

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



**PRINCE
OF PEACE**
Called to Connect



Loss

November 16 & 17, 2019

Loss is an inevitable reality of life. We lose jobs, friendships, money and opportunity. But nothing shapes us and our faith like the loss of a loved one. Rachel's death marked Jacob's life in profound ways, leaving a space in him that nothing could fill. It is in our own losses that we discover just how present God is in our suffering. God truly is "the source of all mercies and the God of all comfort."

SCRIPTURE TEXT: GENESIS 35:16-20, 27-29

Read the scripture text together as a group.

BACKGROUND INFO

There are actually two "losses" that Jacob suffers in this section. The first is the loss of his most beloved wife, Rachel, who dies giving birth to Benjamin, the final of the 12 "fathers" of the Twelve Tribes. The changing of the child's name is interesting. While Rachel sees the birth of this child through the lens of her own impending death, Jacob sees him as a gift in his old age. How we "see" loss shapes how we experience it. The second loss is the death of Jacob's father, Isaac. While not much is said about his death, the text emphasizes both Isaac's longevity and the fact that he got to see all of his grandchildren before he died.

While not rational, I think a lot of people carry the notion that if you're faithful God will protect you from hardship, pain and loss. So, when people do experience significant loss they wonder if God is punishing them or if God has abandoned them. For some people, significant loss includes the loss of their faith in a good and present God. But for others, loss opens space for a new encounter with the One who knows suffering firsthand, and meets us in the darkness bringing the light of his love and comfort.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- As you read Jacob's story about loss, how do you see your own story reflected in it?
- What significant losses have you experienced in your life? While the death of a loved one is certainly significant, think beyond those losses.
- How did you experience God in the midst of your losses?
- How did those losses shape your life? Your faith? How have they changed you?

APPLICATION: This week, reflect on a loss in your life. How did that loss impact your day to day life? As you go through this week, identify the ways your routine has changed as a result of that loss.