



FOR OUR GOOD

The Life of Joseph

COMMUNITY GROUP LEADER GUIDE

This study guide is meant to help you learn and apply the truths of Scripture to your life right now, both individually and with your community group. To get the most from these guides, work through it on your own before gathering with your community group. If you aren't in a community group, consider attending the next Starting Point at Mercy Church, where you can take the next steps to connect with a community group in your area. RSVP at mercycharlotte.com/connect.

Part I: The Power of God's Presence

INTRODUCTION

LEADER NOTES: *Welcome your members to the group. Use the discussion questions to help your group members observe, interpret, and apply the Scriptures to life.*

THE BIG IDEA: *God hasn't forgotten you or abandoned you in your disappointment. In Him, all things work together for our good.*

This week begins an exciting new journey for the Mercy Church family. For the first time, since our launch, we are going to study, in depth, God's faithfulness in the Old Testament. Over the next 6 weeks we are going to look at one of the greatest stories ever told. Outside of the life of Jesus, the life of Joseph is one of the most incredible stories every written. Not just among bible stories, but among ALL stories. Period. In this series we are going to read a story filled with wealth and poverty, rural Palestine meets urban Egypt, famine and abundance, betrayal and faithfulness, prison dungeons and the kings court, multiple sex scandals, conspiracies, suffering, death and legacies. It is an incredible story and recognized as one of the greatest stories of antiquity.

As we begin, in Genesis 37, we see Joseph in the midst of a family debacle with his brothers. Jacob, Joseph's father, favored Joseph over his other brothers. The brothers despised Joseph for the favor he received. Joseph's situation grew worse when he gave a bad report of his brothers (37:2) and deepened their hatred for him. Jacob even gave Joseph a colorful coat to show his approval and



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love. Over the next few verses, we learn that Joseph has a dream where his “sheaf” (stalk of grain) grew and arose above his brothers’. This dream continued to cause anger among his brothers. Some twenty verses later, the brothers are about to kill Joseph because of their jealousy and anger (37:19-20). Eventually, Joseph’s brothers threw him into a pit instead of killing him. By this point, Joseph was distant from his family and seemingly alone in his journey.

Even in the midst of such disdain, we see that God was with Joseph every step of the way. As we read into Genesis 39, we learn that God was with Joseph in all things. The truth that we must take away is that God is always working in our lives for his glory and for our Good. Joseph trusted God to take care of him and bring him through the difficulties he faced. Instead of blaming God or his brothers, Joseph confidently lived as if the Lord was with him. As we work through Joseph’s story, we will see that God worked behind the scenes to accomplish his purposes in Joseph’s life.

STUDY AND DISCUSSION

In the message we saw the great identity given to us by Christ. These questions are a reference point to help your community group study.

LEADER NOTES: *These questions are here to help your group get their minds re-engaged with the passage and teaching points from the weekend message. Think of this as “priming the pump” for a more interactive discussion in your time together.*

1. What is an area of life where you are not trusting/it is hard to believe God working for your to bring about good?
2. In what ways have you retaliated/or wanted to retaliate against those who did harm to you?



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INVESTIGATING SCRIPTURE:

The following questions are designed to help you gain understanding of what the Bible teaches.

LEADER NOTES: *The following questions will help you work through the passage(s). Have someone read the passage(s) aloud, dividing among two or three people if needed.*

The reading of the word, as a group, is an act of worship that helps the group focus on the importance of Scripture. Make a point to emphasize this as an important part of worship together. After the scripture is read, pray to continue to set the tone of worship. Praise God for the gospel and the finished work of Christ, and the transformation he gives through Christ.

Read Genesis 37

1. Why is it often so difficult to see God's good plan in our lives?
It is difficult first because we aren't God. We must submit our finite minds to the possibility that the infinite God is doing things in our lives we cannot comprehend. On top of that, when we are going through pain & suffering, our pain often further blinds us to the bigger picture of what God is doing.
2. At the beginning of Genesis 37, we see the beginning of the division between Joseph and his brothers. How does Joseph stir up the pain anger of his brothers?
 - *Tells on them*
 - *Wears the coat in front of them*
 - *Tells them about the dream where his sheaf is greater*
3. How does the brothers' behavior remind us of the world we live in today?
 - *Brothers wanted the attention*
 - *They want Joseph's demise to feel better about themselves*



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- They were dominated interpreting their lives by the present circumstance
4. What are some of the most common struggles and disappointments we face?
- Lack of success in work
 - Family squabbles conflict
 - Other's success
 - Other's opinions
 - Reminders & consequences of our own sin
5. One of the common struggles in the Christian walk is the feeling God seems distant from us. constant reminder of past sins. How does God's interaction with Joseph show his grace and victory over what happened in his life - both his good character and his sovereign control?
- God does not leave Joseph when others do
 - There is a greater purpose in Joseph's struggle (he is in the family of Jesus)
 - When something bad happens, we often think we are being punished for past sins, this is the anti-gospel
6. Genesis 39:2 tells us that God was present with Joseph. Likewise, He is faithful to be with us in the midst of our greatest trials. How does this truth change the way we look at our own suffering and disappointment?
- Christ already accomplished everything necessary to free us from this very type of thinking and living despair that often comes in suffering. We can now suffer with hope.
 - God walks with Joseph through the struggle, he is not standing outside of the story punishing him or others
 - We have an intentional God. He does not look down upon us from a distance. He is faithful to meet us intentionally where we are and show us his greatness in the midst of our struggle.

TAKEAWAYS

These questions are intention to help you apply the truths about the mission of the church family to your own walk with the Lord.



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1. What are one or two big events or situations resting heavily on your heart and mind right now?
2. How would youWhat would change about the way you respond to these events or situations in your life if you were sure that God was with you?

PRAYER

Prayer is an essential component of your life as a follower of Christ, and an integral part of any healthy church body. Divide up into groups of 2-3 people and use the following points to guide you through a time of prayer together.

LEADER NOTES: *The following is designed simply as an outline for you to use in your group prayer time. Feel free to make this your own and adjust it to fit your group.*

1. Read Romans 8.28. Thank God that he does work all things for our good
2. Read Romans 8.18. Ask God to show us more of his good in Charlotte
Ask God to give you hope in eternity that gives you strength and peace in your present struggles.
3. Thank God that he is here and present with us. Ask him to give you strength in your present situations through remembering his presence with you.
4. Seek Ask God to lead us into more opportunities to show others his good plan.