



Small Group Discussion Notes

**For use the week following the first message in the “Family Affairs” series,
“How to Heal from a Hurtful Family Experience” (April 12-13)**

1. Open in prayer.
2. (Go around the room, ask everyone to answer briefly) As a child, would you say your family was most like *The Waltons*, *The Simpsons*, or *The Addams Family*?
3. This past weekend’s message was “*How to Heal from a Hurtful Family Experience*,” by Bob Hostetler. Can anyone summarize what you remember of the message for the others?
4. In this past weekend’s message, Bob taught from Genesis 33:1-17. We’re going to dig a little further into that passage, but first read the following for background:

Twenty years earlier, Jacob had deceitfully stolen Esau’s inheritance (the blessing of the firstborn), which had understandably made Esau very angry with his brother. Hearing of Esau’s anger and threats to kill him, Jacob fled to the land his family had come from. He lived there for two decades, married Leah, then Rachel, and is returning home with his wives, children, servants, and possessions...and fearing what Esau might do to him when they reunite.

5. Read Genesis 33:1-17.
6. Notice verse 2. Why do you think Jacob put his servants and their children in front, and Rachel and her son Joseph in the rear of the caravan?
7. How did Jacob approach Esau (v. 3)? How did Esau approach Jacob (v. 4)?
8. Judging from Esau’s responses in verses 8-16, what do you think was Esau’s attitude toward Jacob? And why?
9. Judging from Jacob’s responses in verses 8-16, what do you think was his attitude toward Esau? And why?
10. What do you make of Esau’s offer to travel with him or send along men for protection?
11. What do you make of Jacob’s refusal?

- a) Jacob wants “No strings attached?”
 - b) “Once burned, twice shy?”
 - c) Time heals all wounds?
 - d) “Keep your friends close, and your enemies closer?”
 - e) “Better safe than sorry?”
 - f) Something else?
12. Do you think Jacob’s reconciliation with Esau was complete? Partial? Insincere? Something else? And why?
13. Do you identify more with Jacob or Esau in this story? And why?
14. In what ways has your family life been similar to or different than Jacob and Esau’s?
15. Are there any old family wounds you need God’s help in healing? If so, how can your group help you in that process?
16. Any other questions or comments?
17. Close in prayer.