

# Bible Essentials

Scripture Passage: Genesis 25:19-34

As a group, share something about your past week. For example, share prayer requests and answers to prayer. Share the best and worst moments of your week (highs and lows). Write prayer requests here. Open with prayer for these requests and for God to open your hearts to this week's study.

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If you have any siblings, what was/is your relationship with them like? Did you fight all the time? Or did you get along well?

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Read today's passage. Discuss your initial impressions of the passage. Write any major points here.

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Here is some context for Genesis 25:19-34.

*In the stories in Genesis of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, we don't get much time with Isaac. In his early years, Isaac's story is mostly focused on Abraham—Abraham waiting for a son, finally getting the son God promised (Isaac), sending Abraham's illegitimate son (Ishmael) away, and then God's test of Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. Once Isaac grows up, we have one chapter (Genesis 24) that focuses on Isaac getting a wife, although that story focuses more on Rebekah than it does on Isaac.*

*Once Isaac is married, we have a short passage about Abraham's death (Genesis 25:1-11). We find that Abraham left everything to Isaac, even though Abraham had another wife and many more sons. We do learn one important thing, though—God blessed Isaac, just as he had blessed Abraham before him. Then, before we learn much more about Isaac, the story switches to Isaac's sons, Jacob and Esau. Today's passage is about their birth and relationship as brothers.*

What are your thoughts about the context? Discuss the context as a group. Write some key points here.

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Read the passage again. Use a different Bible version if you have one available. Have someone summarize the passage in their own words, and use this space to record that summary.

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Look closely at the passage and answer the following questions as a group. Write notes in the space provided.

What does the passage say about God?

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What does the passage say about people?

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What does the passage say about God's plan?

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What else strikes you about this passage?

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Understanding how a passage fits into the overarching story of the Bible is important.

*In this short passage, we see the three forefathers of the Israelites in one passage for the first time. It starts with describing the family line of Abraham through Isaac and ends with Isaac's son Jacob receiving the birthright from Esau. In this passage, we see God's propensity for upending the way humans think things should be. Instead of the birthright and the blessing of Abraham's line going through Esau, the firstborn, it went through Jacob even though Jacob was younger.*

*I don't know what his reasoning was, but God had a reason for picking Jacob rather than Esau to fulfill his promise to Abraham to become a great nation. Not only did this completely switch the line of the birthright and blessing, it showed careful selection of which son would be the one through which the Messiah would come. Jesus came through the line of Jacob, not the line of Esau. And throughout the Old Testament, God's favor and focus rested on the descendants of Jacob, not the descendants of Esau. God made this choice before they were even born. Even when the Israelites rejected God, God still preserved a remnant of Jacob's line for the Messiah.*

*Just like with Jacob and Esau, God created each one of us, and he knows exactly what his plan is for us before we are ever born. Psalm 139:13-16 says:*

*<sup>13</sup> For you created my inmost being;  
you knit me together in my mother's womb.*

*<sup>14</sup> I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;  
your works are wonderful,  
I know that full well.*

*<sup>15</sup> My frame was not hidden from you  
when I was made in the secret place,  
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.*

*<sup>16</sup> Your eyes saw my unformed body;*

*all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.*

*God ordained all our days before we were even born. He knows exactly what his plan is for each of us. And for those who are predestined, part of God's plan is for us to seek him. We see this in Jeremiah 29:11-13:*

*<sup>11</sup> "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. <sup>12</sup> Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. <sup>13</sup> You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."*

*This promise may have been made to the Babylonian exiles, but they are just as true for us today. What hope and future does God have for us? He gave us eternal hope through his son, Jesus Christ, who came through the line of Jacob. Jesus, God himself born as a man, lived a perfect life and paid the penalty for our sins so that we could live in hope of eternal life if we believe in him.*

What are your thoughts on how this passage fits into the overarching story of the Bible? Discuss as a group. What questions do you have individually or as a group? Discuss potential answers.

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As a group, use the following questions to apply today's Scripture passage to your life. How does this passage affect how you view God?

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How does this passage affect how you view yourself?

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How does this passage affect how you will live your life?

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Close in prayer, asking God to help you apply what you learned today.