

May 8/9, 2004

**Study Questions**  
*Fear or Faith (Part 2): A Study in the Life of Joseph*  
**Jacob's Final Words**  
**Genesis 49:1-33**  
Pastor Bryan Clark

**Opening Discussion**

1. What are the factors that determine the pathways of our lives? Which of those factors can we control and which are out of our control?
2. How can you respond to the factors that are out of your control? How should you respond to those factors you can control?
3. In what ways are you like your parents and in what ways are you different?

**Bible Study**

1. Read Genesis 49. Identify each son (tribe) and his description.

2. Review the sins of Reuben, Simeon and Levi (Gen. 34; Gen. 35:22).

What did their sin gain them and what did it cost them?

How did their character affect not only their lives, but the lives of the tribes to follow?

Why do character issues tend to establish patterns from generation to generation? Are we doomed to repeat these patterns (fatalism) or can we choose to break bad patterns?

3. Judah was the chosen son through whom the promised seed traveled. The blessing on him was very positive. Did he deserve this blessing? Why or why not?

What does Judah picture (hint: think about his role in the line of Christ)?

4. Read I Chronicles 5:1,2. What did Joseph receive and what did Judah receive?

How would we compare the end of both Judah's and Joseph's lives (the blessing) with the middle of their lives (in slavery and prison in Egypt)?

What does this teach us about faith?

What does this teach us about grace?

5. In Genesis 49:28 the text states that each son received a blessing “appropriate” to him. Each son had a story, and that story was written by both the sovereign hand of God and the choices of each son. Each life is one part faith and one part responsibility. How does one affect the other? In other words, how does our faith affect our choices and our choices affect our faith?
6. Over the years the Jewish artists have created a picture or symbol for each son depicting Jacob’s description of that son and his tribe. Draw a symbol that best represents your life to this point. Share these with the group and explain your drawing.

### **Application**

1. Draw another symbol picturing what you want your life to be about. What will be necessary to see that picture become a reality?
2. Share ways you have become a pattern breaker in your family history. In other words, celebrate ways God is using you to establish a new pattern—both in your life and in the lives of those who follow you.
3. Pray and ask God to give you the faith to trust Him with the things you cannot control and to be responsible with the things you can control.

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