

Student ministry workers in Sweden developed a series of questions to ask when reading a Bible passage. Called the “Swedish Method” because of its origins, these questions can be used when reading the Bible by yourself or with others

The daily readings in this family worship guide have a few questions. However, you are encouraged, as appropriate for your family, to ask the following general questions of the text each day.



Is there something that ‘shines’ from the passage—whatever impacts most, or draws attention?



Is there something you don’t understand, or a question the passage raises in your mind?



Is there a personal application to your life?



Is there something you plan to share with someone else – and who will you share it with?



How do ideas in the passage interrelate? Or with other passages in this book – or in the whole Bible?

Worshipping Together is part of the vision and is a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Frankston, Victoria, Australia. frankston.rpca.org.au

The concept and layout draws heavily from *Let’s Worship God*, a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Airdrie, Scotland. airdrierpcs.org

The readings are from Tim Chester’s 3-year weekly reading plan. tiny.cc/WkBbl or tiny.cc/3yrBbl

The quote on the cover is from the article *What Shampoo and Family Worship Have in Common*, Written by Randy Greenwald, (Quoted from *Tabletalk* magazine, Nov 1997.)

Notes this week drawn in part from commentaries on Genesis by John Calvin and R. Kent Hughes

Worshipping Together



We love God because He first loved us.

And we love to tell God that we love Him.

Joyful and faithful worship together twice each Lord’s Day is the highlight of our week. We are glad that they said, “Let us go to the House of the Lord.” Corporate worship prepares us for the week and prepares us for Heaven.

In addition, we regularly worship God as families and as individuals.

One father put it this way:

The back of my shampoo bottle says, “Lather, rinse, repeat.” Simple enough that even I can do it. Though family worship may be a bit more complicated than shampooing hair, it ought not be rated with “home dentistry” in the scale of difficulty.



If you could buy family worship in the store, it would come in the form of a Bible, and the directions would simply say, “Read, pray, repeat.” Men should gather their families at least once daily. They should read a portion of the Scriptures to them. And they should pray with them. There need be no fireworks or pizzazz to keep the kids interested. There needs to be only a father* with a heart-love for God – who desires to see that love appropriated by his children.*

Read, pray, repeat.

* Fathers leading their family in worship is always the goal. When, in the Lord’s providence, the father is absent or uninterested a godly mother will lead her children

Reading Genesis 32:1-8 Two camps, two companies, two brothers

Notes Jacob, Abraham’s grandson, has spent his life since conception (Genesis 25:21-22) wrestling and scheming. He has just “escaped” from his father-in-law and now faces his brother, Esau. In the last contact Jacob and Esau had, Esau was threatening to kill Jacob. (Genesis 27:41)

So, it is not surprising that he is afraid when he hears Esau is coming to meet him with a small army. But, maybe it is surprising after all. God had sent His angels, in some way visible to Jacob, to camp with him. Like Jacob, we easily forget God’s presence with us and fear the unknown.

Jacob is, it seems, intent on being reconciled with Esau. He is willing to give of his wealth to appease his brother’s former anger. Yet when Jacob hears of his brother coming with 400 men he fears the worst.

He divides his family and goods into two companies – hoping that if Esau attacks one the other can escape with their lives. What more can he do? What should he do? We have to keep reading to find out.

Questions 1. Who met Jacob as he left his father in law?

2. What was Jacob’s response when he heard of Esau’s approach with 400 men?

3. How does God protect His people?

4.     

Praise Psalm 4b¹

- Pray**
1. Rejoice with your family in prayer that God protects you.
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

¹ Psalm selections are taken from the *Book of Psalms for Worship*. The same selection is sung each day for a week to gain familiarity with the selection

Reading Genesis 33:1-11 Brothers Re-United

Notes Jacob’s attempt, with God’s help, at being reconciled with his brother, is the right thing to do. Sometimes, even when we do the right thing, our efforts are not successful. Our responsibility is to “If it is possible, as much as depends on [us], live peaceably with all men.” Romans 12:18

Jacob’s efforts are, it appears, successful. Yet, even more than his efforts, it is clear God is providing this reconciliation., This time he greets Jacob with warmth and affection rather than the hatred and murderous thoughts he had the last time the brothers had been together.






The gifts that Jacob had presented were accepted, but only after Jacob’s insistence. Jacob insisted because Esau’s favourable response was a blessing from God.

“That Esau meets his brother with unexpected benevolence and kindness, is the effect of the special favour of God. Therefore, by this method, God proved that he has the hearts of men in his hand, to soften their hardness, and to mitigate their cruelty as often as he pleases: in short, that he tames them as wild beasts are wont to be tamed; and then, that he hearkened to the prayers of his servant Jacob.²”

Questions 1. Who is responsible for Esau and Jacob’s peaceful reunion?

2. What are the ways God has brought blessing into your life?

3. How are you showing your gratefulness?

4.     

Praise Psalm 4b

- Pray**
1. Rejoice with your family in prayer for God’s blessings
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member
 5. Pray for the reading and preaching of God’s word tomorrow

² Calvin

Reading Genesis 32:25-28

Notes After telling the man his name and receiving a new name, Jacob wants to know the name of the man whom he has been wrestling with all night. But, the Man will not tell him. Jacob is coming to understand this Man is supernatural.

Later, the prophet Hosea will tell us Jacob “struggled with the Angel and prevailed; He wept, and sought favour from Him.” (Hosea 12:4) Jacob identifies this mystery wrestler as God himself. Many Bible commentators believe this is an appearance of Jesus in human form. Of course, Jesus will come, not just in appearance as a man, but as fully God and fully man.

This mysterious man, God it seems in human form, slips away from Jacob in the pre-sunrise dawn. He left Jacob – but he left him a changed man – with a new name and with a limp. And the name and the limp are connected. Jacob prevailed with God but God changed him. God wounded him, then blessed him with a new name suggesting a new character.

It was late in life that Jacob came to this point. How much better to yield to God and find His blessing early in life. Parents, pray for your children to prevail with God from their youth. But, for Jacob, and for any who come late to yield to God through repentance and faith in Christ, better late than never.

- Questions**
1. Why would the man not tell Jacob his name?
 2. Who had Jacob seen and wrestled against?
 3. What did Israel receive in addition to his new name?



- Praise Pray** Psalm 4b
1. Rejoice if you and your family have come to yield to God through Christ
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Genesis 32:9-21 Fear and Prayer

Notes Although Jacob’s first response to Esau’s approach is fear, his 2nd approach is prayer. How often in the face of trouble or fear we forget this necessary step! Jacob cries in trouble to the Lord.

As Jacob approaches God in prayer, he gives three reasons for God to hear his prayer. First, he reminds God of His covenant promises through Abraham and Isaac. Secondly, he remembers God’s particular promises to himself. His relationship with God was founded on God’s relationships with his father and grandfather, but was personal too. How important our children move in their relationship with God from our faith to their own.

Thirdly, Jacob seeks God’s help in deep humility. He doesn’t presume any worthiness in himself. Do we remember we don’t deserve God’s favour? Do we sometimes act as though God were our personal servant who is duty-bound to meet all our needs?

Jacob, after seeking God’s protection, makes wise plans. Prayer should usually come first – but it doesn’t mean we don’t make plans. He sends 5 droves of animal gifts to Esau. Goats, sheep, camels, cattle, and donkeys – sent drove by drove to seek Esau’s favour. Will it work? We’ll have to keep reading.

- Questions**
1. What does Jacob do after his fearful response to Esau’s coming?
 2. On what 3 bases does Jacob make his prayer to God?
 3. What does he do after praying?



- Praise Pray** Psalm 4b
1. Seek God in prayer with your family using Jacob’s prayer as a pattern
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Genesis 32:22-25 Night-time Wrestling

Notes Jacob has prayed and prepared to meet Esau. Now he sends his family and his goods across the river and waits. And likely he continues in prayer as he waits.

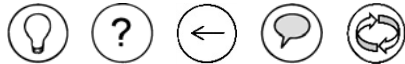
Perhaps he hoped for a quiet night's rest to get ready to meet Esau in the morning. Instead of a rest, though, he gets a wrestle. Jacob, who had been wrestling his whole life, faces the most dramatic wrestling match of his whole life.

In the night a mystery man comes and engages Jacob. In the dark of night the challenger comes. Some Bibles give us a hint of who this Man is by capitalising the word man. Their graspings and wrestlings continue all night until the morning dawns. For perhaps 6 or 8 hours the match continues, and neither prevails.

Finally, the man, although apparently limited in his wrestling strength so that he can't pin Jacob to the ground, demonstrates a touch that appears super-human. With only a touch touch he dislocates Jacob's hip.

The match, it seems, is over. But, as we will see, there is more to the story.

- Questions**
1. What does Jacob do with his family as night comes?
 2. What happens during the night?
 3. Who prevails in this night-time wrestling match?



- Praise Pray** Psalm 4b
1. Bring to the Lord in prayer any wrestlings you or your family may be facing.
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Genesis 32:22-28 I will not let you go

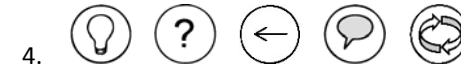
Notes Jacob was injured – a dislocated hip. But his bull-dog like determination kept him in the wrestling match. The mysterious man, after dislocating Jacob's hip with a touch, seeks to be free of Jacob's hold. But Jacob would not let him go.

Maybe Jacob was realising this man was more than just a man. He asks for a blessing. Other places in the Bible make clear that the granting of a blessing comes from one who is greater and is granted to one who is lesser. Like his humility in prayer, humility is reflected again here.

As Jacob hangs on, asking this great man for a blessing, the man asks his name. "Jacob," he says. Jacob: a reminder of his deceitful, scheming, wrestling life. "I'm a deceiver," he might well have said. Yet this man grants his request for a blessing. With the blessing comes a new name – Israel, meaning God prevails.

The sense of this name, we're told, is that Jacob prevailed with God. A casual relationship would not satisfy him. He wrestled with God, holding on, for the blessing that only God could give. Are you holding on to God, pleading for His blessing?

- Questions**
1. Why didn't the wrestling match end when Jacob's hip was dislocated?
 2. Who do you think Jacob is wrestling with?
 3. Why did the Man give Jacob a new name?



- Praise Pray** Psalm 4b
1. Commit yourself and your family in prayer to holding on to God, pleading for his blessing, by God's help.
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member