

As difficult as it may be for us to see in the midst of trials, God has a purpose in what He allows into our lives. As we look back at Joseph's circumstances, we find God was preparing him for the calling to rule over Egypt. Consider the sequence of events which led Joseph to the place where he could rule.

Jealous brothers-> enslaved in Egypt->falsely accused->prison encounter with cupbearer->revelation of dream to Pharaoh-> promoted to rule in Egypt

Along the way it was hard to see how this could end well, but it appears Joseph continued to recognize God in his life. Even as he named the children born to him there (Manasseh meaning forget and Ephraim meaning fruitful) we catch a glimpse that Joseph would forget his trouble and celebrate his fruitfulness in Egypt.

What troubles have you experienced in life that God has used to prepare you for something greater? Do you feel you are still being refined by your trials as you await the fruitfulness they may bear?

WRAP-UP

Nobody enjoys going through trials, yet all of us will. If we want to grow in our ability to endure, despite adverse circumstances, we need to trust that God is still with us through our trials, and that He orders our steps. Ultimately God is able to use adversity to prepare us for His purposes. If we are faithful to serve through the hardships, we will see the glory it brings.

Memory Verse

For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever!
- 2 Corinthians 4:17 NLT

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: _____

Pray for your group members' needs: _____

Challenge- Take some time this week to recount the trials you have already weathered in life. Write them down and thank God for each, no matter how painful. Trust God to use each one to prepare you and use you for His purposes.

“Develop Resilience”

“2020” #2

INTRODUCTION

God had spoken to Joseph in a dream that told him he would one day rule over his family. And Joseph believe God and shared his dream. But the road to its fulfillment wasn't pretty. In fact, Joseph faced great hardship along the way. Not once or twice but over and over again for years. How do we remain resilient in the midst of such circumstances? How do we keep our faith as we see the years passing before us and God's promises unfulfilled? The key lies in trusting that God is with us, and He is ultimately in control.

Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)

Is there anything you thought would have happened in your life by now but in fact you find you are still waiting to see happen?

STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)

1. God was with Joseph (and He is with us)

Genesis 37:23, 28 NLT - 23 So when Joseph arrived, his brothers ripped off the beautiful robe he was wearing. ... 28 So when the Ishmaelites, who were Midianite traders, came by, Joseph's brothers pulled him out of the cistern and sold him to them for twenty pieces of silver. And the traders took him to Egypt.

We are told the events described in Gen 37:23 – 28 happened “soon after” Joseph's dream. Just imagine how Joseph must have felt as he was being taken away to Egypt. How could God make him ruler over his family if he wasn't even in the same country they were in?

Genesis 39:1-2 NLT - 1 When Joseph was taken to Egypt by the Ishmaelite traders, he was purchased by Potiphar, an Egyptian officer. Potiphar was captain of the guard for Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. 2 The LORD was with Joseph, so he succeeded in everything he did as he served in the home of his Egyptian master.

If you were Joseph, what would you be asking God to do for you? What was it that actually demonstrated that God was still with Joseph? Did you ever experience disappointment so great that you doubted God was still with you?

Joseph could have surmised that his enslavement meant God had left him. But as he faithfully served where God had placed him, Joseph prospered. Even after being falsely accused by Potiphar's wife and imprisoned, Joseph was faithful, and God was with him.

Genesis 39:21 NLT - 21 But the LORD was with Joseph in the prison and showed him his faithful love. And the LORD made Joseph a favorite with the prison warden.

It wasn't where he might have wished to be, but it appears that Joseph recognized God was still with him.

How do the following verses hint that Joseph still trusted in God?

Genesis 39:9 NLT - 9 No one here has more authority than I do. He [Potiphar] has held back nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How could I do such a wicked thing? It would be a great sin against God."

Genesis 40:8 NLT - 8 And they replied, "We both had dreams last night, but no one can tell us what they mean." "Interpreting dreams is God's business," Joseph replied. "Go ahead and tell me your dreams."

Genesis 41:16 NLT - 16 "It is beyond my power to do this," Joseph replied. "But God can tell you what it means and set you at ease."

What does it take for you to serve faithfully in a circumstance you wish you weren't in? If your work, or home, or health is not what you want it to be, what does it look like to serve faithfully even if God doesn't change your circumstance? What enables you to overcome adverse situations and be resilient as Joseph was?

Matthew 28:20 NLT - 20b ...And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

It's easy to allow our circumstances to overwhelm our faith. But we have an assurance from Jesus that should enable us to withstand even the most discouraging circumstances.

2. Joseph still had troubles (and so will we)

God's presence doesn't promise us immunity from trouble. Despite what you may have heard, problems in life are not always an indicator of a lack of faith or the absence of God. Joseph experienced a long list of troubles.

Look up the following pairs of verses to find the similarities between troubles Joseph and Jesus both faced.

- *ENVIED AND HATED WITHOUT A CAUSE* – Gen 37:4; Mark 15:10
- *SOLD FOR SILVER TO GENTILES*- Gen 37:28b; Mat 26:15b
- *BECAME A SERVANT*- Gen 39:1; Luke 22:27b, Phil 2:7b
- *EXPERIENCED TEMPTATION*- Gen 39:7-12; Mat 4:1, Heb 4:15b
- *FALSELY ACCUSED*- Gen 39:17-18; Mat 26:60-61
- *UNJUSTLY IMPRISONED* – Gen 39:20; John 18:38
- *ABANDONED TO PRISON* – Gen 40:23; Mark 14:49-50
- *REJECTED AND CONDEMNED TO DIE* -Gen 37:18b; Luke 23:21

We may never experience trouble of this magnitude, yet we will go through trials in our lives.

What perspective did Paul give the Corinthians about the trials we all will face in this life?

2 Corinthians 4:17 NLT - 17 For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever!

What assurance did Jesus give about those trials?

John 16:33 NLT - 33 I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."

3. Everything Step was Providential- (so too for us)

Proverbs 16:9 NLT - 9 We can make our plans, but the LORD determines our steps.