's cross.

Read John 19:30.

The work that was finished on the cross was God's plan to redeem (buy back) the world from sin (see John 3:16). When Jesus died on the cross, His blood served as payment for the sin of all mankind (see Ephesians 1:7). When Jesus rose from the grave, His resurrection conquered death and made eternal life possible for all mankind (see Hebrews 2:14). All we have to do to take advantage of the rescue God offers through Jesus is put our faith in Him for salvation (see Romans 10:9-10, 13). When we do, God's Holy Spirit comes to live in our hearts (see 1 John 4:13). We get to enjoy constant communion with God just

like He intended when He created Adam and Eve. The work that Jesus finished on the cross is accomplished in us.

Read Jeremiah 31:31-34.

Jesus is the fulfillment of the New Covenant that God promised in this passage. Through Jesus, all God's promises were fulfilled.

Jesus was the fulfillment of God's promise to Adam and Eve (see Genesis 3:15). Satan attacked Jesus in many ways, but Jesus won by dying on the cross and rising again on the third day. Adam's sin brought death to all mankind, but Jesus's death and resurrection made forgiveness of sin and eternal life possible for all mankind (see Romans 12:5).

Jesus was the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham (see Genesis 12:1-3). Jesus came from Abraham's family and became a blessing to all people by becoming the bridge between God and all human beings.

Jesus was the fulfillment of God's promise to Noah (see Genesis 9:8-11). True to His word, God has not flooded the earth again in response to mankind's sin, but has allowed His own plan to rescue people from themselves play out in the form of Jesus. Jesus didn't come to condemn the world, but save it (see John 3:17). Although this world will one day burn up, Jesus will establish a new heaven and new earth without sin that will last forever (see Revelation 21:1).

Jesus was the fulfillment of God's promise to Moses (see Exodus 19:1-6). God promised to treat Israel as His treasured possession as long as they obeyed Him, but the law revealed mankind's inability to obey God without fail. No matter how hard we try, we just can't stay in right relationship with God on our own (see Romans 3:23). Through Moses, God gave the Israelites a way to pay for their sin using a sacrificial system, but that system had to be repeated over and over again because people sin over and over again. When Jesus died on the cross, He became the once-and-for-all sacrifice necessary for people to remain in right relationship with God at all times (see Romans 6:10).

Jesus was the fulfillment of God's promise to David (see 2 Samuel 7:8-16). A descendant of King David, Jesus is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He reigns over heaven and earth forever.

Read 2 Corinthians 1:20-22.

Some people say that Jesus did away with the Old Covenant (the Mosaic covenant), but He didn't. Jesus simply satisfied the Old Covenant so that it doesn't have power over us anymore. We don't have to be perfect. He was perfect for all of us. All we have to do is continue to put our faith in Him and enjoy the blessings of God as God always intended.

What does the fact that God did for us what we could not do for ourselves tell you about God?

What did you learn about God today?

How is what you learned different from what some people say about Him?

How is God not like people?

How can you reflect His character?

Respond:

Read back over your answers to the questions above and any additional notes you may have made.

What do you think God is saying to you?

How will you respond to Him?

Spend a few minutes praying. Just talk to God. Tell Him what you're thinking and how you're feeling. Ask God for what you need.

End your time by giving God whatever compliments you think He deserves and thanking Him for speaking to you.

Well done, friend! We are so proud of you and hope you will continue this helpful habit you've developed. If you want to follow another study guide going forward, we suggest *The Devo to End All Devos*, which is available for free on the Bible App or on our website. We developed this resource to teach you how to study the Bible on your own. It covers all the basic doctrine you need to know while teaching you three effective methods for self-guided Bible study. You might find it helpful to do the study with a friend!