



MEANT FOR GOOD

A STUDY OF THE LIFE OF JOSEPH



SUMMIT VIEW CHURCH
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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

We all love a good story. The entertainment industry makes billions of dollars year after year simply by telling stories. All good stories contain similar components. We become invested in a story when we encounter a protagonist who finds themselves in a trying or difficult situation. Whether it is jealousy, sibling rivalry, betrayal, love interests, murder plots, suffering, or despair, we all leap out of our seats when a person experiences redemption or salvation from their situation. Often, we love even more the story which tells of a hero who comes from an unlikely place, a good underdog story. Luckily for us, the story of the life of Joseph contains all the above. The life of Joseph is a Hollywood story worth watching.

However, as easy as it is for us to paint the picture of Joseph as the hero in this story, we would be mistaken in thinking the story is ultimately about him. We quickly overlook the fact that God is the main actor in this story, not Joseph. This story is more than just a narrative of Joseph's life from the deep pit of despair to the palace. Over the next seven weeks we will be looking at the concluding chapters of the book of Genesis where we will see how God worked and moved through Joseph's life to bring about a promise established years before he ever existed.

AUTHOR + DATE + BACKGROUND

The title of the book “Genesis” comes from the Greek translation of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible) and means “origin.” The book of Genesis offers us a reliable record of the beginnings of humanity, as well as the people of God. Genesis provides a picture of mankind’s rebellion against God and God’s immediate response with a plan of redemption. This plan is carried out by God, through commitment to His promise to bring his people into right relationship with him.

Although no one formally claims authorship of Genesis in its text, traditionally it has been attributed to Moses. Even New Testament authors wrote in acknowledgement of Moses’ authorship (John 1:17, Mark 1:44, 7:10, 10:3, 12:26, Luke 5:14, Acts 3:22, 1 Corinthians 9:9). Some have debated whether Moses penned the entirety of the Pentateuch, and while we will likely never know with absolute certainty, based on the evidence available it is fair to attribute its origins to Moses.

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF STUDY

While Joseph's story does not start until Genesis 37, his importance in the Genesis narrative stems all the way back to Genesis 12. In Genesis 12, God calls Abraham into a covenant relationship with Him and makes a promise. Joseph would be the great-grandson to Abraham, the one with whom God made an unconditional promise to provide his descendants a land, a nation, and a blessing. It is through Joseph's life and interactions that God would make this covenant come true. In our study together we will see the sovereignty of God on display over His creation and our role in His grand plan for redemption.

TYPOLGY

Throughout the Old Testament there are people, events, and things that pre-figure shadow, or point to something that is yet to happen. Typology is entirely based on the idea that there is a superintended pattern within Scripture due to God's sovereignty over redemptive history. Graham Cole in his book *He Who Gives Life*, gives this definition of typology: "the idea that persons (e.g., Moses), events (e.g., the exodus), and institutions (e.g., the temple) can—in the plan of God—prefigure a later stage in that plan and provide the conceptuality necessary for understanding the divine intent." Joseph is often seen as a type of Christ. A.W. Pink in *Gleanings in Genesis* finds over sixty connections between the life of Joseph and Jesus. Each week will we help make a direct connection to Christ through our study. It is our desire as we study the life of Joseph to highlight these and help you grow in seeing the unified theme of Scripture.



MEANT FOR GOOD

INTRODUCTION

OUTLINE OF JOSEPH'S LIFE

I. Origin Story of a Dreamer & Dysfunctional Family – *Genesis 37*

II. Joseph in Egypt – *Genesis 39-40*

A. Joseph as a Faithful Servant – *Genesis 39:1-20*

B. Joseph, the Forgotten Slave – *Genesis 39:21-40:23*

III. Joseph's Rise to Power – *Genesis 41*

A. The Dreams of Pharaoh – *Genesis 41:1-36*

B. Exaltation of Joseph – *Genesis 41:37-57*

IV. Joseph's Reunion with Family – *Genesis 42-50*

A. Joseph with his brothers – *Genesis 42:-45:25*

B. Joseph with his father – *Genesis 46-47:12*

V. Joseph & Egypt – *Genesis 47:13-26- 50:26*

A. Leading the Egyptians – *Genesis 47:13-26*

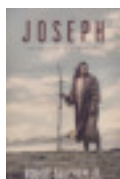
B. Joseph's Family in Egypt – *Genesis 48:1-22*

C. Blessings for the Future – *Genesis 49:1-27*

D. Joseph's Continued Faithfulness to the End – *Genesis 49:28-50:26*

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

BOOKS



*Joseph and the Gospel
of Many Colors*

By Voddie Baucham Jr.

VIDEO



*Bible Project: The Book
of Genesis - Part 2*

[https://youtu.be/
VpbWbyx1008](https://youtu.be/VpbWbyx1008)

INTRODUCTION

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide has been specifically prepared with you in mind. There are two main ways to use it: in a group setting and for personal devotion.

In a group setting, you will have a chance to dig deeper by looking directly at Scripture, hearing stories from real people in our church and together be able to answer questions, discuss God's truth, and grow in our faith.

We truly believe that studying the Scriptures together will cultivate deeper growth in relationship with God and one another. Each week's study begins with conversation starters, followed by questions for discussion based on the text. The study wraps up with personal applications and things to pray for to help you grow spiritually.

Use this resource as a guide, not as a straitjacket. We realize you may not be able to get to every question. Pick the ones that would best work for your group. If you think of a better question, ask it! If you approach each gathering time with prayer and preparation, this guide will be easy to use. Obviously, you are more than welcome to pull in other resources, or highlights from the sermons each week. Our hope is that by participating in this study, you will have a firmer grasp on the Scriptures and a stronger connection with Christ.

For personal devotion, consider using this guide to direct your mind and heart in your times with God throughout the week to help you reflect upon last week, or preparing yourself for the coming weekend.

Event	Age of Joseph	Genesis
Joseph's Father Jacob moves family from Haran to Canaan	6	31:17-21
Joseph sold to Potiphar in Egypt	17	ch. 37
Joseph Interprets dreams of cupbearer and baker in prison	28	ch. 40
Joseph's grandfather Isaac dies	29	35:28-29
Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dreams, is released from prison	30	41:1-36
7 years of plenty; sons Manasseh and Ephraim born in this time	30-37	41:47-52
7 years of famine; 2 years into famine Joseph reconciles brothers + father	37-44	41:53-47:26
Joseph's father Jacob dies	56	47:28
Joseph dies	110	50:22-26

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever opened to the back of a book to see how the story will end, before you've started chapter one? Sometimes to gain a better understanding of a story, it is helpful to look at the ending, and then work our way back through the character's journey to find out just how they arrived. When done well, this mode of storytelling gives a greater depth and appreciation for the entirety of the story. As we start a seven-week study looking within the life of Joseph, we are going to attempt to do just that. In our first week, instead of beginning at the beginning, we will look at a well-known passage in the Scriptures where Joseph makes a declaration of God's sovereignty and His goodness.

MEMORY VERSE

As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

Genesis 50:20

Within our study we will examine Joseph's life to see how deeply this truth played itself out in his life, paying particular attention to how this principle is true of God in all circumstances; how it was true for our savior Christ Jesus, and is true for us today. May we come to an understanding of this truth as we explore this verse this week, but also, may it become richer and deeper in the subsequent weeks as we see the story unfold. May it bring us comfort and confidence in our God.

CONVERSATION STARTER



For the next seven weeks, we'll be spending our time examining the life of Joseph. A large portion of Genesis (chapters 37-50) surround Joseph and his family, highlighting the ups and down of his life. At this point, what do you know about this individual from the Bible?

MAIN IDEA

God's sovereignty is put on display in the way He provides and cares for His people.

JUMPING IN



A common theological theme that will come up over the next seven weeks is the sovereignty of God and the providence of God. We'll spend the most of our time exploring this theme this week. By doing so, we'll enhance our ability to see and understand exactly that this means as we study the life of Joseph. In your own words, what do you think the sovereignty and providence of God means?

GOD'S PROVIDENCE

GENESIS 50:20

1

WATCH + READ + DISCUSS

WATCH

**The Providence of God –
Explainer (Village Church
Resource)**

[https://www.youtube.com/
watch?v=ng3cf6WhS-E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ng3cf6WhS-E)



Based upon this video, what did you learn about God's sovereignty and providence?

Follow Up: What did you learn about God's wisdom and care for His people?

Follow Up: What makes it so difficult to trust in God's sovereignty / providence?



Twice within Joseph's story he credits his understanding of God's role and involvement in his life. Compare Genesis 45:5, 7-8 with Genesis 50:20-21. Describe Joseph's understanding of suffering, patience, and God's sovereignty.

Follow Up: Joseph saw and declared that God was in control of every aspect of his life. How similar or different is your attitude in relation to the trials you face in your life?

Tip – It may be worth jotting a note to yourself to see how this answer changes for you over the next seven weeks as we study the life of Joseph together.



READ PSALM 121

We often find ourselves asking questions like “Is there anybody up there who can help me?” or “Are you listening?”. How does Psalm 121 answer these and similar questions?

Follow Up: What are the specific statements made about God in this Psalm?



Read Matthew 10:30. What does Jesus communicate to us in His statement here?

CHRIST CONNECTION

Joseph makes an incredible statement towards the end of his life. After all the hardship, difficulty, and trials he went through, he still saw God as sovereign and good, proclaiming *“you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.”* The historical climax of this profound truth is the cross of Christ—here, if anywhere, is an act of evil: the crucifixion of the only person who lived a life undeserving of any punishment. Yet even this, the book of Acts tells us, was under God’s good hand. Jesus was “delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2:23; Acts 3:12-18; Acts 4:27-28).

REFLECTION &
PERSONAL APPLICATION

The sovereignty and providence of God tell us that God is deeply in control and involved with our world. Many profess to believe in higher power; however, we often attribute the events that occur as chance, fate, or coincidence. Christianity affirms the universe is not chaotic but controlled by a God, from the mundane to the spectacular. Take the next few days to read and reflect upon Psalm 104. Consider making a list of the statements made within the Psalm that tell us how God is actively involved in the universe, not a blind mechanical force.



IN HIS HANDS

JOHN 12:1-11

SUMMARY

Joseph's story takes place in the book of Genesis, in chapters 37-50. He was the favorite son of Jacob. Early in his life, through no fault of his own, Joseph was sold into slavery and later, found himself in prison. For much of his life, Joseph could have questioned himself and God. But Joseph stayed true and trusted in God.

MAIN IDEA

God's power, control, and authority is put on display in the way He provides and cares for His people.

BIG IDEAS

OVERVIEW

- The book of Genesis recounts the entrance of sin into the human family but also relates the faithfulness of God in providing a way of life for man.
- While Joseph takes center stage in Genesis 37-50, the main actor is God Himself. This story shows God's commitment to His people and His promise.
- Joseph is known for his suffering and glory. At the end of his story, Joseph has everything going for him: he is reunited with his family and is a top leader in Egypt—second only to Pharaoh. But that can be appreciated so much more, when we understand that there was much suffering in his life.

Faithfulness of God in Joseph's story: God provided a way of life for Joseph that, through suffering, ultimately brought good to him, his family, and the people of Egypt.

- As we read through Joseph's story (and consider our own lives), remind yourself that although God does not seem apparent, He is present and He cares.

God has a purpose that you and I do not/cannot see. God is not going to let anything happen to you unless it will accomplish a good purpose in your life.

FAMILY DISCUSSION

GENESIS 50

- *Genesis 50:14-17* - Though they had been reunited and forgiven, the brothers were afraid that Joseph would be against them when their father died. When Joseph finds out, he weeps.
- *Genesis 50:18* - The brothers repent because of their sin and fall down before him. We will see the prophecy of their falling down before him repeatedly comes true.
- Joseph's response is our Key Verse.
- Joseph gives God the glory in every case.

MEMORY VERSE

As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

Genesis 50:20

JOSEPH POINTS TO JESUS

- Joseph – His brothers gave him into slavery; his father believed he was dead, yet found that he was alive—this allowed forgiveness to and reunion with his family and the end of conflict, blessing the families of Egypt and surrounding countries.
- Jesus – His people gave Him to be crucified; He was dead and then was alive—this allowed forgiveness to us and our reunion with God, which will also bring the end of conflict, blessing the families of the earth.



JOSEPH POINTS TO JESUS

INTRODUCTION

In the routine of day-to-day life, we can often miss the forest for the trees. We have highs, lows, crossroads, and dead ends. We often struggle to find a way to put the entire picture together within each life event. However, as those who love and worship God, we are invited to believe that He is at work, weaving an overall plan together for our good. The life of Joseph puts exactly this on full display for us. In Genesis 37 we see the beginning of Joseph's story where he experiences great highs, receiving favor from his father and hope from God through the giving of dreams. Yet within a few verses we see Joseph's skyrocketing ascent in life quickly plummet and his life begins a downward trajectory. He faces jealousy and strife with his brothers, which culminates in being stripped of his possessions, status, and family, and sold as a slave, left and utterly abandoned.

CONVERSATION STARTER



Everyone dreams, but some people remember their dreams better than others. Are you someone who remembers your dreams? Can you recall any funny or interesting dreams? Do you think God has ever spoken to you through a dream?

MAIN IDEA

The favored son was conspired against, rejected, sold, and betrayed.

READ & DISCUSS

READ GENESIS 37:1-11



Three times in these eleven verses, we are given a glimpse into the dynamic of Joseph's family. He is favored over his brothers by his father (verse 3) and receives two dreams from God regarding his role in the family (verses 6-7; 9). Imagine yourself as one of Joseph's brothers; how would you have felt toward him? Would it vary from the way in which Joseph's brothers felt (see verses 4, 5, 8, 11)?



What were the contents of Joseph's two dreams? What type of message did they communicate to Joseph?

Hint: Dreams were taken seriously in the ancient world, often believed to be messages from God containing symbols that revealed the future.

Follow Up: Why would God give Joseph these two dreams? Considering the tension in the family, why would Joseph have shared these dreams? Were they for him alone, or for him to tell his brothers?

READ GENESIS 37:12-36

Q Often times in the retelling of the story of Joseph, he is pictured as a tattletale or a braggadocious individual. We can either give him the benefit of the doubt or assume the worst. However nowhere in this chapter (or the entirety of Joseph's story in Genesis) is Joseph described as such. In fact, Joseph was simply being obedient to the instructions his father had given him (verse 12-17).

Q It is in Joseph's fulfillment of the task given to him by his father where he begins to experience consequences for the preferential treatment he received. The anger, pride, and jealousy of the brothers led them to make drastic decisions. Can you recall a time your emotions led you to make a choice you later regretted?

Q What did the brothers originally plan to do with Joseph when he came upon them? Why did they not follow through with this plan?

Follow Up: The Bible does not include a description of how Joseph felt when his brothers betrayed him. How would this betrayal make you feel?

Follow Up: Joseph was betrayed in a horrific way by his own family, and some of our greatest pain in life comes from being hurt by our families. Is there any area where you may need to take action to bring about healing, forgiveness, or reconciliation?

Follow Up: On the other side of the same coin, from the perspective of the brothers, does this narrative challenge you regarding any bitterness or unresolved conflict in your own life?

Q One of the main things we will see regularly in our study of Joseph's life is how God intervenes on Joseph's behalf. Even in a chapter that does not have the happiest of endings, we can see His involvement. Where is that evident here?

MEMORY VERSE

He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Isaiah 53:3

CHRIST CONNECTION

Many of the interactions we see take place in Genesis 37 between Joseph and his father and brothers should draw up connections to what we see take place in Jesus' life. Joseph was loved by his father (verse 3) much like God the Father declared his love for the son (Matthew 3:17). Joseph's brothers did not believe in him and hated him (verse 4-5), much like the Jews did not believe in Jesus and hated him (John 7:5; 15:24). Joseph's brothers rejected his rule (verse 8), just as the Jewish leaders denied Jesus the same right (Luke 19:14). Joseph was conspired against and stripped of his garments (verse 23), just as Jesus was during Holy Week (Matthew 27:1, 28; John 19:23). Finally both Joseph and Jesus were sold for silver (Genesis 37:28; Matthew 26:15). All these instances cannot be simply coincidence. How do these similarities help reveal to you the unity in Scripture? Does this help prove to you that God is using all human history to tell a story of redemption?

REFLECTION &
PERSONAL APPLICATION

Read 2 Timothy 1:12; Charles Spurgeon comments on this passage:

Paul does not say, "I know what I have believed," though that would have been true. He does not say, "I know when I have believed," though that would have been correct. Nor does he say, "I know how much I have believed," although he had well-weighed his faith. He does not even say, "I know in whom I have believed." He says expressly, "I know whom I have believed," as much as to say, "I know the person into whose hand I have committed my present condition and my eternal destiny. I know who he is, and I therefore, with-out any hesitation, leave myself in his hands."

Do you feel as if you can always trust God with your life despite the difficulties and hardships that you may go through? Do you share in the same confidence as written above? Have you given yourself without hesitation?

SUMMARY

Joseph was favored by his father, Jacob; so much so, that Jacob gave Joseph a special robe or coat. This caused great jealousy from his brothers. Joseph told his dad about some things the brothers were doing that were wrong. Joseph later told his family of two dreams that he had—both show Joseph highly esteemed. The first one was easily interpreted as his brothers bowing down to him. The brothers' jealousy and hatred of Joseph grew. They took advantage of the fact that they were far from home and put Joseph into a pit wanting to kill him. Instead, they sold him into slavery to a passing caravan.

MAIN IDEA

The favored son was conspired against, rejected, sold, and betrayed.

BIG IDEAS

IDENTITY & PURPOSE

- Joseph's dad, Jacob, had inherited the covenant blessings and was renamed Israel. Joseph was part of a people who were chosen by God.

God settled over Jacob the extravagant promise that had been given to his fathers and his father's fathers: Jacob will have many descendants—including nations and kings. (Genesis 35:1–15)

God's favor was decided on long before Jacob and Joseph were born. It was not because of anything they had done (Rom. 9:11). It is simply through God's grace and to further God's plan to rescue sinners.

- God shows Joseph his purpose through his dreams.

SEEN & UNSEEN

- The place where Joseph was put into the pit is the same place that years later, Elisha was surrounded by the much-superior Syrian army. Elisha's servant could not at first see what Elisha could see—the angel army of God.
- Remember, that though God does not seem apparent, it does not mean that He is not present and that He does not care.

JOSEPH POINTS TO JESUS

SET APART

- Joseph had a robe from his father, which set him apart.
- Jesus was set apart in that He was “separate from sinners.”

RULE & RIDICULE

- Joseph announced he was to rule over his brothers and was ridiculed.
- Jesus presented Himself as the Messiah; He rules over the world. Jesus was also ridiculed. Nailed to His cross were the words, “This is Jesus the king of the Jews.”

MEMORY VERSE

As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

Genesis 50:20

FOLLOW UP

How has the truth of Genesis 50:20 played itself out in Joseph's life?

In Genesis 37 we see the beginning of Joseph's story where he experiences great highs, receiving favor from his father and hope from God through the giving of dreams. God is so great that He can work out His purpose even when people are doing their worst.

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever found yourself in a position where you are doing the right thing and still wind up in trouble? Do you ever feel like you simply cannot catch a break? These thoughts often run through our minds in seasons of trial and tribulation, and it can be hard not to let our thoughts or despair carry us away. However, as believers, we find it is in these times our character is refined and God's faithfulness is often put on display. After a traumatizing experience in his teenage years, Joseph seemed to find stability and success in Egypt. Despite all that Joseph had gone through, rather than being filled with self-pity, anger, or hatred, Joseph remained faithful to God. By doing so, it appeared that things had finally turned around for him in life. Yet as we look to Genesis 39, Joseph is once again thrust into a less than desirable situation. In our passage this week, we discover the test of Joseph's character amid temptation.

CONVERSATION STARTER



Can you recall a time when you have seen God's favor in your life or in the life of someone you know?

MAIN IDEA

Faithfulness to God comes with a real cost.

READ & DISCUSS

READ GENESIS 39:1-6



Joseph was only a teenager when he was sold into slavery in Egypt. He only had one thing going for him and helping him. What was it? *(see verse 2 and 3)*

Follow Up: Often, in our darkest hour we ask: "Where is God in this!?" However, in Joseph's situation we find that God is most present even in less than desirable circumstances. Four times within this section of Scripture, we are told that God was with Joseph *(see verses: 2, 3, 21, 23)*. What can we learn here about our circumstances and God's presence?

Follow Up: Does this seem counterintuitive to you? How does this challenge your belief in God's role in your life?

Q In the same way that God was with Joseph, God is also with those who are in Christ (see Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 13:5). What are ways we can sense or experience God's presence on a day-to-day basis despite its difficulty sometimes?

READ GENESIS 39:7-18

Q Look at verse 10. It states that the interaction between Joseph and Potiphar's wife was not just a one-time occurrence, but one of constant and perpetual temptation. What does this say about Joseph's character? What does it require of someone to develop such character?

Follow Up: Read Psalm 119:9-11; Romans 6:11-14; and 1 Corinthians 10:12-13; how would these passages provide insight for us into building godly character in the face of temptation?

Q What were the two main reasons Joseph gave when saying no to the proposition of Potiphar's wife?

Q Did Joseph's fleeing improve or better his situation? Is there anything in your life that you need to flee, but fear that in doing so your obedience may bring about even greater difficulty?

READ GENESIS 39:19-23

Q It is hard to accept sometimes that when we do all the "right things" we still end up with the "wrong" outcomes. Joseph's integrity cost him greatly. Can you think of a time in your life where you did the right thing and still faced more hardship?

Follow Up: How does the idea of "if I do the right things, good things should happen to me" line up with this text and the entirety of the Bible?

Follow Up: Both Potiphar (prior to the interaction with his wife) and the warden trusted Joseph with great responsibilities and duties. Do people in authority over you have the same ability to trust you?

MEMORY VERSE

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Hebrews 4:15

CHRIST CONNECTION

The similarities between Joseph's life and Jesus' life continue to present themselves in Genesis 39. Joseph and Jesus were both given a great level of trust and responsibility and saw everything in their hands prosper (Genesis 39:3-8; Isaiah 53:10; John 3:35). Both Joseph and Jesus were imprisoned upon false charges (Genesis 39:19-20; Mark 14:56). We also see that Jesus and Joseph saw victory in times of temptation. While we do not have details as to how Joseph combatted the temptation in his life, we are shown a picture of Jesus being tempted in Matthew 4:1-11. What can we learn from Him as we face temptation in our own lives?

REFLECTION &
PERSONAL APPLICATION

Often when we approach Genesis 39, we want to moralize the lesson and reduce it to simply a teaching on overcoming sexual temptation. While there is an aspect of that in this passage, that is not the entire message of this chapter. Genesis 39 teaches us about God's divine providence in our lives. God's sovereignty addresses His authority to rule and govern; providence addresses the way He does it. In the words of R.C. Sproul, "God doesn't roll dice"; nothing happens by chance. Close your time by reflecting on the words of Dr. Lee Roberson who wrote a poem titled: "He Maketh No Mistake"



GOD DOESN'T ROLL DICE
- RC SPROUL -

He Maketh No Mistake

*My Father's way may twist and turn,
My heart may throb and ache
But in my soul I'm glad I know,
He maketh no mistake.*

*My cherished plans may go astray,
My hopes may fade away,
But still I'll trust my Lord to lead
For He doth know the way.*

Tho' night be dark and it may seem
That day will never break,
I'll pin my faith, my all in Him,
He maketh no mistake.

*There's so much now I cannot see,
My eyesight's far too dim;
But come what may, I'll simply trust
And leave it all to Him.*

For by and by the mist will lift
And plain it all He'll make,
Through all the way, tho' dark to me,
He made not one mistake

Dr. Lee Roberson

SUMMARY

Joseph's brothers disliked him so much that they plotted against him, sold him into slavery; 17-year old Joseph was taken to the land of Egypt. Joseph was bought as a slave by Potiphar, an extremely rich officer in Pharaoh's service. Because of the way Joseph served, he was elevated to a high position in Potiphar's house. Potiphar's wife accused and framed Joseph for something he did not do, and Potiphar had Joseph put into prison. The keeper of the prison came to like Joseph and to trust him. All Joseph did, the Lord made prosper.

MAIN IDEA

Faithfulness to
God comes with a
real cost.

BIG IDEAS

VERSES 1-6: SUCCESS & SERVICE OF JOSEPH

- Immediately, when he gets to Potiphar's home, it is obvious that the Lord is with Joseph. Blessings came to the home when Joseph came.
- Potiphar elevated Joseph to a high position in his house, trusting him to manage everything within it. Potiphar trusted him so much, that he never asked for an accounting.

VERSE 7-18: INTERACTION WITH POTIPHAR'S WIFE

- Potiphar's wife tempted, unjustly accused, and framed Joseph for indecent behavior despite Joseph's treatment of her and Potiphar reflecting utmost respect.
- Even though Joseph held a trusted position in Potiphar's household, he was still a slave and would not be believed over Potiphar's wife.

VERSE 19-23: JOSEPH'S CONTINUED SUFFERING

- Potiphar had Joseph put into the Pharaoh's prison.
- The Lord was with Joseph. God caused the keeper of the prison to like Joseph and to trust him, so Joseph was put in charge of the jail.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO NOTE

- Though Joseph was a nice looking, very skilled young man, this success was not due to his good looks or abilities. It was because God used these experiences to move him toward His purpose for Joseph's life.
- Joseph did not let the circumstances of his life get him down. He knew the Lord was with him. He recognized the hand of God in his life, and so he was not discouraged.

As a slave and prisoner, Joseph could have seen his situation as hopeless. Instead, he did his best, even with small tasks given to him.

- Joseph served God through all of this. Bad things can happen even when we are serving God.

But as the children of God, when we are in the will of God, we can have the guarantee of God that He works all things together for good to them who love Him. (Romans 8:28) Even our misfortunes, heartbreaks, and sufferings are for our good and His glory.

JOSEPH POINTS TO JESUS

- Joseph became a prosperous servant that was a blessing to others, and in whom his masters were well pleased.
- Jesus became a servant that was prosperous and was a blessing to the world; the master (the Father) was always pleased with what Jesus did.



**FAITHFULNESS TO GOD
COMES WITH A REAL COST.**

MEMORY VERSE

As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

Genesis 50:20

FOLLOW UP

How has the truth of Genesis 50:20 played itself out in Joseph's life?

As a slave, Joseph seemed to find stability and success in Egypt. Even when things went wrong again for Joseph and he was unjustly thrown into prison, rather than being filled with self-pity, anger, or hatred, Joseph remained faithful to God. We begin to see how Joseph's character was refined and witness the set-up for God's faithfulness to be put on display.

Though God appeared directly to his great-grandfathers and father (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), He did not appear to Joseph, but the direction of God in his life can be clearly seen.

We can take encouragement that while God did not appear to Joseph directly, He guided him, and similarly we can know that He is also leading and directing us.



MEANT FOR GOOD

INTRODUCTION

Dreams are a significant part of Joseph's story. In the beginning of our study, we saw how his dreams got him into a great deal of trouble. Now we come to a point in Joseph's life where his ability to understand and interpret dreams brings about his liberation and rise to power. At this point, he had spent nearly half of his life in Egypt away from his family and over two years being unjustly imprisoned. However, Joseph's resolute belief in the goodness of God did not waver and he remained faithful to God. By relinquishing control of his life, and choosing to trust God throughout his long and trying circumstances, Joseph found himself in the right place, at the right time, with the right people, for the right opportunity.

CONVERSATION STARTER



Patience is often something that people proclaim they wished they had more of, especially in seasons that seem to last way too long. How do you manage that tension in your own life?

MAIN IDEA

Joseph faithfully served the Lord and the people God placed in his life.

READ & DISCUSS

READ GENESIS 40



In verse 7 Joseph asks an interesting question for one in prison. Joseph turns to another prisoner and asks: "Why are your faces so sad today?" It seems that Joseph was not sad in his current state. From what you know of Joseph, at this point in his story, what do you think are some of the ways he was able to keep his spirits lifted?



Joseph is in prison with two other people; who are they and what is their significance to Joseph's life and story? *Hint – What relationship do these men share that may have a future impact on Joseph's life?*

Follow Up: These two men share dreams with Joseph. What similarities do you see between them? What differences are there?

READ & DISCUSS

Q Joseph continues to experience an arduous life—betrayed by family, sold into slavery, falsely accused, and imprisoned. The sadness in the story doesn't end. In verse 23 we are told that he is forgotten about. Have you ever experienced that feeling?

Follow Up: Elsewhere in the Scriptures, we see others sharing the same sentiment of being forgotten, especially by God (Psalm 43:2). How do we balance the feeling of being forgotten with the truth that God promised to never leave or forsake us (see Deut. 31:6; Heb 13:5)?

MEMORY VERSE

Humble yourselves,
therefore, under the
mighty hand of God so
that at the proper time
he may exalt you, casting
all your anxieties on him,
because he cares for you.

1 Peter 5:6-7

READ GENESIS 41:1-36

Q How much time has passed since the cupbearer forgot about Joseph? What prompts the cupbearer to remember Joseph?

Follow Up: Even though it appeared that Joseph may have been forgotten about, he was in the right place, with the right people, along with the right attitude. When presented with the right time, he was able to step into what God had prepared for him. Have you experienced something similar within your own life?

Q Joseph attributes his ability to help Pharaoh to someone; who is it (see verse 16, 25, 28)?

Follow Up: What was the dream that Pharaoh had? What was Joseph's interpretation of the dream?

Q In chapters 40-41, we see God give Joseph opportunities to make a difference by demonstrating patience, discernment, and spiritual influence. Can you think of a time you have been able to do something similar for someone? Which of these is hardest to exhibit?

CHRIST CONNECTION

On Mount Calvary, Jesus hung on the cross between two criminals (Luke 23:32). Through the story of Good Friday, we learn that one of the criminals was told they would experience life, while the other faced death (Luke 23:43). This is much like the two criminals Joseph encountered in prison—one was redeemed and given life, where the other was condemned. Both Jesus and Joseph were placed in these situations due to their faithfulness to God's plan for their life. Why is it that we often find ourselves surprised when we step out in faithfulness to God and wind up in less than desirable situations by worldly standards? Especially when it seems to be the norm for those who love God.

REFLECTION &
PERSONAL APPLICATION

At this point in the story it has been approximately thirteen years from when we were first introduced to Joseph up to this moment in his story. Throughout Joseph's life we see him exhibit patience, humility, diplomacy, wisdom and faithfulness, and experience intimacy with God. Of these, which stands out most to you? Why is that? How would you like God to change and refine you for the coming decade? Would you be willing to accept similar trials and challenges as Joseph for God to bring about that product? Conclude your time reflecting on a prayer of surrender from Thomas Merton:

NOTES

Prayer of Surrender

*My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going.
I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end.
Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your
will does not mean that I am actually doing so.
But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you and I
hope that I have that desire in all that I am doing.
And I know that if I do this, you will lead me by the right road although I
may know nothing about it.
Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the
shadow of death, I will not fear, for you are ever with me and you will
never leave me to face my perils alone.*

Thomas Merton

NOTES

SUMMARY

Joseph was in prison and was promoted to be in charge of all the prisoners. After angering Pharaoh, Pharaoh's cupbearer and the chief baker ended up in prison with Joseph. Both the cupbearer and the baker had dreams that they did not understand. After Joseph interpreted them, he asked for one thing; he wanted the cupbearer to remember him and to tell Pharaoh about him. Then two years passed. The cupbearer did not remember to speak to Pharaoh about Joseph until God gave Pharaoh a dream. Pharaoh's advisors could not tell him what the dream meant. The cupbearer remembered Joseph and told Pharaoh about him. Joseph was cleaned up, brought before Pharaoh, and asked to interpret Pharaoh's dream. Joseph told Pharaoh that dream interpretation did not come from him, but from God. Then Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dream—there would be seven years of plenty in the land, followed by seven years of famine.

MAIN IDEA

Joseph faithfully served the Lord and the people God placed in his life.

BIG IDEAS

- Joseph knew that he could not do anything without God's help.

Joseph let the chief baker, the cupbearer and even Pharaoh know that he could not tell them what their dreams meant, but God could.

Because God was with him, Joseph had confidence to give suggestions to prepare for the famine:

Joseph advised Pharaoh to collect all the surplus food during the seven years of plenty and keep it in storage for the seven years of famine.

- Joseph knew God was caring for him even during the difficult times. This developed in Joseph many traits:

Patience: Joseph exemplified Romans 5:3.

Faithfulness: Joseph was faithful to God, even when he was put in bad situations. Joseph was faithful to whatever task was put before him because he knew that God was in it.

BIG IDEAS

- At the beginning of our story, Joseph's dreams got him into trouble, but 13 years later, other people's dreams would get him out of trouble.
- Joseph was placed in a position of power, so he could save his family and many other people.

JOSEPH POINTS TO JESUS

- Joseph was faithful to do the jobs that God had called him to do, even though it was hard. Joseph understood that God is in control and trusted Him.
- Jesus understood God's plan for Him and was faithful to carry it out, even though it meant death on the cross.

MEMORY VERSE

As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

Genesis 50:20

FOLLOW UP

How has the truth of Genesis 50:20 played itself out in Joseph's life?

Joseph understood that God had a plan for his life, and even though life got messy and hard for Joseph, he remained faithful. He knew that God had something better for him. He trusted God's plan and followed him through all the hard times.

INTRODUCTION

Despite all the suffering that he had endured, Joseph goes from lowly slave, servant, and prisoner, to be elevated to a place of prominence and splendor in the palace of Pharaoh. Joseph goes from rags to royalty. By using the gifts that God had given him, Joseph was able to impact nearly every area of the nation's life. He did not see a separation between his relationship with God and the work God had called him to do. While it is tempting to moralize and celebrate what Joseph accomplishes here in his life, we must not overlook God's faithfulness to Joseph to see these things through. It was God who enabled Joseph to work in and through the Egyptian government to provide the needs for His people.

CONVERSATION STARTER



Have you ever been put in a position of power? How did you handle it? Have you ever had someone in a position of power over you not use their authority for the good others? What happened?

MAIN IDEA

Those who are lowly in spirit will receive favor.

READ & DISCUSS

READ GENESIS 41:37-57

This may be the most extreme rags to riches story that has ever been told! Here we see the result of years of obedience and trusting God really “pay off” for Joseph. But we must be very careful in our interpretation of what God is doing in this story. Jesus tells His disciples in John 16:33, “I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”



How does that change your view and expectation of suffering?

Follow Up: Do you tend to approach obedience and faithfulness to God as a means to get something from Him?

Follow Up: What is the purpose of our obedience and faithfulness to God?

Q Compare and Contrast: Read Genesis 41:40-44 and Matthew 28:18. What similarities do you see between Joseph's authority and the authority of Jesus Christ?

Follow Up: What other scriptures come to mind about Jesus that sound similar?

Q Joseph did not start in a position of power, but as a slave. Looking back at Joseph's life, can you identify how God used his past experiences to prepare him for this exaltation?

Follow Up: How might a proper understanding of Joseph's life help you interpret Romans 8:28? How do you see God working all things for good in Joseph's life? How have you experienced this favor in your life? For further study, read Philippians 2:5-11. How did Christ come to us? What did he leave behind?

Q After unlikely beginnings as suffering servants and a lifetime of responding in faithfulness, we see both Joseph and Christ end up exalted, seated on thrones (for example, Genesis 41:24-44 and Hebrews 12:2). How do Joseph's and Jesus' faithfulness encourage you in your struggles? Does God always give us a "happy ending" like we see in Joseph's life? Why or why not?

Follow Up: How does Christ's death and resurrection encourage you to look beyond your circumstances here on earth to eternity?

Q Pharaoh recognized God's grace (or favor) on Joseph's life (41:38-39) and exalted him because of his worth (his wisdom and discernment). Read Philippians 2:6-9. We learn in Paul's letter that God has exalted Jesus because of His humility. When you think of Jesus, do you think of His worth, or do you tend to focus on what He has done for you? How might you change the way you think of Jesus?

MEMORY VERSE

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:9-11

CHRIST CONNECTION

READ GENESIS 47:15-19

We see the Egyptians come to Joseph because of their desperate need for food; without Joseph's provision, they would surely die. We too are in desperate need of saving; because of sin, without the provision of a savior, we will surely die. Just as the brothers had to humble themselves before Joseph so we must humble ourselves before Christ and admit our need to receive God's favor and so be saved. *(For further study, read James 4:8-10 and Matthew 5:2-3).* Why must we first approach God with a humble, or lowly spirit?

REFLECTION &
PERSONAL APPLICATION

Where do you need to humble yourself to further experience the favor (or grace) of God? This week, confess the area(s) in your life where you have allowed the sin of pride to keep you from humbling yourself before God. Ask that He will give you wisdom as you read and study His Word and that He would give you discernment to truly know your heart. Ask that God would give you a heart for obedience that would glorify His name.

**HUMBLE ME LORD**

5

SUMMARY

Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dream—there would be seven years of famine. Joseph then gave Pharaoh a plan so that he could provide for the people of Egypt and keep them safe during the seven years of famine. Pharaoh was so impressed by Joseph, that he promoted him to a position of power in Egypt and put him in charge of storing up food for the people. Pharaoh appointed Joseph as Overseer of Egypt, second in command. Joseph also married and had two sons.

MAIN IDEA

Those who are lowly
in spirit will receive
favor.

BIG IDEAS

- Joseph's Rise to Power & Preparation for the Future (41:37-57)
 - God had put Joseph in the house of Potiphar. Joseph had been trained to be in charge of everything Potiphar owned. Now Joseph was going to be in charge of everything in the land of Egypt.
 - The famine was worldwide.
 - As the famine grew, people from all over came to Egypt for food.
 - God used the famine to get the family of Jacob out of Canaan and to bring them to Egypt to settle. This was to further His plan to rescue sinners.
 - God sent Joseph to Egypt to preserve his family so that one day the chosen people of Israel could give the world Jesus.
- God used Joseph as he led the nation of Egypt (47:13-31)
 - Joseph's accomplishments were due to God's faithfulness to Joseph to see these things through. It was God who enabled Joseph to work in and through the Egyptian government to provide the needs for his people.
- Joseph's two sons
 - Through God's grace, Joseph was able to wipe out the pains and bad memories of the past and make a new beginning.
 - Joseph called his first son, Manasseh, which means "forget." God made him forget his homesickness.
 - Joseph called his second son, Ephraim, which means "fruitful." God made him fruitful in the land of Egypt.

JOSEPH POINTS TO JESUS

BREAD

- Joseph is the one who had the bread.
- Jesus called Himself “the bread of life.”

EXALTED

- Joseph is exalted and set over all Egypt.
- God highly exalted Jesus.

MEMORY VERSE

As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

Genesis 50:20

FOLLOW UP

How has the truth of Genesis 50:20 played itself out in Joseph's life?

Joseph went from lowly slave, servant, and prisoner to be raised up to a place of power and majesty in the palace of Pharaoh. By using the gifts that God had given him, Joseph was able to impact nearly every area of the nation's life. He did not see a separation between his relationship with God and the work God had called him to do.

INTRODUCTION

Oddly enough the very dream that Joseph had at a young age which first caused all the disruption in his life comes true this week. In Genesis 42-44 we see the events that ushered in the reunion of Joseph with his brothers, and how he chose to interact with them. All the tests and trials Joseph faced in his life brought him to that moment. How does he finally respond? The power differential flipped; he was in a far different position than the last time. Through these three chapters we will watch Joseph put his brothers through a series of tests surrounding truthfulness and loyalty, much like the ones he had experienced due to their earlier actions in his life. These tests enabled him to discern their character, which led him to show mercy and forgiveness. While we are prone to seek and revel in payback, vengeance, or justice, God is often out to accomplish something better with his people: reconciliation.

CONVERSATION STARTER



What is the most expensive gift you've ever received?

MAIN IDEA

God gives grace at the cost to Himself.

READ & DISCUSS

READ GENESIS 42-44



We tend to use the words mercy and grace interchangeably. Look up the definition of mercy and grace. How are they similar? How are they different?



We often interpret disruptions in our lives as deterrents from getting where we need to go, not how we arrive. What difficulties have you faced that seemed like a distraction at the time, but you now see God used for a greater purpose? *Remember, God doesn't cause bad things to happen, but as we're learning, as we live in a sinful and fallen world, and encounter hardships. He will use them for our good and His glory!*

Follow Up: When you focus on why God would allow an unexpected trial instead of who God is and what He might be doing, how might you miss an opportunity for growth? What do you think would have happened if Joseph took this attitude toward his trials?

Follow Up: Read Romans 5:3-5. How can you apply this truth to challenges you are currently facing?

Q In chapters 42-44 we see Joseph carefully testing the character of his brothers (42:9-17-25; 44:1-13). Why do you think he does this? What did Joseph's tests reveal about his brother's hearts (For reference, 42:29-34; 43: 3-10; 44:14-34)?

MEMORY VERSE

But you, O Lord, are a God
merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and
abounding in steadfast
love and faithfulness.

Psalm 86:15

Follow Up: We know that God tests our hearts to prove, reveal, purify, and/or strengthen our faith and glorify God (1 Peter 1:7). How does knowing this change your attitude toward trials or testing? What does the most recent "test" you went through reveal about your heart?

Follow Up: Even as Joseph tests his brothers (42:9-17-25; 44:1-13), he is merciful as he provides them with the food they need for survival (42:25, 44:1). It must have been painful as he chose to be gracious to them, not yet knowing how they would respond. Think of Jesus' costly mercy and grace on the cross as he cried out, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:34) Do you ever think about the great cost of Jesus' grace toward you? How have you experienced God's grace and mercy in your trials?

Q In chapter 42:6, 8 we see that Joseph's brothers didn't recognize him, which at first can seem odd. It seems unfathomable to not recognize your own brother! But Joseph's brothers weren't looking for him. How might you miss seeing Jesus because you're not looking?

Follow Up: In the Gospels, we see that many Jews missed recognizing Jesus as the messiah, despite being familiar with what He would be like, just like Joseph's brothers would have been familiar with what he had been like. What kept them from "seeing"?

Follow Up: Even today, many Jews believe Jesus to be dead, like the brothers thought, or expected Joseph to be. However, just as Joseph saw his brothers and knew them (42:8), Jesus sees and knows the Jews, even today. Read Jeremiah 16:17 and Hosea 5:3. What do you notice?



In chapter 43:8 Judah steps in to provide for and save his family. He knows that unless they return to Egypt, they will starve. Think about his willingness to give his life for Benjamin's. What did Christ say about laying down one's life to save someone else (John 15:13)? What does this reveal about Judah's heart?

CHRIST CONNECTION

Grace and mercy are only fully appreciated when we realize how undeserving we are of them. In chapter 44 we see Joseph's brothers admit their sin against him as Judah begs for mercy and offers his life to save Benjamin. Even more amazingly, we witness Joseph's forgiveness and restoration of their relationships in chapter 45! We too must bring a full admission of the guilt of our sin to God as we plead the covering of Christ's sacrifice. 1 John 1:9 tells us, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." How do you feel about confession? Does knowing God will forgive you make confession easier or not? Why or why not?

REFLECTION & PERSONAL APPLICATION

Spend time this week in confession, knowing you are fully seen and known by Christ. It is because of His sacrificial death and resurrection you are forgiven and can come confidently before His throne. Praise God for His mercy and grace; we are forgiven! Just as confession is necessary to restore us to right relationship with God, and we can rejoice knowing we are forgiven, we must practice forgiveness toward those who have caused us harm (Matthew 6:12). Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal where you may be harboring resentment or bitterness in your heart and ask for help to forgive.

6

SUMMARY

MAIN IDEA

God gives grace at the cost to Himself.

Jacob sent his sons to go to Egypt to purchase grain and they ended up encountering Joseph. Joseph's brothers did not recognize him, but Joseph recognized his brothers. Joseph accused them of being spies, released them three days later, and sent them home with grain, but with a command to bring back their

youngest brother, Benjamin. Joseph kept Simeon to ensure their return. When they returned to Egypt with Benjamin, Joseph released Simeon and had a meal prepared for them. Joseph sent them back home, but framed Benjamin for theft. They returned again and Judah pleaded with Joseph to take him as a prisoner instead of Benjamin.

BIG IDEAS

FEAR OF PUNISHMENT

- When Jacob first spoke to his sons about going to Egypt for grain, he noticed the brothers exchange a look. They knew Joseph was probably sold as a slave there. They felt guilty anytime Egypt was mentioned.
- After being released from prison, the brothers discussed selling Joseph into slavery and recognized their current troubles were a result of that sin (42:21-22).

This was not a logical connection between the two situations for them because they did not yet know Joseph's real identity. However, they had a guilty conscience.

- Later when the brothers find money in their grain sacks, they were afraid they would be accused of stealing (42:35).

This was a test. What would they do with the money? What would be revealed about their hearts?

COMPASSION IN THE PLACE OF REVENGE

- Joseph put his brothers through a series of tests surrounding truthfulness and loyalty. These tests helped him to determine their character, which led him to show mercy and forgiveness.

BIG IDEAS

- Joseph heard his brothers discussing how they should not have sinned against Joseph and now were being punished. Hearing this, Joseph wept (Genesis 42:24), for he could see God's deep work in the hearts of his brothers.
- After releasing them from prison, Joseph sent them home with grain, provisions for their journey, and had the money the brothers paid for the grain returned to their sacks.

This is not usually how one treats “prisoners” or “spies.”

Joseph did this before the brothers had repented or asked for forgiveness.

He extended love and care to them.
- When eating dinner and seeing his youngest brother, Benjamin, Joseph began to weep and had compassion, even though his brothers sold him into slavery (Genesis 43:29-31).

CHANGE OF CHARACTER

- After the brothers discovered the money in the grain sacks and returned home, they told their father all that had happened to them. They confessed to their father the truth.

This was a small step, but showed that their hearts were changing.
- When Benjamin was framed for theft, the brothers responded by tearing their clothes—this is an extreme expression of horror.

This was a radical change in the brothers. Before, they didn't care about their father or the favored son (Joseph). Now, the idea of hurting their father or brother (Benjamin) made them feel as bad as if someone had died.

They all returned with Benjamin—they were willing to stand with him as he faced slavery or death. This is a significant change in the hearts of the brothers.
- Judah was the person who suggested selling Joseph into slavery (Genesis 37:26-27). We see here (45:18-34) that he pleaded with Joseph to let Benjamin go and to take him instead.

JOSEPH POINTS TO JESUS

SACRIFICE

- Judah was willing to give up his life to save Benjamin and to prevent his father from being deeply sorrowed (Genesis 43:18-34).
- Jesus gave up His life for us on the cross to rescue us from sin.

PROVISION

- Joseph had the opportunity to make his brothers pay for their sins against him. Instead, he chose to provide for them.
- Jesus could have made us pay for our sins, but He provided himself as a perfect sacrifice.

MEMORY VERSE

As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

Genesis 50:20

FOLLOW UP

How has the truth of Genesis 50:20 played itself out in Joseph's life?

All the tests and trials Joseph faced in his life brought him to this point—reuniting with his brothers. How would he finally respond? Joseph dealt with his brothers in a patient and loving way. God brought Joseph's brothers to the place where they admitted the evil things they had done to Joseph and their father. God designed the event to bring the brothers to true repentance.

6

INTRODUCTION

After weeks of seemingly continuous heartbreak and let downs, we see a happy resolution to the story of Joseph and his family. Joseph reveals his identity to his brothers, is reunited with his father, and provides a safe place for the people of God, setting them up to flourish. The story of Joseph's life provides for us a beautiful picture of the Gospel. Joseph moves from abandonment in a pit, a time of servitude and false imprisonment, to a place of power and respect— now used to protect and sustain his family. Joseph moved from death and despair to life, from destitution to a life of fortune and plenty. Not only does he experience this himself, but he also shares the abundance with others. Although God's ways can be difficult to understand at times, He uses the everyday events of our lives to accomplish His will, reconciling people to Himself, and others to one another. By now, we can see in full what Joseph meant when he said: "you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today." (Gen. 50:20)

CONVERSATION STARTER



Share a time when something you planned didn't work out the way you expected. Did it end up better or worse?



Through this study, how has your perspective changed on God's use of evil to bring about good, for yourself and for others? If you haven't experienced a shift, take some time now to pray that the Holy Spirit would give you new eyes to see as He sees.

MAIN IDEA

God is at work bringing his people to a place of safety and blessing.

READ & DISCUSS

READ GENESIS 45:1-3



Try to imagine Joseph's emotions as years of disappointment give way to relief and joy! The unimaginable is happening; he is reunited with his brothers! Imagine the thoughts running through his mind, realizing that God had indeed been at work all these years for this moment. Time and time again we see Joseph choose to trust God when it makes no sense, when an answer feels far away and unlikely. How does this encourage you to keep trusting God?

Follow Up: In the Gospels we see the disciples' sorrow turn into joy when they see Jesus after He has risen from the dead and He reveals Himself to the disciples in the upper room. Contrast the brothers' reaction to Joseph in verse 3 with the disciples' in John 20:15-20.

Follow Up: How is the salvation Joseph offered similar to the salvation we find in Christ Jesus? More importantly, how is it different?

MEMORY VERSE

But you, O Lord, are a God
merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and
abounding in steadfast
love and faithfulness.

Psalm 86:15

Follow Up: The Egyptians needed a savior because of extreme famine; why do we need a Savior (For examples and further study, read Genesis 2:17; Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23)?

Q Joseph, a type of Christ, points us to the Gospel; his story should prepare our hearts to hear the good news! As we read and become familiar with the themes found in it, our hearts should burn within us as they did for the disciples when Christ opened their eyes to the Scriptures (Luke 24:32). How do these repeated themes of faithfulness in the face of trial, sacrifice, and salvation change how you see the purpose of Scripture? Do you think there are other stories in the Bible that might point you to Christ? Can you think of any?

Q Just as we see Joseph welcome and become reunited with his brothers, we are welcomed into God's family and united through the salvific work of Christ. When Joseph's family joins him in Egypt, they are both reunited and secure. In Christ we are secure as sons and daughters. But before we can become family, something must take place. We must know who Christ is, and confess our need for salvation. Why?

Q In chapter 45, Joseph reveals himself to his brothers and gives them reassurance. In addition to his forgiveness, Joseph will ensure they are provided for throughout the ongoing famine. Read what Jesus says to His disciples in John 14:27. He has been revealing who He is to His disciples and gives them (and us) assurance as well. What is our assurance and why do we need it?



Read Genesis 45:9-11 and John 14:1-3. Both Joseph and Christ prepare a place. Joseph's story should increase our trust as we see God provide. Knowing Christ is preparing a place for us should give us eternal perspective; we look beyond our present circumstances as we trust that God has delivered us, is delivering us, and will continue to deliver us (1 Corinthians 1:10). How can this help shape your attitude for the here and now?

Follow Up: As God sent Joseph ahead to preserve a remnant on Earth (45:7), what does God provide for those who call on Christ as we await His return (John 14:26)? Why is that important for us to remember?

CHRIST CONNECTION

God has been working from the beginning of time to bring His people to a place of safety and blessing; and even more amazingly, He invites each of us to be part of that blessing! Just as Joseph didn't consider his position of power as something to keep to himself, but used it to bless and provide for others, Jesus didn't consider His position with God something to cling to but laid it down that we might be saved. Read Philippians 2: 5-11. We are called to model Christ's behavior.

REFLECTION & PERSONAL APPLICATION

How can you use the position God has given you, either at work, school, or at home, to bless people by directing them to Christ? Do you view sharing Christ as a blessing to those who do not yet know Him? Observing the attitude Joseph modeled in this study, knowing it was God who sent him to Egypt for good (45:5, 7, 8; 50:20), how can you apply this truth to your life, where you are right now? How would it change your approach to everything you do if you were to look at your life through the lens that God has intentionally placed you where you are?

SUMMARY

After years of heartbreak and let down, struggles and suffering, we see a happy ending to the story of Joseph and his family. Joseph reveals his identity to his brothers, is reunited with his father, and provides a refuge for the people of God setting them up to flourish and grow.

MAIN IDEA

God is working to bring
His people to a place of
safety and blessing.

BIG IDEAS

JOSEPH REVEALS HIS IDENTITY (45:1-8)

- Such simple words (“I am Joseph”) that hold so much meaning: the brothers’ secret was a secret no more.
- The brothers were terrified! It had been almost 25 years since they had seen him when they sold him into slavery.
- The brothers were sure that now Joseph would want to get his revenge.
- But Joseph was not angry, and he did not seek revenge.
Joseph encouraged them with words that came from a loving and forgiving heart.
- Joseph gives the glory to God.
Joseph did not diminish what they did—the brothers had done wrong and were guilty. However, Joseph does not focus on their sins but on what God had done for all of them.
Joseph saw that God’s purpose in it all was greater than the evil of the brothers.

JOSEPH RECONCILES WITH HIS BROTHERS AND
INVITES THE FAMILY TO EGYPT (45:9-24)

- Joseph and Pharaoh sent the brothers home with many gifts.
- Joseph wanted to bring them to the land of Goshen, which was the best part of Egypt.

BIG IDEAS

It is there that God would make this family a great nation, sheltered from the rest of the world, able to become a distinctive people.

A FATHER'S RESPONSE (45:25-28)

- Jacob did not believe Joseph was alive until the brothers told him the words of Joseph and showed him the gifts that came to them through Joseph.

For us today—one way people will know Jesus is alive is if we tell them His words and show them His blessings in our lives.

GOD MEETS JACOB (46:1-7)

- For most of his life, Jacob had not been looking to God.

As a young man, Jacob ran away. He did not seek God.

Jacob had a wrestling match with God, fighting in his own strength.

When he heard about Joseph's "death," his grief was all consuming. He did not see the truth of eternal life.

- But now he was not running away or walking in his own strength; he was walking by faith.

Jacob offered sacrifices to God and God was gracious and appeared to him.

God promised that he would make of Jacob a great nation in the land of Egypt (and He did—Exodus 1:7)

A FAMILY REUNITED (46:28-34)

- Jacob and Joseph have a joyful reunion.
- Now that Jacob was living by faith, the Bible refers to him by his other name, "Israel."

For the next 400 years, Jacob's family would be in Egypt, first as honored guests and then as slaves, but through it all, God would be with them and form them into a nation as promised. God would go on to lead them out of Egypt under Moses to carry out His plan to send a Rescuer for our sins.

JOSEPH POINTS TO JESUS

REVEALING

- Joseph revealed himself to his brothers “a second time” and they were dismayed.
- Jesus will reveal himself to His people when He comes the second time and they will be amazed.

PROVIDING

- Joseph provided for his family's needs presently (food), but also brought them to a place he prepared for them.
- Jesus takes care of His people (us) in the present, but has gone to heaven to prepare a place for us, and will receive us to Himself.

MEMORY VERSE

As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

Genesis 50:20

FOLLOW UP

How has the truth of Genesis 50:20 played itself out in Joseph's life?

The story of Joseph's life provides a beautiful foretelling of the Gospel. Joseph moves from abandonment in a pit, slavery, and false imprisonment, to a place of power and respect, thereby able to protect and sustain his family. Joseph moved from death and despair to life, from hardship to a life of fortune and plenty. Not only does he experience it himself, but he also shares this abundance with others. Although God's ways can be difficult to understand at times, He uses the everyday events of our lives to accomplish His will, to reunite people to Himself, and each to one another. We can see what Joseph meant when he said: “You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.” (Gen. 50:20)



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