



No family is perfect, but every family can be redeemed.

Join Erin Davis for an 8-week Bible study through *The Story of Joseph*—where dysfunction meets God's beautiful redemption.

Dear Bible Study Leader,

Thank you for your commitment to lead women to Scripture. It matters! I'm honored you've chosen to dig into *The Story of Joseph* together. You already have the tools you need most: the inspired Word of God and the Holy Spirit. Any true heart change will be a result of His work, not your own. Even the most seasoned teachers must cling to Him for every step of the journey.

My personal teaching philosophy has long been whoever is doing the work is doing the learning. I also believe that to know God's Word is to wrestle with it. You will read some uncomfortable passages in this study and spending eight weeks thinking about the brokenness in every family will likely stir up some strong emotions. Embrace the process. It's remarkable what we can learn when we know and love our whole Bibles.

This short guide includes some group discussion questions for each week of study. I hope you find them helpful.

Rooting for you, Erin

GUIDELINES FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

As you lead, here are some general guidelines I use when I teach the Bible:

- Before you are ministered to by the Lord, take time to minister to the Lord (Deut. 10:8). Give the ladies in the room a prompt like one of the following before digging into the content of the study:
 - Lord, we thank you for . . .
 - Jesus, we know you are . . .
 - Lord, we praise your name. Spontaneously declare the names of God.
 - Lord, I can thank you for my family because . . .
 - Jesus, you're the only one who can provide _____ for us. Tell Him why you need Him.
- Every woman learns differently and processes at different speeds. Find ways to vary your instructive method to account for this. Here are some ideas I've used and loved:
 - Ask women to write their answers to your questions on index cards and report back in the next session. This gives them time to think.
 - Invite them to use their imagination about the text. As they place themselves in the narrative, what do they see, hear, smell, and taste?
 - Pair them up and ask them to discuss the text one-on-one. Some women will really come out of their shell in this format.
- Make peace with awkward. There is power in letting the room fall silent for a minute or two. The topics in this study are deep. Let women think about their answers for a moment before articulating them.
- Snacks help. Food creates common ground and makes the room more comfortable. It doesn't have to be fancy. (A big bowl of popcorn is hard to beat).
- Sing! Ephesians 5:19 tells believers to address "one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart." I take this passage literally and am committed to singing with God's people whenever we gather. Pick a song that relates to that week of study and play it from your phone. Sing a favorite hymn acapella. Or ask if anyone has a song they want to sing. This is my favorite way to close Bible study.
- Make a plan and get ready to surrender it. Be prepared, but before each session invite the Holy Spirit to interrupt.

For additional help on leading small groups well I highly recommend:

- Women of the Word by Jen Wilkin
- Small Group Leadership Made Simple from Revive Our Hearts

THE THREE QUESTIONS METHOD

My husband, Jason, and I have led small group Bible studies in our home for many years. We've tried lots of different methodologies. Some have worked. Some have flopped. Our favorite is as easy and accessible as it is effective. We call it The Three Questions Method. Simply ask the group to read a passage aloud, often multiple times from various translations and then ask these three questions in this order.

1. What does this passage reveal about God?

This is a North Start question because it anchors us in the reality that the Bible is not primarily a book about us, it is first and foremost a book about God. Every passage is meant to showcase something about God's will, ways, and character. Like the bicep in your arm, the muscle of God-focused Bible study develops with lots of reps.

2. What does this passage reveal about us, the Church?

The Bible is for all of God's people through all of history. It can't mean one thing for you and something else entirely for your neighbor. Thinking about collective application helps us see the bigger picture and take a less individualized, consumer-driven approach to Scripture.

3. What should we do?

James 1:22 gives us this sobering admonition, "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your-selves." We don't read the Word merely for information, but rather for transformation—to be shaped more into the image of Jesus. Women tend to rush to application too quickly, that's why right observation and interpretation (questions 1 and 2) must happen first. But, once you've wrestled with the text, it is good and right to ask, "What should we do?" Under the Spirit's guidance, discuss how to live out what you've learned.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Here are some additional questions to use when you gather for this study.

WEEK 1: FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION

- What evidence do you see in Scripture that family is God's idea? Make a list.
- Read Psalm 127:1 aloud several times. Practically speaking, what does it mean for the Lord to build your house/family?
- Consider the definition for family provided on page 22 of the study. What would you add to this definition? What would you subtract? How is this definition different from the way the culture defines family?

- Do you see evidence that God is doing a "generational work" in your family? Share it with the group. How does thinking generationally shift your thinking about your current family situation?
- Read John 10:10 together. How have you seen the enemy's mission executed in your family? In the recent past? In the past decade? In previous generations? How can we respond to the reality that the enemy hates families without defaulting to fear or anxiety?

Bonus: Leave a Legacy of Prayer Together

Take time to each identify one audacious prayer you'd like to ask the Lord to do in your family. Think beyond today's needs (though those matter to the Lord, too). Think big! Think generational. Maybe ask that there would be no broken marriages in your family line for the next 100 years. Or ask that one thousand Christians would come from your family line. Perhaps ask the Lord to raise up missionaries from among your decedents. Write down your bold prayer and then exchange it with another woman in the group. Commit to pray for each other's families together and separately for the next eight weeks.

WEEK 2: A CROOKED FAMILY TREE

- When you think of your own family, what evidence do you see that God works in the midst of the mess more often than He works in the absence of it?
- Have you ever been caught up in the trap that the Bible is a book about perfect people? How has this shaped
 your faith? What shifts occur in your heart when you see that there are no perfect people (or perfect families)
 in the Bible? What does this baseline reality teach us about the character of God?
- Have you felt the pressure to be a "perfect family" because you're a Christian? How can you shift this thinking and put the gospel on display through your imperfections, failures, and shortcomings?
- Have you struggled with discontentment within your family? What has that looked like specifically? Peel back the layers. What does your discontentment reveal about your beliefs about God?
- Read Psalm 107 aloud. Take time to share how you've seen God redeem the most broken parts of your family line. Remember, what is shared in the group is not to be shared elsewhere. Honor each other's honesty.

WEEK 3: PLAYING FAVORITES

- Has favoritism played a role in your family dynamics? Explain the impact.
- What are some other specific sin patterns that have had an effect on your family? Be specific.
- This week's study highlighted that God can use our families as missionaries to highlight our depravity and need for a savior. What sinful attitudes and actions have been exposed in your life through family? How do you typically respond when family situations highlight your need?

- Every single member of your family is a sinner in need of a Savior. How should this reality shift the way you respond to your family members?
- How does knowing Jesus bring comfort when we feel disregarded or dismissed by family members? Do any specific passages of Scripture give you hope and strength in this area? Share them with the group.

WEEK 4: MAKING ROOM FOR MYSTERY

- When it comes to our families, why is it so difficult to trust God with the big picture?
- Have you ever had to take a step of obedience that your family struggled to understand and accept? Share about it with the group.
- What does the story of Joseph teach us about Jesus specifically?
- Name a painful snapshot from your family right now. Name a happy one. How can you encourage each other to see past the snapshot and trust that God is doing more than you can see in this moment?
- Why do you think the sanctification process is often so painfully slow? What would we miss if it wasn't?

WEEK 5: BLESSINGS & CURSES

- Have you experienced the destructive power of family secrets? Why do you think Satan is motivated to keep things hidden within our families?
- Does your family have patterns related to truth and lies that God needs to break in you? Share them with the group for accountability.
- What regrets plague you most often when you think of your family? What does it look like to surrender those to Jesus today? Tomorrow? Ten years from now?
- Is there any part of your family where you've lost hope that God is at work? Say it out loud and then pray for each other in those areas.
- Read Exodus 34:6-7. Discuss the generational blessings and curses you've witnessed in your own families.

WEEK 6: REUNIONS, RECONCILIATION, & REDEMPTION

• Has this study challenged you to surrender control of your family? What has that looked like specifically?

- If you were in Jospeh's shoes and your brothers came to you begging for food after they'd thrown you in a pit and left you for dead, how would you have likely responded? What impact did it have on the future generations of Joseph's family that he stayed soft-hearted?
- What impact can a hard-hearted woman have on the generations of her family?
- Are there any situations or relationships in your family right now where you are tempted to become hard-hearted?
- Joesph's story shows us that there is nothing God can't redeem. How have you seen His redemptive work in your life? In your family? Share these testimonies out loud and give God all the glory.

WEEK 7: I AM A STRING IN THE BOW OF THE LORD

- What parts of family life are stretching you right now? How are you coping with that stretching?
- How would you summarize Josph's legacy? How can we emulate his example?
- Words matter. What shifts do you need to make to bring more life-giving speech into your home?
- How does God get glory when we endure suffering with grace?
- Share your "how longs," then read Psalm 13 out loud. Pray for each other to faithfully endure as you wait to see God move.

WEEK 8: NURSERIES FOR HEAVEN

- Read the Puritan prayer found on page 224 of the study out loud. What do you think it means to ask the Lord to make our homes "nurseries for heaven"?
- What sermon do you hope your life preaches?
- How do you see the gospel interwoven into the story of Joseph?
- How can the shortcomings of our husbands, children, parents and other family members drive us toward the love of God?
- Talk about heaven. What will it be like? What are you looking forward to? What are your questions? What do you think it will be like to be a part of a redeemed and unified family forever?