

GENESIS

Study Guide

Fall 2019

Special thanks to Mary Peters for the cover artwork!

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INTRODUCTION

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”

~Genesis 1:1-2

We have been in and out of the book of Genesis over the past several years and this fall we will be jumping back in to finish the book.

Arguably, no book of the Bible has more debate surrounding it than this book. However, this is a shame, because in the debate the big message of the book is often lost. Our goal must be to understand the book of Genesis on its own terms.

So, what is Genesis about?

Genesis is about beginnings. A new beginning! So many of the major themes found in the rest of the Bible begin in Genesis. In this sense, it is the most important book of the Bible because it lays the foundation for all the rest of the Bible. It is the key to the rest of the Bible.

In the Bible, we find the beginning of the world, the beginning of the beginning of basic human institutions and civilization itself, the beginning of the Jewish people, the beginning of sin/evil, and the beginning of God’s promise to redeem. From the beginning, God has been in the business of making broken people whole.

In this sense, the book of Genesis is all about Jesus. As the Apostle Paul put it in his letter to the Colossians (1:18): “He is the beginning.”

The Purpose of this Study Guide

This study guide is intended to be a simple and basic way for us to engage in the sermon passages on a week by week basis. Our hope is to work together on our daily discipline of pursuing God in Scripture and prayer. The daily discipline that this study guide represents will be a tangible way to allow the “word of Christ [to] dwell among us richly” (Colossians 3:16), by enhancing our engagement with the sermon passages and directing us in shared prayer.

How to Use the Study Guide

A word about how to use this study guide: The date at the top of each page notes the Sunday for the respective the week. The Scripture verse listed under each heading is a suggested memory verse for that week. Below that

you will find a passage of Scripture, followed by “*Reflection Questions*”. In general, these readings will allow you to reflect on the previous sermon or prepare you to hear the sermon for that upcoming week. We estimate that each day’s “lesson” should require no more than 15 minutes.

To be clear, this guide is not intended to be a “legalistic” requirement. Not at all! Rather, it is a way for us as a congregation to walk together as we explore God’s Word. And to what end? Our prayer is that as we grow in our understanding and practice of daily prayer and meditation, we will grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ and so grow in our love for Him and one another.

A Word about Walking with Christ

Walking with Christ is a work that God is doing in you. This does not mean that we are not also required to do the work of walking with Him. Indeed, we are! Paul repeatedly writes that we are to strive for the faith of the gospel (Philippians 1:27); we are to strive and sacrifice to know Christ (Philippians 3)! We do and must strive! Nonetheless, our confidence is that it is not dependent upon the perfection of our striving, but on the perfection of our Savior. Our striving does not secure his saving power. Actually, it is the exact opposite. His saving power secures our striving. He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion (Philippians 1:6). This is HIS promise!!! In light of this promise, we seek to do all that we can to work out the salvation he has accomplished for us, because we know that he is at work in us, working that which is pleasing to him (Philippians 2:12-13).

God created us by His Word. And the way God completes His work is the same way He began it—by His Word. It is for this reason we are encouraging everyone at CRC to be in the Word of God personally. That is the point of this guide.

For Him who is our New Beginning,

Don Willeman
September 2019
Hanover, NH

WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 15

Memory Verse:

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

~Genesis 1:27

MONDAY

Scripture Reading: Genesis 1:1-5, 26-31; Genesis 3:1-24

Reflection Questions:

- What were one or two things that stood out to you from yesterday's sermon?

- In light of these things, in what way(s) do you need to change your attitudes or actions today?

Pray about the areas stated above.

TUESDAY

Scripture Reading: Genesis 25:19-34, "Jacob and Esau"

Reflection Questions:

- How does this scene continue to work out the macro-narrative ("big story") of Genesis?
- What does it teach us about God's sovereignty (He's in control) and our responsibility?

Pray:

- Spend some time praising God for His sovereignty over our lives.
- Spend some time asking God that He would give you the grace to be faithful to the responsibilities that He has given you this day.

WEDNESDAY

Scripture Reading: Genesis 28:10-17, "Jacob's dream"

Reflection Questions:

- In this section, God gives to Jacob a promise. What is it?
- How does this promise connect to the promise of Genesis 3:15 and Genesis 12:1-3?

- How does it connect to the promise that we have in the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Pray:

- Pray that God would give you greater understanding for the universal reach of the Gospel of Jesus, that it is a promise for all peoples.
- Pray that God would give you an opportunity today to tell someone about the good news of Jesus. Pray for specific people with whom you would like to share the good news of Jesus.

THURSDAY

Read: Genesis 32:22-31, “Jacob wrestles; his name becomes ‘Israel’”

Reflection Question:

- Jacob comes face to face with God and it becomes a wrestling match. What might this tell us about the nature of our relating to God? How can you relate to Jacob’s wrestling with God?

Pray:

- Pray that we as individuals and as a church would have the faithful perseverance to “fight” for a relationship with God.
- Spend some time praising God for Jesus who “wrestled” with both the reality of our sin and the righteous judgment of God, so that we might be brought near to God.

FRIDAY

Scripture Reading: Genesis 37:1-11

Reflection Questions:

- God gives Jacob's (Israel's) son Joseph dreams of his eventual exaltation. This, coupled with Jacob's favoritism toward Joseph, creates some difficult family dynamics. What do you find relatable to your experience?
- Was it right or wrong for Joseph to share these dreams with his family?
- What do you think God is doing through this situation?

Pray:

- Pray that God would show you, in deeper ways, both how the gospel humbles us and exalts us.
- Pray that God would give you an opportunity to sacrificially serve someone today for the sake of Christ.

SATURDAY

Scripture Reading: Genesis 37:12-36, "Joseph sold into slavery in Egypt"

Reflection Question:

- How has God used suffering (maybe especially unjust suffering) to shape you into who you are today?

Pray:

- Pray for the gathering of God's people tomorrow, that our worship and fellowship would be rich and genuine.
- Pray for the preaching of God's Word, that those who hear would "see" and trust in Jesus. Pray for yourself that you would grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ.

WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 22

Memory Verse:

But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

~Genesis 39:21

MONDAY

Scripture Reading: Genesis 39:1-6, "God Blesses Joseph in Egypt"

Reflection Questions:

- What were one or two things that stood out to you from yesterday's sermon?

- In light of these things, in what way(s) do you need to change your attitudes or actions today?

Prayer:

- Pray about the areas stated above.

- Pray that the Lord would be "with you" to strengthen you and make you "successful" in your obedience to Him.

FRIDAY

Read: Genesis 39:11-23, "Joseph Unjustly Imprisoned"

Reflection Questions:

- How did Joseph respond to being unjustly imprisoned?

- What was the secret to Joseph's success in the prison? What do you learn about this for your life today?

Pray:

- Pray about a difficult situation that you are facing today.
- Pray with confidence that God would guide you and direct your steps.
- Give thanks for the ways you have seen God provide for you with his grace in the past.

SATURDAY

Scripture Reading: Genesis 39:23

Pray:

- Pray for the gathering of God's people tomorrow, that our worship and fellowship would be rich and genuine.
- Pray that we would experience God being "with" His people.
- Pray for the preaching of God's Word, that those who hear would "see" and trust in Jesus. Pray for yourself that you would grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ.

WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 29

Memory Verse:

The keeper of the prison paid no attention to anything that was in Joseph's charge, because the LORD was with him. And whatever he did, the LORD made it succeed.

~Genesis 39:23

MONDAY

Scripture Reading: Genesis 41:1-8

Reflection Questions:

- What were one or two things that stood out to you from yesterday's sermon?

- In light of these things, in what way(s) do you need to change your attitudes or actions today?

Pray about the areas stated above.

TUESDAY

Scripture Reading: Genesis 40:9-23, "The Cupbearer & the Baker"

Reflection Questions:

- What is the meaning of each dream? How do they differ?

- Why do you think God sent the dreams? What can you observe about his timing and intention?

Pray:

- Spend some time praising God for His providential care for our lives.
- Spend some time asking God to make you grow in patience, faithfulness, and trust as He guides your life.

WEDNESDAY

Scripture Reading: Genesis 41:1-24, "Joseph and Pharaoh"

Reflection Questions:

- How do you see God's hand in bringing Joseph to Pharaoh?

- Why did God choose to communicate in dreams? How did this choice impact Pharaoh, the cupbearer, the baker, and Joseph?

- How does Joseph see his role and his ability to interpret dreams?

Pray:

- Pray that God would give you greater understanding of his word.
- Pray that God would give you opportunities to share the gospel with those around you. Pray for specific people and opportunities.

FRIDAY

Read: Genesis 41:25-45, "Joseph Exalted"

Reflection Questions:

- What does Pharaoh's dream mean? Why does God tell this to Pharaoh?
- How does Pharaoh treat Joseph? Why does he exalt him in this way?

Pray:

- Pray with confidence that God would guide you and direct your steps.
- Give thanks for the ways you have seen God provide for you and intervene with his grace.

SATURDAY

Scripture Reading: Genesis 41:46-57

Reflection Questions:

- How does God bless Joseph in this period of his life? How does Joseph respond?

- How does God bless Egypt and the nations?

Pray:

- Pray for the gathering of God's people tomorrow, that our worship and fellowship would be rich and genuine.
- Pray for the preaching of God's Word, that those who hear would "see" and trust in Jesus. Pray for yourself that you would grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ.

WEEK OF OCTOBER 6

Memory Verse:

"May God Almighty grant you mercy before the man, and may he send back your other brother and Benjamin. And as for me, if I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved."

~ Genesis 43:14

MONDAY:

Scripture Reading: Genesis 42

Reflection Questions:

- When things seemed to go against them, the brothers said to one another, *"Surely we are being punished because of our brother"* (v. 21) and their father Jacob said, *"Everything is against me!"* (v. 36). When you face difficulties of your own, brought about by your own hand or otherwise, do you tend to assume (like them) that you are being punished for your sin, or that God is generally making your life miserable? How so?
- In what ways does the Gospel interrupt that interior narrative and speak a better word over our troubles with sin and sorrow?

Pray:

- If there's known sin in your life (past or present) that leaves you feeling condemned or cursed, take sometime to confess those sins to God now.
- Thank God for the forgiveness that He freely and graciously offers you because of the life and work of Jesus on your behalf.

WEDNESDAY:

Scripture Reading: Genesis 43:1-14

Reflection Questions:

A good deal of time seems to have passed before Jacob finally entrusts himself and his family to the mercy and providence of God, and allows things to move forward (v. 14).

- In what areas of your life do you struggle to entrust yourself or others to the goodness and care of God?

- In what ways do these fears tend to hold you back, and what might it look like for you to move forward?

Pray:

- Spend some time quietly considering and praying about these things.

FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: Genesis 43:15-23

Reflection Questions:

At the very moment when the brothers assume that the very worst is coming to pass in their lives, Joseph says to them, *“Do not be afraid...”* and then assures them that God is for them and has abundantly cared for them.

- Can you think of a time in your own life when God abundantly cared for you when you were assuming the very worst was coming about? What happened?

- Similarly, how might the Gospel provide us with the very same counter-active power (“Do not be afraid!”) in the face of our current fears and concerns?

Pray:

- As you consider your own current fears or concerns, take some time to meditate upon and give thanks for the unchanging faithfulness of God.
- Take some time to pray for a friend who you know is struggling with fear and anxiety.

SATURDAY:

Scripture Reading: Genesis 43:24-34

Pray:

- Pray for the gathering of God’s people tomorrow, that our worship and fellowship would be rich and genuine.
- Pray for the preaching of God’s Word, that those who hear would recognize the goodness and care of God shown to us in Christ. Pray for yourself that you would grow in the grace and knowledge of Him.

WEEK OF OCTOBER 13

Memory Verse:

“And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life.”

~Genesis 45:5

MONDAY

Scripture Reading: Genesis 44:1-17, “Joseph Sets Up His brothers”

Reflection Questions:

- What were one or two things that stood out to you from yesterday’s sermon?
- In light of these things, in what way(s) do you need to change your attitudes or actions today?

Pray about the areas stated above.

WEDNESDAY

Scripture Reading: Genesis 44:14-34, “Judah Intervenes”

Reflection Questions:

- Joseph has set up his brothers. Why do you think he is doing this?
- What does Judah’s intervention tell you about the kind of person Judah is? How does this remind us of Christ?

Pray:

- Spend some time praising God for His sovereignty over our lives.
- Pray that God would give you sensitivity to the needs/perspectives of others in your life. Pray that God would give you opportunity to care for them.

FRIDAY

Scripture Reading: Genesis 45:1-24, "Joseph Reveals His Identity"

Reflection Questions:

- Why do you think Joseph can no longer control himself? What finally drove him to reveal his identity?
- How does it appear that Joseph's brothers responded to Joseph revealing his identity?
- What does Joseph say in response to his brothers' response?
- What does this scene teach us about the nature of repentance (i.e. being broken over our sin)?

Pray:

- Pray that God would expose sin and self-deception in your life and give you the grace to face it and turn from it.
- Pray that God would show you, in deeper ways, both how the gospel humbles us and exalts us.

SATURDAY

Scripture Reading: Genesis 45:21-28, "Joseph's Brothers Go Back to Jacob"

Reflection Question:

- How did Jacob respond to the news that Joseph is still alive?

Pray:

- Pray for the gathering of God's people tomorrow, that our worship and fellowship would be rich and genuine.
- Pray for the preaching of God's Word, that God would work a spirit of repentance in all who hear.

WEEK OF OCTOBER 20

Memory Verse:

Then he said, "I am God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for there I will make you into a great nation. I myself will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up again, and Joseph's hand shall close your eyes."

~Genesis 46:3-4

MONDAY

Scripture Reading: Genesis 46:1-27, "Jacob's Family Moves"

Reflection Questions:

- What are Jacob's greatest concerns? How does God guide and reassure Jacob?
- What is Jacob's family like now? Why are we told about the numbers and relationships of the people going down to Egypt?

Pray:

- Spend some time sharing your concerns and anxieties with God.
- Spend some time praying for the needs and concerns of the family of God.

WEDNESDAY

Scripture Reading: Genesis 46:28-47:6, "Jacob Arrives in Egypt"

Reflection Questions:

- In what ways do Judah and Joseph act as leaders for the people?
- How is Jacob welcomed to Egypt? What prevents his family from being folded into the Egyptian people, so that they remain a separate people?

Pray:

- Pray for the people God has placed in your care.
- Pray the leadership of the church as they care for the family of God.

FRIDAY

Read: Genesis 47:7-26, "Famine and Provision"

Reflection Question:

- How severe was the famine when it came? How did God provide for the people affected by the famine?
- What was Joseph's role in providing for the people?
- How did things change for Pharaoh and the people of Egypt in the course of the famine?

Pray:

- Pray that God would prepare you and his people for seasons of hardship.
- Pray that God would enable you to care for those who are suffering in your community.

SATURDAY

Scripture Reading: Genesis 47:27-31

Reflection Questions:

- How do the people fare in Egypt? Was this a good move for them?
- What does Jacob ask Joseph for as he nears the end of his life? Why do you think he requires this?

Pray:

- Pray for the gathering of God's people tomorrow, that our worship and fellowship would be rich and genuine.
- Pray for the preaching of God's Word, that those who hear would "see" and trust in Jesus. Pray for yourself that you would grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ.

WEEK OF OCTOBER 27

Memory Verse:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

~1 Peter 1:3-5

MONDAY:

Scripture Reading: Genesis 46:1-7, 26-34; 47:1-31

Reflection Questions:

- Take time to reflect on two or three things stood out to you from yesterday's sermon.
- How does these things reorient you today?
- What practical steps might you take to respond to what God is saying?

Pray about the areas stated above.

WEDNESDAY:

Scripture Reading: Genesis 48:1-13

Reflection Questions:

- Try to picture how intense the emotions would be for Jacob and Joseph in this scene. What might they be feeling as Jacob's time is coming to an end?

- The teacher in Ecclesiastes, says that it is better to go to the house of mourning than the house of feasting because greater wisdom is found there. As you contemplate the weight of this moment between Joseph and his father, how might God be calling you to reorder your priorities?
- The love and affection between Jacob and Joseph is palpable in this scene after so many years apart. Spend some time picturing what it will be like for you to finally be united with your Savior, who was separated from His Father for you.

Prayer:

- Confess any ways that you've prioritized things in life that don't really have eternal significance. Ask for God's grace to reorder your heart's desires.
- Confess any ways that you've become lukewarm in your affections towards Jesus (Revelation 3:16). Ask for His forgiveness and spend some time meditating on and responding to God in light of what He's undergone to reconcile you to Himself.

FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: Genesis 48:11-22, 1 Peter 1:3-5

Reflection Questions:

- In the time in which this story takes place it was customary for the firstborn son to receive a double-blessing. Who gets Israel's blessing in this section?
- Why do you think there is a theme in the Bible of God blessing those who don't have the societal status? How does that give you hope?
- Are there any people that you might be overlooking in your life because you are too focused on outward appearance or status? Who might God be calling you to move towards because they matter in His kingdom?
- What kind of parallels are there between how God blesses Jacob and how he blesses Ephraim and Manasseh?
- Look at 1 Peter 1:4. What kind of inheritance do we have in Christ? How does this enable us to liquidate what we've been entrusted with on earth for the sake of God's kingdom?

Prayer:

- Confess any ways you have been preferential in your treatment towards people.
- Pray for anyone who has come to mind from the above questions and about how you might be a means of God's grace in their lives.
- Ask God for wisdom to know how you might use the ways that He has blessed you to be a blessing to others for the sake of His kingdom.

SATURDAY:

Scripture Reading: Genesis 48:1-22

Prayer:

- Pray that when we gather together tomorrow, our worship and fellowship will be deep and real.
- Pray that God would bring His word tomorrow with power and conviction as it is preached. Pray that He would awaken and deepen faith in Jesus Christ both for yourself and everyone else present.

WEEK OF NOVEMBER 3

Memory Verse:

The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

~Genesis 49:10

MONDAY

Scripture Reading: Genesis 49:1-12, "Judah's Kingly Blessing"

Reflection Questions:

- What are some of the reasons that Judah is preferred over his older brothers?
- What is the nature of Judah's blessing? How does his blessing prefigure Jesus as the king?

Pray:

- Praise God for his majesty, glory, and rule over all of creation.
- Give thanks for Christ in his roles as prophet, priest, and king for God's people.

WEDNESDAY

Scripture Reading: Genesis 49:13-27, "Abundant Blessings"

Reflection Questions:

- What are some of the advantages given in each tribes blessing?
- How is Joseph's blessing similar to Judah's? Why might Joseph's sons be favored above most of the other sons of Jacob?

SATURDAY

Scripture Reading: Genesis 50:1-14

Reflection Questions:

- What were the funeral rites and mourning of Jacob like? What does this communicate about his reputation and name at the end of his life?

- How does this validate God's promises and care for Jacob? How did Jacob's life turn out differently from what he expected in the wake losing Joseph?

Pray:

- Pray for the gathering of God's people tomorrow, that our worship and fellowship would be rich and genuine.

- Pray for the preaching of God's Word, that those who hear would "see" and trust in Jesus. Pray for yourself that you would grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ.

WEEK OF NOVEMBER 10

Memory Verse:

But Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

~Genesis 50:19-20

MONDAY

Scripture Reading: Genesis 50:1-14

Reflection Questions:

- Why was it important to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that they be buried on their property in Canaan?
- What does this mean for the relocation of Jacob's family to Egypt? What is positive about this move? What is not positive about it?

Pray

- Pray that God would strengthen your hope in him and his promises.
- Pray that God's name would be known and revered by all people.

WEDNESDAY

Scripture Reading: Genesis 50:15-21

Reflection Questions:

- What do Joseph's brothers think their relationship with him is based on? What are they afraid of?

- How do they deal with their fear? What is the basis of their appeal to Joseph?

Pray:

- Pray that you would be free of insecurity and grow in your ability to relate to others the way that God relates to you.
- Pray that the love of God would mark our relationships to one another in the church.

FRIDAY

Scripture Reading: Genesis 50:15-21

Reflection Questions:

- What was the actual basis of Joseph's relationship with his brothers? How does he respond to their appeal?

- How does Joseph reassure and comfort his brothers?

- What was God doing in and through the evil actions of Joseph's brothers?

Pray:

- Pray that we would grow in wisdom, trusting God's providence through all circumstances.
- Pray that God would, by and all means, make his grace and salvation known to the world.

SATURDAY

Scripture Reading: Genesis 50:22-26

Reflection Questions:

- How did God show kindness to Joseph throughout his life? How would you describe his life in summary?

- What are Joseph's last wishes? Why does he give this command?

Pray:

- Pray for the gathering of God's people tomorrow, that our worship and fellowship would be rich and genuine.
- Pray for the preaching of God's Word, that those who hear would "see" and trust in Jesus. Pray for yourself that you would grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ.



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