

Genesis, pt3: Joseph's Character, part 5: Life Perspective

Genesis 48-50

MPS A Christian discerns all things to understand the world and all of life by the promise of God in Jesus Christ.

OBJ Three practices to build and hold a life perspective that glorifies God in all of life.

INTRO At our point in the text, Joseph's whole family has come to Egypt to dwell. And because of Pharaoh's love for Joseph, they have been received and rewarded as royalty. They are reunited and the process of reconciliation has begun. New relationships are being built on truth shared in new experiences and new intimacy gained. Much has happened through the years as we have tracked Jacob's family through Joseph. And here we are shown their end. **Seeing the end of life holds a sobering, clarifying effect on all of life, does it not? A person who rests their life, at the end of life, in the peace, love, grace and goodness of God is the most glorious of all hope.**

The last three chapters of Genesis record the most celebrated aspects of both Jacob and Joseph's life, a snapshot that captures the core of their whole life. (No spoiler here. You have to track to the end of the sermon to hear what it is.) Jacob did not hold a fairy-tale perspective on his life, as he told Pharaoh, "*Few and evil have been the days of my life*".^{47:9} And he encountered much evil in his life. But Jacob knew nothing had thwarted God's blessing and promise to him. In the end, he remained a man ready to bless others. The last chapters of Genesis are filled with Jacob's blessing.

Arguably, THE challenge of the Christian life is this; "**How do we encounter all the evil of this world, and remain full of God's love, grace and blessing for others?**" Today it is estimated that a majority of people who do not believe in God cite evil and bad as the leading reason why they do not believe in God. It typically revolves around a question like, "**IF God is a loving, caring, compassionate, gracious God, then why does so much evil exist in the world? Why does so much bad happen? Why do bad things happen to good people, and good things to bad people?**" These questions should drive one to God, not away from, because only the gospel of Jesus Christ holds any hope in the midst of evil. It is this deep conviction that forms the way a Christian discerns and understands all of life. **The Christian's life perspective is the way one holds to God in the midst of all that is faced in this world.** => WHY today is so important!

A Christian discerns all things to understand the world and all of life by the promise of God in Jesus Christ.

OBJ **Three practices to build and hold a life perspective of glorifying God in all of life.**

READ Genesis 48:1-5

*After this, Joseph was told, "Behold, your father is ill." So he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. ² And it was told to Jacob, "Your son Joseph has come to you." Then Israel summoned his strength and sat up in bed. ³ And Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, ⁴ and said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will make of you a company of peoples and will give this land to your offspring after you for an everlasting possession.' ⁵ And now your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, as Reuben and Simeon are. **Genesis 48:1-5***

Joseph brings his sons to Jacob, who remembers God's promise and blessing on his life, and bows himself to Joseph and his sons. Trusting God's promise, as Jacob testifies, does not give you a "get out of evil, suffering, and hardship free" card, but it does guard you against allowing any of those things from damaging or destroying your faith. **Holding to God's promise grants one the understanding of WHY and HOW God works through all circumstances to overcome them in you, to produce even more love, joy, peace and blessing for others.**

TRANS This forms the Christian's first practice to hold a life perspective of glorifying God in all.

Practice #1. Hold to God's promise in Jesus Christ.

When Jacob shares the Lord Almighty's appearance to him and the blessing God placed on him, he points us to remember the call of God on our own life in salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. Nothing is more important. Relationship with God by



grace through faith in Jesus Christ defines everything about life for the Christian. [The Christian's whole life is defined by our new identity in Christ, every relationship, experience, and all of life.](#)

When Paul instructs the Romans in how we are to approach our daily lives, he states,

"For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. ⁸For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. ⁹For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living." Romans 14:7-9

And as I've cited for understanding this whole narrative, so I remind us today. 2 Corinthians 5 teaches that our relationship with God through Jesus Christ determines how we live our whole lives! And here it is in a phrase: (2 Corinthians 5:14-15)

For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; ¹⁵and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15

[A Christian views all of life by God's call on our life, to live for Him, fully confident that we will always live with Him.](#)

Consider Jacob's example in Genesis 48:12 for how to do this. As Jacob bowed himself to the earth at the sight of his son and grandsons, James and Peter exhort us to humble ourselves before God. [We hold to God's promise when we humble ourselves before Him.](#)

Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. James 4:10

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you. 1 Peter 5:6

Genesis 49 Jacob Blesses His Sons

After Jacob blesses his grandsons, making them his own sons, he blesses each of his sons. Jacob knew that what God had given to him was not only for him. Every blessing from God comes with a stewardship. He pronounces a blessing on his sons, and in so doing passes his faith in God to each of them. And note that each blessing is unique and specific to each son, recognizing who they are in the blessing bestowed upon them. Genesis notes this when it states (Genesis 49:28), "*All these are the twelve tribes of Israel. This is what their father said to them as he blessed them, blessing each with the blessing suitable to him.*"

Practice #2. Live to bless others and pass on the Faith to the next generation.

The greatest blessing one can bestow on others in life is our faith in Jesus. A blessing transfers something from God to others through us. And what is transferred should be distinctive of God, so the recipient recognizes God's presence in the blessing. When we bless others, we give to them according to how and what God has blessed us.

Parents, do not miss this critical application for raising your children. Blessing others begins by blessing your children with faith in God. Jacob instilled in his sons and grandsons that the direction for his whole life came from God. Moses centered all of life around this central practice (Deuteronomy 6:5). Repeatedly we read of God's plan for this in the Old Testament (Joel 1:3) and the New Testament (2 Tim 1:5-7). Your children need to know this. They need to know that you believe this and how you depend on this. And not just at the end of your life, for they will need it for their lives after you are gone but they will only recognize it if they saw you practice and live by it. Tell it to them repeatedly now. Jesus is why we are who we are. The Bible reveals how we live. We trust God because He is true and right, holy and just, loving and compassionate.

While living to bless others begins with your family, it is surely not limited to the family. As we pass the Faith on to our family, they become instruments through which we pass the Faith on to the whole world in sharing and serving Jesus through the gospel. This is why the local church is so critical for the Christian. It is the first place to fulfill Christian community for your life. [Christians live to bless others and pass our faith in Jesus on to others with our whole life.](#)

Genesis 50 Jacob dies and the brothers take him back to Canaan to bury him. When Joseph and his brothers return to Egypt after the funeral, things that had long been settled creep back into some of their thinking. The brother now begin to wonder if Joseph will not exact his vengeance now that their father is gone. Listen to these verses in chapter 50.



“When Joseph’s brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, “It may be that Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him.”¹⁶ So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, “Your father gave this command before he died: ¹⁷‘Say to Joseph, “Please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil to you.”’ And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father.” Joseph wept when they spoke to him. ¹⁸His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, “Behold, we are your servants.” ¹⁹But Joseph said to them, “Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? ²⁰As 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. ²¹So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones.” Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.” **Genesis 50:15-21**

Friend, if I want you to know and believe anything about the Christian life from this last portion of study, it is simply this: There is more glory and good in understanding life by what God means to bring from it, than anything man could dare to intend in it. [God’s promise to which we hold in Jesus Christ, that holds us in our salvation, tells us that there will never be anything in our life that God will not bring good to us from it.](#)

TRANS When you live with the anchoring conviction of such a promise, it empowers you live distinctly because of it.

Practice #3: Live to repay every evil with good.

The New Testament applies this practice for us.

*Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. **Romans 12:21***

See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone.

1 Thessalonians 5:15

*Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. **1 Peter 3:9***

Christians do not live this way because it’s what we ought to do, which it is. Christians counter evil with good because of what we know to be true of God, of this world, and of our whole lives. THIS IS why we were called to faith in Jesus Christ. THIS is our highest and most glorious hope that will not fade, perish or spoil! We live by the power of God that overcomes evil by good.

What makes Jacob and Joseph so notable in scripture that the study of their lives bring value, benefit and help to ours? (As I promised.) Hebrews 11:21 marks Jacob’s greatest accomplishment when it says, “By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff.”^{Heb11:21} Hebrews also cites Joseph’s finest hour when he foretells of the Exodus (Gen 50:24): “By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones.”^{Heb11:22} Jacob and Joseph were recorded in Scripture as a model of faith for us because of this one characteristic, that in the midst of all the imperfection of their lives, they held to God’s promise as the highest hope and first priority for all of life; the way they understood their whole life and the whole world – life perspective – was by believing God’s promise. [Christians live by a distinct life perspective because of the glorious promise given to us in Jesus Christ.](#)

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CLOSE **Do you look to Jesus to see and understand all things? Are you discerning all hardships in life by, “As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good”^{Gen50:20}, confident of God’s promise^{Romans8:28} to bring good to you? Holding a God-centered, gospel-fueled perspective of life when hard or confusing times hit begins by walking daily with Jesus.**

