



Dgroup Discussion Guide for July 7, 2016

The Beast Goes On

Scripture: Genesis 48

There was a time when Jacob was ill, so Joseph visited him with the two sons born to him while he was in Egypt. Jacob not only blessed them but he practically adopted them, saying in Genesis 48:5, ***Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, as Reuben and Simeon are.*** This is significant, because that meant that Jacob meant to make the two partakers of the inheritance of God's blessing, which was passed on from his father and grandfather. When Joseph brought the two over to Jacob to receive his blessing—the younger Ephraim toward Jacob's left hand and the older Manasseh toward the right hand—Jacob crossed his arms and instead laid his right hand on Ephraim's head and his left hand on Manasseh's head.

When Joseph saw what Jacob's intentions are, he tried to switch his father's hands, claiming that the right hand should go on top of the firstborn. However, Jacob refused, saying that he means to put the younger of the brothers before the older. He said in Genesis 48:19 that Manasseh ***shall also become a people, and he also shall be great. Nevertheless, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his offspring shall become a multitude of nations.*** This echoes Genesis 25, when the Lord said to Jacob's mother that among the twins she was to give birth to, the older—Esau—will serve the younger—Jacob.

In both situations, the action went against the norm, but the stark difference is the intentionality of the second situation. When this upset of the blessing happened to Jacob, it was only made possible through deceit. Here, however, he intentionally means to bless the younger over the older grandson.

After blessing his grandsons, Jacob turned to Joseph with his last words: that he is giving his favorite son a mountain slope that he himself had acquired from the hands of the Amorites—instead of his other brothers. This isn't the first time Jacob has given preferential treatment to Joseph: Genesis 37:3-4 says, ***Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a varicolored tunic.*** This favoritism is seemingly passed onto Joseph, as in Genesis 45 he gifted his younger brother Benjamin superfluously compared to his other brothers.

In this bloodline, there is a continuous generational cycle of favoritism, which only leads to strife within the family. This comes as no surprise, as in Deuteronomy 29:5 it says that the iniquity of fathers is passed onto their children to the third and fourth generations. This verse highlights the responsibility of the fathers to stop the cycle of sin in their families, as what they do determines the fate of their descendants.

How does one break the chain, so to speak? Paul writes in Romans 7:21-24, ***I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?*** He answers his own question in Romans 7:25, saying, ***Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.***

Only Jesus Christ can break the cycle. John 8:36 says, ***So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.*** We must firstly make sure that we have Jesus in our lives to become born again. Our next step lies

within Jesus' last words here on Earth: ***And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."***

APPLICATION:

Patiently listen as God reveals where you can apply the passage's lesson in your life. Write down specific action points to what He has revealed to you.

	<p>Personal: Do I find myself still falling into the same crazy cycle over and over? Am I prone to fall into the same sin trap? What am I doing to change this? What is it that hinders me from completely being "healed"?</p>
	<p>Family: As a family talk about the importance of breaking generation sins and favorite sins. Is there a "beast" in your family that has to be addressed? Do you children feel that you are prone to have favorites?</p>
	<p>Discipleship: Share with your discipleship group your struggles with breaking free from this crazy cycle; this generational sin; and even just a favorite. How do you plan to improve on this? Make specific action points.</p>
	<p>Church/ Ministry: In the light of all that is happening in the world today, how am I actively and intentionally sharing the gospel to those who are around me?</p>

PRAYERS:

Lift all the things that you learned back to God. Share your thoughts to Him. If He is impressing a sin in your life, confess it to Him. He is always ready to forgive.