

**WITNESS – Reaching out to others**  
(Aim for 20 – 30 minutes)

Go around the group and share a challenge you are facing so that others might pray for you.

When each person has shared pray for each other, with each person praying for the person on their right.

Conclude by praying

**Dear Father,**  
**you caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning:**  
**help us to hear what you are saying to us today,**  
**help us to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest your truth**  
**that through your holy word we may embrace your love**  
**and know the hope of everlasting life,**  
**which you have given us through Jesus Christ our Lord.**  
**Amen.**

**FOR NEXT WEEK’S STUDY:-**

Peter Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality Day by Day*  
(Zondervan 2014) Pages 77-93

# EMOTIONALLY HEALTHY SPIRITUALITY

# 3

## 3: Retreat in order to Advance

**WELCOME – Breaking the ice**  
(Aim for 10 minutes)

How would you describe the family atmosphere you grew up in?  
(eg affirming , complaining, critical, approachable, angry, tense, cooperative, competitive, close, distant, fun, serious etc)

**WORSHIP – Meeting the Lord**  
(Aim for 10 – 15 minutes)

Sing, or listen to a CD of, “Father God I wonder” (SoF 92).

As you sing or listen, think about the family words and what they mean: Father, parenthood, son, adopted, family.

Then praise God that he is our heavenly Father and that through Jesus we have become his children.

**WORD – Applying the truth**  
**(Aim for 40 – 45 minutes)**

**Play the DVD introduction now**

1 What is your greatest fear in looking back at your family of origin to discern unhealthy patterns and themes?

**Bible Study – Genesis 50:15-21 -----35 minutes**

The “family” is an emotional system of two to four generations who move through life together in different places at different times. When we are born into families, we inherit their ways of relating, their values, and their way of living in the world. Your family’s story and your individual story cannot be separated.

Joseph is an excellent example of that reality. He is born into a complex, blended family where Jacob, his father, his two wives, two concubines and their children, all live together under one roof. Joseph was Jacob’s favoured son. As a result, his brothers grew jealous, leading them to sell Joseph to a merchant who took him to Egypt. The brothers never expected to hear from Joseph again. After he is sold, Joseph’s life becomes very difficult. For the next ten to thirteen years, Joseph lives first as a slave, and later, as a prisoner falsely accused of rape.

2 Imagine yourself in Joseph’s shoes sitting in a prison cell without any hope of freedom. What thoughts, feelings, or doubts might you have about your family? About yourself? About God?

3 Through God’s miraculous intervention, Joseph is pulled from the pit of prison and made the second most powerful person in Egypt. When his brothers come to him for help and food, Joseph invites them to bring their father and live in Egypt. After their father dies, the brothers begin to worry. Read Genesis 50:15-21. What assumptions are the brothers making about Joseph?

4 Why do you think Joseph weeps (v.17)?

5 Joseph chooses to break the “normal” way his family deals with hurt feelings and conflict by forgiving his brothers. How might you have responded if you were in Joseph’s position? (Be sure to put yourself in Joseph’s shoes).

6 Slowly, reread verses 19-21. Here we see Joseph’s response to the enormous losses he experienced in his life. Carefully consider the different aspects of this response below. As you think about your own life story, which one speaks the most to you?

6a Don’t be afraid”.

6b “Am I in the place of God?”

6c “You intended to harm me but God intended it for good”.

7 Joseph had a rich sense of being part of his family of origin and how it had shaped his life.

7a Individually list the life messages you received from your parents or guardians (eg don’t be weak, education is everything, you must achieve to be loved, don’t be sad, things could be worse, make a lot of money, don’t trust people they will hurt you etc)

7b List any “earthquake” events that sent “aftershocks” into your extended family (eg abuse, premature or sudden death, divorce etc)

7c Summarise what messages about life/yourself/others you have internalised.

8 Share with the group the messages you received

9 How do these messages compare with the messages about who you are and how life is to be lived in Gods family?

10 What might be one specific message from your family that God revealed to you today that you want to change as part of your “hard work of discipleship”?