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GOD PLANS

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Leader, please make these available to your group.

Women's refresh this year will be focused on our BELOVED Jesus. It will be a precious time to spend time in worship and prayer, hearing encouragement from the women at our church who have inspiration for how to spend that precious time with Jesus despite our busy lives. You will leave REFRESHED in the spirit of the Lord and we all need that!

Men please spend time praying for the women of this church that this day meets them where they are and ministers to their hearts.

Get your ticket here - lunch is included and bring a friend!



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GOD PLANS

Week 32 | Reunited And It Feels So Good | Genesis 45:1-14

REAL CHANGE STARTS WITH YOU

Are you as surprised as I am at the amount of news covering the Johnny Depp and Amber Heard drama? The sheer volume would lead you to think that it's one of the most important issues in the world, ranking right up there with the war in Ukraine and the mad Russian dictator who wants to destroy the world. But of course, it isn't. In truth, it reveals that the human appetite for broken celebrity relationships is insatiable. And it's insatiable because, in some sense, we identify with the pain of conflict in relationships. Perhaps there's some cathartic experience we have watching "someone else's drama" play out on the television, as if it were our own. The brokenness in Joseph's family is no exception. It's a brokenness that we can all identify with, though maybe not to the same extreme. Yet, I believe it's also why we breathe a collective sigh of relief when Joseph and his brothers are ultimately reconciled. What makes this story so special isn't the way it begins but the way that it ends. It proves that even in the worst relationship situations, there is the hope of reconciliation if we are willing to walk the path of real change.

Leaders: Take your group through each section: Pray, Reflect, and Reach. Keep in mind the time allowances. In the Reflect section, feel free to focus on several of these questions instead of all as time allows.



PRAY (10 min)

As a Life Group, take time to pray over relationships that need to be reconciled.



REFLECT (25 min)

As you've had the opportunity to reflect on what God has spoken to you through the lesson this week, consider these questions as a group and discuss them.

1. The pathway to reconciliation isn't an easy one, but it's available if we're willing to take it.
What were the 3 C's that Pastor Derek talked about, and how can you apply them to your life with respect to relationships? Is it hard for you to admit that you're wrong? Would those closest to you say that you are quick to admit when you're wrong or reluctant? Do you argue or reason your way out of taking responsibility for your actions?

Reconciliation is impossible unless there's real spiritual change.

2. One thing that helps us see people in the right light is God's love and care. Don't underestimate how much God cares for people, even those who have offended you.
What are some Scriptures that teach us that God cares for and loves everyone? How can remembering this help you love those who have offended you? Are there people you need to apply this truth to in your life?



He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

Matthew 5:45

3. The Bible doesn't teach that we just "let offenses go." We see them in light of the cross, and therefore choose forgiveness. We also see them in the light of God's purpose for our lives. He uses everything, even those things that are hurtful. Nothing is greater than the sovereign love of God that rules over you.

Have you let any issues or offenses supersede this truth? Have you been reluctant to take offenses to the cross and choose forgiveness?

And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

Genesis 45:7 -8

4. Forgiveness takes one person, reconciliation takes two. Sometimes reconciliation is a long process or doesn't even come to pass because one party is unwilling. Joseph was willing to invite his brothers back into his life, even after all they had done. He took a step toward them as a peacemaker.

Have you done all you can to be reconciled with those you are in conflict with?



WEEKLY MEMORIZATION VERSE

Matthew 5:23-24

Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.



REACH (5 min)

Considering what God revealed to you this week, spend extended time praying over your broken relationships. Ask God to search your heart to reveal what you need to take responsibility for. Choose repentance and forgiveness and be willing to take a step towards that person as a peacemaker so what's broken can be mended by God.

We will be waiting with anticipation to hear how God is bringing healing to what has been broken.