

Life Group Guide
2016 September Session 1

PREP:

Take a few minutes to read through this guide so that you are prepared for the conversation you will be facilitating with your Life Group this week.

WELCOME:

Make sure you take time to welcome those attending your Life Group. Also take time to have everyone introduce themselves to the group. It's great to have them share their name and a fact about their life they would like people in the group to know about them.

VIDEO:

The video is less than 3 minutes long. After the video, have the group read the passage from Genesis together. It is a great idea to give the group 5 minutes after reading the passage to jot down any insights or questions they have from the passage. This is really helpful for people who are more introverted. It gives them time to focus and a way to respond later.

SCRIPTURE:

Genesis 27: ¹When Isaac was old and his eyes were so weak that he could no longer see, he called for Esau his older son and said to him, "My son."

"Here I am," he answered.

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² Isaac said, "I am now an old man and don't know the day of my death. ³ Now then, get your equipment—your quiver and bow—and go out to the open country to hunt some wild game for me. ⁴ Prepare me the kind of tasty food I like and bring it to me to eat, so that I may give you my blessing before I die."

⁵ Now Rebekah was listening as Isaac spoke to his son Esau. When Esau left for the open country to hunt game and bring it back, ⁶ Rebekah said to her son Jacob, "Look, I overheard your father say to your brother Esau, ⁷ 'Bring me some game and prepare me some tasty food to eat, so that I may give you my blessing in the presence of the Lord before I die.' ⁸ Now, my son, listen carefully and do what I tell you: ⁹ Go out to the flock and bring me two choice young goats, so I can prepare some tasty food for your father, just the way he likes it. ¹⁰ Then take it to your father to eat, so that he may give you his blessing before he dies."

¹¹ Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, "But my brother Esau is a hairy man while I have smooth skin. ¹² What if my father touches me? I would appear to be tricking him and would bring down a curse on myself rather than a blessing."

¹³ His mother said to him, "My son, let the curse fall on me. Just do what I say; go and get them for me."

¹⁴ So he went and got them and brought them to his mother, and she prepared some tasty food, just the way his father liked it. ¹⁵ Then Rebekah took the best clothes of Esau her older son, which she had in the house, and put them on her younger son Jacob. ¹⁶ She also covered his hands and the smooth part of his neck with the goatskins. ¹⁷ Then she handed to her son Jacob the tasty food and the bread she had made.

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¹⁸ He went to his father and said, "My father."

"Yes, my son," he answered. "Who is it?"

¹⁹ Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me. Please sit up and eat some of my game, so that you may give me your blessing."

²⁰ Isaac asked his son, "How did you find it so quickly, my son?"

"The Lord your God gave me success," he replied.

²¹ Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Come near so I can touch you, my son, to know whether you really are my son Esau or not."

²² Jacob went close to his father Isaac, who touched him and said, "The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau." ²³ He did not recognize him, for his hands were hairy like those of his brother Esau; so he proceeded to bless him. ²⁴ "Are you really my son Esau?" he asked.

"I am," he replied.

²⁵ Then he said, "My son, bring me some of your game to eat, so that I may give you my blessing."

Jacob brought it to him and he ate; and he brought some wine and he drank. ²⁶ Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come here, my son, and kiss me."

²⁷ So he went to him and kissed him. When Isaac caught the smell of his clothes, he blessed him and said,

"Ah, the smell of my son
is like the smell of a field
that the Lord has blessed.

²⁸ May God give you heaven's dew
and earth's richness—
an abundance of grain and new wine.

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²⁹ May nations serve you
and peoples bow down to you.
Be lord over your brothers,
and may the sons of your mother bow down to you.
May those who curse you be cursed
and those who bless you be blessed.”

³⁰ After Isaac finished blessing him, and Jacob had scarcely left his father’s presence, his brother Esau came in from hunting. ³¹ He too prepared some tasty food and brought it to his father. Then he said to him, “My father, please sit up and eat some of my game, so that you may give me your blessing.”

³² His father Isaac asked him, “Who are you?”

“I am your son,” he answered, “your firstborn, Esau.”

³³ Isaac trembled violently and said, “Who was it, then, that hunted game and brought it to me? I ate it just before you came and I blessed him—and indeed he will be blessed!”

QUESTION:

Do you think that what you overhear a person saying about you is more honest than what they say to you? Why or why not? Do you have a story you could share about this?

QUESTION:

Which tends to be true about you? Are you more likely to say something that you wish you could take back – or – are you more likely to not say something that later you wish you had said? How

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does this tendency in you impact others? How does this tendency affect you?

OBSERVATION:

The Bible is filled with blessings. In Genesis 12 God told Abraham that He would bless him and He would make Abraham a blessing. We are blessed by God so that we can bless others.

Blessing is more than a compliment. It involves seeing a truth about a person and sharing how that could be significant in their lives. It helps reveal how that truth could benefit others.

Cursing is more than using four-letter-words. It is using words to devalue others or to tell them they have not future.

SCRIPTURE:

James 3: ⁹ With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. ¹⁰ Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be.

QUESTION:

Why do you think it is difficult to help a friend identify and deal with a weakness in their lives? Do you have a story where someone did that well in your life – or where someone did that poorly in your life? What did they do right? What could they have done better?

QUESTION:

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Do you think that a blessing that comes from a parent has more impact than one that comes from a friend or stranger? Why?

SCRIPTURE:

Ephesians 4: ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.

OBSERVATION:

Blessing isn't making something up about someone. Being less than honest with another person can actually cause pain in the long run. We must be committed to speaking the truth, but we must be equally committed to speaking it in love.

Blessings is noticing a truth and connecting it with potential. Blessing helps identify potential.

You are far more likely to notice the truth that has potential in a person if you pray for that person. The source of all blessing is God. It only makes sense that a conversation with God will enable us to bless others.

QUESTION:

Who in your life, would you like to be able to bless? If you consistently talk to God about them, He might give you something to share with them.

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PRAYER:

Make sure to give group members an opportunity to share anything they would like prayer for. Please note the concerns of those who share. It is a great way to follow up with group members later in the week or next time you meet.