

LIFE GROUP GUIDE
iDENTiTY Joseph #10: "HANDLING DISAPPOINTMENT"

Tips for Leaders

Over the last three weeks we have shared tips on how to lead worship in your time together as a Life Group. Here are the final points 12-14:

12. As you come to the end of the chorus, say the first line of the section where you want people to go next e.g. Back to the beginning / back to verse Etc. Whilst your regulars might do this intuitively, it's especially helpful for those who are new to your group.
13. If your Life Group finds sung worship difficult, talk about it together, explore why. Some of the most extravert people can become quiet and reclusive when singing - why is that? Talk about where you are and where you want to get to / should be.
14. Sometimes we let good practice slip over time, don't be afraid to say "We used to do... and for some reason lately, we haven't, we need to get back there..."

CONNECT UP: give the Lord an opportunity to speak to you through his Word

- Please read **Genesis 47:7-10**. How can we tell that Jacob is really disappointed in these verses? What impact do you think his conversation with Pharaoh has on him as a nonbeliever? [*Leaders note: Here we have a 130-year-old complaining that his life has been too short! We have a man who has just discovered that his family is the second most powerful family in the world complaining that life feels a bit hard! This was Jacob's moment to declare the glory of the Lord to Pharaoh. Instead, he blew it by making God seem mean and unfair.*]
- What do you think led to Jacob's disappointment in these verses? [*Leaders note: Try to draw out the three big themes here. Jacob was disappointed in the **person of God**. He felt that the Lord had let him down by not doing things his way. Jacob was disappointed in the **timing** of God. He felt that God hadn't done things fast enough for him. Jacob was disappointed in his **place** in God's plans. He had hoped that all of God's promises to Abraham and Isaac would be fulfilled in his own generation, and he is gutted to realise it will take longer.*]
- Jacob moves out of his disappointment and into worship. Joseph clearly helped him to see a right perspective, because he praises God for his own life (47:31) and then prophesies to his sons and grandsons about what God will do for them (Gen 48-49). Using the following verses, how would you encourage Jacob in the middle of his disappointment:
 - About **the person of God**? (see Gen 45:7-8, Gen 50:20, Acts 2:23, Rom 8:28, Gen 48:11)
 - About **the timing of God**? (see Gen 48:3-4, Jn 7:6, Rom 5:6)
 - About **our place in God's plan**? (see Gen 48:15-16, Gen 48:21-22, Acts 13:36)
- Let's be honest with one another. What are you feeling disappointed about right now?
- How much have these three factors (person of God, timing and place) contributed to your own disappointments right now?
- How do our answers to Jacob speak into our own disappointments today?
- Lead from here into a time of faith-filled prayer and worship, telling the Lord you trust him.

CONNECT IN: discuss the implications of what God says to you as a Life Group

- Much of Jacob's disappointment was caused by focusing on what God planned to do in **him**, rather than in what God wanted to do in his many children through him.
- Read **Titus 2:2-8**. Paul says that one of the primary ways in which God wants to make us fruitful is by inspiring older Christians to invest their lives in the next generation. How can you do this as a Life Group together? How can you become like Jacob in chapters 48-49, inspiring the next generation to believe God for far more than he has seen? [*Leaders note: If your group is mainly older people then you are in a great position. Many twenty-somethings are looking for a spiritual mum or dad. If your group is mainly younger people, then you are in a great position too. God is adding many teenagers to our number, who need excellent role models and mentors in their twenties.*]

CONNECT OUT: discuss the implications for your interactions with the world

- We live in a very discouraged world. How can you be encouragers this week?
- How can you proclaim to those exploring faith around you the Good News about the true **person of God**, the true **timing of God** and their true **place in the plans of God**?
- End your time together by praying for God to make you encouragers and proclaimers of God.