

INTERACTIVE TEACHING/LEARNING GUIDE

Week 12

SESSION TITLE: "Worship: How To Respond To God's Grace"
FOCAL PASSAGE: (Genesis 28:10-22)

Central Teaching/Learning Aim: To help the learner discover and apply the elements of true worship as he/she responds to a Holy God.

I. Creating Interest in the Series (Hook)

A. Share the following information:

Not many people could smile through what Karen Granger, 41, suffered last year. First, her husband Eric was laid off from his telecom job. Then in March, finally pregnant and eager to start a family, she had a miscarriage. One month later, her closest cousin Sharon received a diagnosis of advanced breast cancer. No sooner did Granger return from visiting Sharon in Tower Lakes, Ill., than two hurricanes smacked her hometown of Boynton Beach, Fla. Finally, in early December one of her best friends died at age 50 from a brain tumor. After that, she found herself asking, "Why, God? Why?"

But Granger, a devout Christian who attends Presbyterian services weekly and prays daily, doesn't allow circumstances to get her down. "We're not in heaven yet," she says, "and these things happen on this earth." Granger credits religion with helping her cope and giving her a feeling of connection and purpose. "We're putting our lives in God's hands and trusting he has our best interests at heart," she says. "I've clung to my faith more than ever this year. As a consequence, I haven't lost my joy."

Comfort and joy. Inner peace. A sense of well-being. Sacred texts and sermons have long promised such rewards to the faithful. Now the rigor of scientific research is being applied to this seemingly ineffable tenet of religious belief. According to Dr. Harold Koenig, a co-director of the Center for Spirituality, Theology and Health at Duke University, from 2000 to 2002 more than 1,000 scholarly articles on the relationship between religion and mental health were published in academic journals--as opposed to just 100 from 1980 to 1982. Such studies indicate that religion buffers its adherents from worry. Religious people are less depressed, less anxious and less suicidal than nonreligious people. And they are better able to cope with such crises as illness, divorce and bereavement. Even if you compare two people who have symptoms of depression, says Michael McCullough, an associate professor of psychology and religious studies at the University of Miami, "the more religious person will be a little less sad."

Chances are, he'll also be a little happier. Studies show that the more a believer incorporates religion into daily living--attending services, reading Scripture,

praying--the better off he or she appears to be on two measures of happiness: frequency of positive emotions and overall sense of satisfaction with life. Attending services has a particularly strong correlation to feeling happy, and religious certainty--the sense of unshakable faith in God and the truth of one's beliefs--is most closely linked with life satisfaction

Ask - Do you agree with the theme of this article that acts of faith (worship, prayer, Bible study) can make you a more joy-filled person?

How does a worship experience whether corporate or personal add quality to your life?

Share an example of one of your most meaningful worship experiences, maybe a certain place, maybe a circumstance in your life that made it memorable etc. (Allow time for some to share. You could place them in groups and let them share.)

State - Today we are going to discuss how Jacob responded to God's grace and how we should respond through worship.

- B. Optional Method – Create** an atmosphere of worship and reverence in your ABF room. Use candles, have praise music playing. Call the class into a time of worship. Ask them to listen and read along to a song based on (Psalm 51:10-17) "Create in me a Clean Heart" by Keith Green. After the song ask them to spend time thanking God for His grace and goodness.

After the time of worship ask the class members to share examples of their most memorable worship experiences. Maybe a certain location or occasion that stands out. (You may want to place them in groups for this activity.)

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- C. Optional Method – Movie Clip "Mr. Bean Goes To Church"** from the Best of Mr. Bean video.

Synopsis: Mr. Bean goes to church and can't stay awake. He eventually falls to the floor in complete boredom.

Ask – What makes a true worship experience for you? What are the elements of worship for you? How much of a worship experience is dependent on how prepared a person is for worship?

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II. Book

- A. Utilize the discussion guide to examine the Scripture passages.

III. Look

- A. **Distribute** the handout "Worship: Responding to God's Grace" and guide members through it. (You could do this as an entire group and have members read Scriptures out loud or you could place members into groups.)

IV. Took

- A. **Close** by having a time of worship. (See Hook option B.) Challenge members to put more effort into their preparation for worship this week.
- B. **Optional Method – Share** the following story and lead members in a time of closing worship.

Matt Redman, a popular worship chorus composer, relates a season of his life when he re-evaluated his worship. His pastor sensed that the music in their worship had turned into more of a performance so he banned music for a period of time. During this time Redman really examined his worship motives and he wrote the song "The Heart of Worship."

Let's listen to his song as we reflect on our own worship experiences.

Create In Me A Clean Heart
Keith Green

Create in me a clean heart, oh God
And renew a right spirit within me.
Create in me a clean heart, oh God,
And renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from thy presence oh Lord,
And take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.
Restore unto me, the joy of Thy Salvation,
And renew a right spirit within me.

Sing it together -

Create in me a clean heart, oh God
And renew a right spirit within me.
Create in me a clean heart, oh God,
And renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from thy presence oh Lord,
And take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.
Restore unto me, the joy of Thy Salvation,
And renew a right spirit within me.

Create in me a clean heart, oh God
Sing it to Jesus - Close your eyes and worship Him.
Create in me a clean heart, oh God,
And renew a right spirit within me.
Create in me a clean heart, oh God,
And renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from thy presence oh Lord,
And take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.
Restore unto me, the joy of Thy Salvation,
And renew a right spirit within me.

The Heart of Worship
Matt Redman

When the music fades
All is stripped away
And I simply come
Longing just to bring
Something that's of worth
That will bless Your heart

I bring You more than a song
For a song in itself
Is not what You have required
You search much deeper within
Through the way things appear
You're looking into my heart

Chorus

I'm coming back to the heart of worship
And it's all about You
It's all about You, Jesus
I'm sorry Lord for the thing I've made it
When it's all about You
It's all about You, Jesus

King of endless worth
No one could express
How much You deserve
Though I'm weak and poor
All I have is Yours
Every single breath

Chorus

DISCUSSION GUIDE
(Teacher's Copy)

1. Did the place Jacob stopped for the night carry any significance before his encounter with God? (Genesis 28:10-11)
(No he simply stopped because it was becoming dark.)

2. Where do you regularly encounter God?
(Make a list.)

3. Outline the significance of Jacob's dream:
 - a. (v. 12) Divine access to heaven revealed
 - b. (v. 12) Angels at work in heaven and on earth
 - c. (v. 13) God revealed as sovereign over all
 - d. (v. 13) God reiterated the land promise
 - e. (v. 14) God reiterated the seed promise
 - f. (v. 14) God reiterated the universal blessing promise
 - g. (v. 15) God comforted Jacob promising His presence, protection and restoration.

4. How did Jacob respond to God's divine intervention into his sleep? (vs. 16-22)
 - a. (v. 16) He recognized God's presence
 - b. (v. 17) He expressed a holy fear of God
 - c. (v. 17) He expressed the awesomeness of God
 - d. (v. 18) He set up a memorial to mark the experience
 - e. (v. 20) He made a vow to God claiming God's promise
 - f. (v. 21) He promised to return to this place
 - g. (v. 22) He promised to tithe to God

5. God promised to stay with Jacob, He has made the same promise to you. Read (John 16:5-15). How should this promise impact your life?

6. When was the last time you cried out "How awesome is this place!" because of your encounter with God?

7. Jacob was not expecting his encounter with God yet he still had an incredible worship experience, how should you prepare for worship?

8. What needs to change in worship experience whether corporate or personal for you to experience the awesome power of God?

DISCUSSION GUIDE
(Student's Copy)

1. Did the place Jacob stopped for the night carry any significance before his encounter with God? (Genesis 28:10-11)

2. Where do you regularly encounter God?

3. Outline the significance of Jacob's dream:
 - a. (v. 12) _____
 - b. (v. 12) _____
 - c. (v. 13) _____
 - d. (v. 13) _____
 - e. (v. 14) _____
 - f. (v. 14) _____
 - g. (v. 15) _____

4. How did Jacob respond to God's divine intervention into his sleep? (vs. 16-22)
 - a. (v. 16) _____
 - b. (v. 17) _____
 - c. (v. 17) _____
 - d. (v. 18) _____
 - e. (v. 20) _____
 - f. (v. 21) _____
 - g. (v. 22) _____

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Worship: Responding to God's Grace

Utilize the WORSHIP acrostic to help you in your daily walk with a holy God.

Wonder at the holiness of God. Fear His name. (Psalm 46:1-10; Proverbs 19:23)

Obtain praise for His love and mercy. (Psalm 27:1-3; Eph. 2:4-5; James 5:11)

Recall and confess your sins. (1 John 1:6-10; James 5:16)

Seek God's help to allow you to start over. (Psalm 51:10-13)

Honor God for giving you another opportunity. (Psalm 23:1-3; Isaiah 40:29-31)

Insist on expectant worship. (Mal. 3:10; Psalm 100; Matt. 7:7-8)

Prove your devotion through a life of service. (Isaiah 6:8)

THE Word For The Week

Payback: How God Gets Our Attention (Genesis 29:1-30)

Monday – Read Genesis 29:1-30

- What was the real reason Jacob went to Paddan Aram?(Gen. 27:41-43)
- What was the supposed reason Jacob went to Paddan Aram?(Gen. 28:1-2)
- How often do we embark on a journey in life with a “supposed” legitimate purpose, yet with an underlying motive that is the result or consequence of sin?
- What was the condition of Jacob's heart as he left?

Tuesday – Read Genesis 29:1-30

- We saw in last week's lesson that Jacob was changed by his encounter with God (Gen. 28:10-22). How was he changed?
- What was the condition of Jacob's heart when he arrived in Paddan Aram?
- Can you think of a time when you have encountered God and he changed your heart?
- How did that prepare you for what God had planned for you?

Wednesday – Read Genesis 29:1-12

- God's sovereignty is evident as Jacob arrives in the region. Can you see two instances of “happenstance” really being God at work in Jacob's life?
- Often God is at work in the circumstances of our life, but we are too busy to see Him. Prayerfully seek God through the Holy Spirit's power to make you aware of Him working in your life.
- Note Jacob's willingness to serve Rachel at the well. Do you think this is evidence of his changed heart? If so, how can we emulate Jacob, by allowing our encounters with God that change our heart to be worked out in our daily lives?

Thursday – Read Genesis 29:13-27

- How did Laban deceive Jacob?
- Why do you think God allowed this to happen?
- Have you ever seen in your life where God has allowed some circumstances in your life as an opportunity to open your eyes to sinful attitudes or behaviors that He wanted you to change?
- Seek God to open your hear to such instances so that He can conform you to the image of Christ, as you meditate on the lesson of this scripture.

Friday – Read Genesis 29:28-30

- How did Jacob respond to the trickery of Laban?
- Do you think this response was different due to his changed heart?
- How was God using these circumstances to prepare Jacob to be the seed of His chosen people?
- Do you recognize God's discipline in your life? How do you respond to His discipline?
- Ask the Lord, through prayer, to give you a heart that responds to His discipline, and allows Him to continue to conform your character to that of Christ.

“Worship: How to Respond to God’s Grace”
Genesis 28:10-22

(Exegetical . . . What it meant to Israel back THEN)
JACOB'S VOW TO WORSHIP GOD AT "THE HOUSE OF GOD,"

(Following His Awakening to God's Wondrous Presence
And His Raising a Pillar of Witness)

WAS BASED ON GOD'S PRIOR PROMISES TO BE FAITHFUL TO HIM

(Ultimate Promises of Land, Seed, and Blessing and
Immediate Promises of Presence, Protection, and Restoration).

- I. SETTING (The Place): The result of Esau's death threat (27:41) and Isaac's marital advice (28:1-2) was Jacob's leaving Beersheba (in the land of promise) and setting out for Haran (outside the land of promise), (10).
- II. SETTING (The Time): The reason Jacob stopped his journey at the place he did (which became known as Bethel), using a stone for a headrest while he slept, was because the sun had set (it was becoming night), (11).
- III. YHWH's ACTION: YHWH's sovereign intrusion upon Jacob's retreat from the land of promise comforted Jacob with ultimate promises of land, seed, and blessing and immediate promises of His presence, protection, and restoration, (12-15).
 - A. YHWH's means of encountering Jacob was a dream with (Behold!) a stairway reaching to heaven, with (Behold!) angels ascending and descending, and with (Behold!) YHWH standing above, (12-13a).
 1. Jacob's dream from YHWH revealed divine access through a staircase.
 2. Jacob's dream from YHWH revealed heavenly communication through angels.
 3. Jacob's dream from YHWH revealed YHWH standing as Sovereign over all.
 - B. YHWH's ultimate comfort for Jacob consisted of His reiteration of the Abrahamic Covenant including land, seed, and universal blessing, (13b-14).
 1. YHWH's promise to Jacob reiterated the land promise.
 2. YHWH's promise to Jacob reiterated the seed promise.
 3. YHWH's promise to Jacob reiterated the universal blessing promise.
(12:2-3; 13:14-17; 15:1-7 & 18-21; 17:1-8; 22:17-18; 26:3-4 & 24; 27:27-29; and 28:3-4)
 - C. YHWH's immediate comfort for Jacob consisted of His promise of His presence, protection, and restoration, (15).

"BEHOLD . . . "

 - A - "I Will Be with You."
 - C - "I Will Watch Over You Wherever You Go."
 - D - "I Will Bring You Back to This Land."
 - E - "I Will Not Leave You."

. . . UNTIL I DO What I Promised.
- IV. JACOB'S RESPONSE: Jacob's vow to worship God at "The House Of God," following his awakening to God's wondrous presence and his raising a pillar of witness, was based on God's prior promises to be faithful to him, (16-22).
 - A. Jacob's wonder at awakening from his dream also awakened him to the realization that YHWH was with him in that place and awed him to the

- reality of God's immediacy, (16-17).
- B. Jacob's witness, upon arising in the morning, resulted in his raising a memorial pillar to God, Who intervened, and in his renaming the place "The House of God," (18-19).
 - C. Jacob's vowing to worship God in the place he had named "The House of God" was based on God's prior promises to be faithful to him, (20-22).
 - 1. God's prior promises to be faithful to Jacob motivated his vow to worship.
 - 2. Jacob's vow to worship God was based on God's prior promises of faithfulness.

(Theological . . . What it means to believers ALWAYS)

**GOD'S GRACIOUS PROMISES PROVOKE
WONDER, WITNESS, AND WORSHIP**

- I. God's revelation to His people assures them of His provision, (10-15).
 - A. Usurping God's will or way results in wilderness journeys, (10).
 - B. Wilderness journeys lead into a darkness of estrangement, (11).
 - C. God's self-revelation intrudes on a fugitive's retreat, (12-13a).
 - D. God's revelation of His promises comforts His people, (13b-15).
 - 1. God's family promises (in His Word) comfort His people, (13b-14).
 - 2. God's individual promises (in His Word and Spirit) comfort His people, (15).
- II. The wonder, witness, and worship of God's people naturally follow God's promises, (16-22).
 - A. Fearful wonder naturally follows God's promises, (16-17).
 - B. Faithful witness naturally follows God's promises, (18-19).
 - C. Fervent worship naturally follows God's promises, (20-22).

(Pedagogical . . . What it means to us NOW)

RESPOND TO GOD'S GRACE TO YOU.

- I. Your presumption alienates you from God's blessings.
 - A. Jacob abandoned the land of blessing because he took God's will and way into his own hands, (27:1-28:9).
 - B. You have broken fellowship with God's gracious blessing by trying to take control of your life.
- II. God's intrusion interrupts your retreat from blessing.
 - A. God interrupted Jacob's retreat from blessing, (10-13a).
 - B. God has interrupted your life as you have retreated from His blessing.
- III. God has promised you blessing.
 - A. God has called you into fellowship through Jesus Christ.
 - B. God has promised you public corporate blessings in His Word.
 - 1. Jacob was promised a land, seed, and blessing, (13b-14).
 - 2. You are promised salvation: past, present, & future.
 - C. God promises you private personal blessings by his spirit.
 - 1. Jacob was promised presence, protection, and restoration, (15).
 - 2. You are promised presence, protection, and restoration.
- IV. Respond to God's grace to you.

- A. Wonder at God's awesomeness as sovereign over all.
 - 1. Jacob wondered in awe at God's revelation of Himself, (16-17).
 - 2. Wonder at God's awesomeness.
- B. Witness of His promises to all who will believe.
 - 1. Jacob witnessed God's presence and promises, (18-19).
 - 2. Witness God's promises to a watching world.
- C. Worship Him in sacrificial obedience.
 - 1. Jacob worshipped the God of blessing, (20-22).
 - 2. Worship the God of blessing rather than the blessing of God.