

Small Group Study Questions: The Life of Joseph

Lesson 1 Joseph: A man who chose God instead of self

Key Verse: Genesis 50:20

Life is a series of circumstances. How we process those circumstances affects our choices and this in turn affects our future. Joseph didn't choose to be the chosen son, he didn't choose to oversee Potiphar's house, he didn't choose to go to jail. What he did choose was to serve God despite his circumstances. Joseph chose to trust God and not rely on himself, and those choices affected Joseph's future.

1. What do we know about Joseph's future?
2. What were some circumstances Joseph faced, and how did his choices affect his future?
3. How would you see Proverbs 3:5-6 applied to Joseph's circumstances?
4. What do you know about your future as a believer? Select Bible verses that support your answers.

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Lesson 2 Partiality

In Genesis 29-37 we are presented with a man of God showing partiality to his wives and his sons.

1. Define *partiality* in your own words.
2. What was the impact on Jacob's wives and children? Consider verses such as Genesis 29:30, Genesis 33:1-3, and Genesis 37:1-4.
3. In James 2:1-10, the Lord addresses the sin of partiality. What are some key thoughts concerning partiality from these verses?
4. Look at the following verses and write out what they teach concerning partiality:
 - Romans 2:11
 - 1Timothy 5:21
 - Galatians 3:28

- Acts 10:34-35
- Proverbs 24:23
- Proverbs 28.21
- Colossians 3:25
- Jude 1:16
- Job 34:19

5. Colossians 3:1-14 teaches us that there are habits we are to put off and ones we are to put on.

a. What qualities would God like us to demonstrate?

b. What are ways we can live these out within our families, to our children, to other believers?

6. In your own life what are the areas/circumstances in which you are tempted to show partiality?

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Lesson 3 Envy and Jealousy

In Genesis 37 we are presented with the theme of envy and jealousy.

1. Read through this chapter and write down what you learn, what you think, and how you see *envy* and *jealousy* affecting the lives of Joseph, his brothers, and his father?

2. Read over and consider Acts 7:9.
 - a. What is revealed to us concerning Joseph and his brothers?

 - b. What was Joseph's response?

3. Define *envy* in your own words.

4. The following verses can help us understand envy. Read each verse and write down some of your thoughts:
 - Job 5:1-3
 - Psalms 37:1-3; 73:1-28
 - Proverbs 3:31-32; 14:30; 23:17-18; 24:1-4,19-20; 27:3-4
 - Ecclesiastes 9:5-11
 - Romans 1:28-32; 13:10-14
 - 1 Corinthians 3:1-3
 - 2 Corinthians 12:20-21
 - Galatians 5:19-26
 - Philippians 1:14-17
 - 1 Timothy 6:3-6
 - Titus 3:1-4
 - James 3:11-18; 4:5-8

5. Finish the following sentence:

An envious person or one who has envy in their heart...

6. What were the long-term effects of envy on Joseph's brother?

7. What does *envy* want?

8. Jealousy and envy go hand in hand. What brings them alive in our lives?

9. In Matthew 27:16-18 we see envy arise against our Saviour.

a. How did he respond?

b. What was the outcome?

10. Through Joseph's and Christ's life, what have you learned personally about envy?

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Lesson 4 **God's Sovereignty: Using Every Circumstance for Our Good**

From being a favoured son of his father to being thrown into slavery is just the first instance of Joseph's extreme changes in circumstance. Later Joseph becomes a trusted manager of Potiphar's household only to be thrown in prison. He becomes a trusted prisoner only to be forgotten by the ones he cares for. Yet finally he is elevated to second in command in all of Egypt.

God brings Joseph through many different circumstances and uses each one in his life. This week we will consider God's sovereignty, and how he uses all things for his glory and the good of his people.

1. Consider some of the different circumstances that Joseph faced in his life (see paragraph above for some examples).
 - a. What are some of the ways God used these circumstances for his purposes/glory?

 - b. What are some of the ways God used these circumstances for Joseph's good?

2. Take time to consider some events recorded in scripture when God used what some might call a "bad or unprofitable event" to accomplish his purposes/bring good into the lives of his people. Be prepared to share 1 or 2 of these with the group.

3. Read Romans 8:18-30. Using the context of this passage what does v. 28 teach us about God's sovereignty and His ability to use all circumstances in our lives?

b. What are some choices you see that need to be made in our lives to keep us and those around us pure?

c. What are some positives for making pure choices?

d. What are the long-term effects of impure choices?

5. How do you see the teaching from Proverbs lived out in Joseph's choices?

6. In Joseph's life what are the long-term effects?

7. How would you apply these truths concerning pure choices to your own life?

4. What do you think the benefits are of God giving us a variety of spiritual gifts (there are many different gifts, believers may have one or more gifts, and believers may have the same or different gifts from each other)?

5. What are some ways that you can “stir up” or develop your gifts? How can you encourage others in their gifts?

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Lesson 7 Joseph: A Man with a Forgiving Heart

Read Genesis 41 and 50

Often who we are is seen when we have a position of power or influence. Our heart comes to the forefront when we either have been given power or have focused our energy on achieving it.

Over a period of approximately 15 years, Joseph was sold into slavery, falsely accused of sexual immorality, imprisoned, and then forgotten. Throughout that time remembering what God had said to him in a dream. Then, over night, Joseph goes from being held captive in Pharaoh's jail to being promoted to the second most powerful person in Egypt. What would be revealed about Joseph's heart?

1. Write down something that stood out to you from these chapters. It can be a key theme, a verse that encouraged you, or a truth that you learned or were reminded of.
2. When Joseph was put into a position of power how did this affect the way he treated those who had mistreated him: i.e., his brothers, Potiphar, the King's cupbearer?
3. How does Romans 12:9-21 and Ephesians 4:32 encourage us to live?

