

Study notes, Sunday 27th January 2019
Jacob's relationships (Genesis 29:1–30:24)

Welcome

- Can you list Jacob's thirteen children, if possible in order of Biblical appearance?! (see footnote at bottom of page for the answer)¹.
- How accurate is "Jacob and sons" from Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical?:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xbTaNmKEVM>

Worship

- Read Psalm 19 together and let it lead you into a time of praise and worship.

Word – Jacob's relationships (Genesis 29:1-30:24)...

Re-cap...

- Relationships have a back-story... hence a need for understanding and tolerance
- Relationships reflect a God-story... hence a need to both give and to receive grace
- Relationships give rise to a still-to-be-written story... hence a reason for hope and an opportunity to leave a legacy
- Conclusion – It's not Jacob's story, nor our story, but God's story... Do we want to be in it?

Possible discussion questions (select a few)

- Is it important for us to be able to explain logically things in the Bible which seem implausible? e.g. Jacob only recognising Leah in the morning after his wedding
- Does the passage suggest any elements of strength, as well as strife, in Jacob's relationships?
- To what extent was Jacob's back-story responsible for some of the difficulties in his relationships?
- Are we a product of our own back-stories or, as Christians, are we free from them?
- What cultural elements might we need to be aware of as we seek to engender good relationships with others?
- Do we sometimes use circumstances e.g. pressure at work/tiredness as an excuse for poor behaviour in our relationships? If so, how can we avoid this?
- Do you agree that the way that we treat others is a reflection of our relationship with God? Why/why not? If so, what are the implications of this?
- How do you view the fact that God chose to bless Jacob despite his apparent lack of active personal relationship with God? What does this tell us about God?
- Which are the key elements of our life in Christ that we should seek to bring into our relationships in order to bless others?
- Do you agree that there are elements of God's story that are still to be written?
- What does it mean for us individually and collectively to play a part in God's story?

Prayer and witness

- Pray for God to work powerfully in and through your relationships. Pray for any relationships issues which are currently particularly tough. Pray that our relationships might be a witness to others.
- Pray for Katie Mumford as she leaves for her DTS with YWAM in Australia and for Tessa in her work and witness.
- Pray for Jan Iliffe, the team and the residents of Night Shelter, beginning 5th February – sign up with Jan to hold your small group on site at NMBC during one week of the shelter...
- Pray for MMCC, including their START course on Monday evenings – join the Mumfords for prayer at their house on 9th February.

¹ Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Dinah, Joseph, Benjamin.