

*Sermon Questions for Life Groups*  
**Genesis 48: A Patriarch's Final Words**  
**Pastor John Mahaffey**  
Sunday June 5, 2016

*These questions are generated by several authors for Life Group discussions  
or family or personal devotions*

1. What is the significance of Joseph bringing his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim to Jacob?
2. Manasseh and Ephraim's mother was an Egyptian, but their adoption by Jacob includes them in the covenant blessing. What does this tell us about God's ways? What does this tell us about the composition of God's people? Revelation 7 sheds light on this.
3. Jacob's adoption of Manasseh and Ephraim is a clear reminder of the New Testament doctrine of adoption. How does this speak of our standing before God? Read Romans 8:5-17 and John 1:11-13.
4. This was the fourth consecutive generation of Abraham's descendants, in which the normal pattern of the firstborn assuming prominence over the second born was reversed: Isaac over Ishmael, Jacob over Esau, Joseph over Reuben, and Ephraim over Manasseh. Discuss how God exalts those who honour Him, regardless of their background or their birth order. What other situations can you think of in the Bible where this also happens?
5. Read also Jeremiah 31:9 regarding Ephraim and Psalms 89:27 regarding the status of King David before God's eyes. From these two passages, can you discuss what might the meaning of "First Born" be from God's perspective? How would you explain the title given to Jesus Christ in Colossians 1:15 – "the Firstborn over all Creation"?
6. Jacob deliberately frustrated Joseph's plan. This reminds us in some way of Genesis 27 when Jacob stole Esau's blessing from his father, Isaac. In both cases, birth order did not determine who received covenant blessing. Why? Read Romans 9:5-13 for the New

Testament explanation. Summarize why God acts “out of the conventional way” at times?  
As believers, what attitudes must we maintain before God?

7. Joseph's sons would have had a privileged life, likely being groomed to become his successor as viceroy of Egypt, yet he allowed his father to extract them from that opportunity through his adoption. What does this tell us about Joseph's faith?
  
8. Joseph was concerned about the blessings of his father passing on to his sons. Pastor John presented a challenge to the congregation that we need to think about giving a spiritual legacy to our children, rather than just financial gain or educational opportunities. Consider your plans in terms of these three areas of consideration? What difficulties might you face in trying to achieve a balance?
  
9. If you have no children, how can you help nourish the faith of the children and youth of West Highland? How will doing so benefit you?
  
10. If you had the opportunity to speak final words to your family before you died, what would you say?