

Bible Essentials

Scripture Passage: Genesis 37:1-11

As a group, share something about your past week. For example, share prayer requests and answers to prayer. Share the best and worst moments of your week (highs and lows). Write prayer requests here. Open with prayer for these requests and for God to open your hearts to this week's study.

What is your most recurring dream?

Read today's passage. Discuss your initial impressions of the passage. Write any major points here.

Here is some context for Genesis 37:1-11.

Our last Bible Essentials study was in Genesis 35, where we saw Jacob return to the land of Canaan with his family. God renewed his covenant with Jacob and Jacob's descendants, and God changed Jacob's name to Israel. This is where we get the name the Israelites from.

We also get some bittersweet news in Genesis 35. Rachel has become pregnant with another child, but she dies in childbirth. This is the final son of Jacob—Benjamin. Benjamin is the only full brother of Joseph, who will be the focus for the rest of Genesis. Benjamin will play a key role later in Genesis. In addition to Rachel's death, we also learn of the death of Isaac at 180 years old.

After a chapter reporting the lineage of Esau, Jacob's twin brother, Genesis transitions a bit starting in Genesis 37. The rest of Genesis will tell us the story of Joseph.

What are your thoughts about the context? Discuss the context as a group. Write some key points here.

Read the passage again. Use a different Bible version if you have one available. Have someone summarize the passage in their own words, and use this space to record that summary.

Look closely at the passage and answer the following questions as a group. Write notes in the space provided.

What does the passage say about God?

What does the passage say about people?

What does the passage say about God's plan?

What else strikes you about this passage?

Understanding how a passage fits into the overarching story of the Bible is important.

As the first major story about Joseph, this story sets into motion the rest of what happens in Genesis. It establishes the role of Joseph in his family as the one who was favored (by his father) and the one who was hated (by his brothers). This contrast caused the brothers to sell Joseph to merchants, and he eventually ended up in Egypt, where he rose to a place of power. That power later saved his family when they came to purchase grain during a famine.

When Joseph was reunited with his family, he convinced the entire family, including his father, to move to Egypt. While in Egypt, the Israelites grew into a great nation—so great, in fact, that eventually Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt, would make them slaves because he feared they would become too powerful. Because of their slavery, we also see God deliver the nation of Israel from slavery and call them out of Egypt back to the Promised Land.

God's care for Joseph and his family and God's deliverance of the Israelites from slavery reflect God's care for us and his willingness to send his favored Son to provide a way of deliverance for his people. Jesus was also called out of Egypt, just like the Israelites, and he lived a perfect life so that he could save us from our slavery to sin through his death on the cross.

What are your thoughts on how this passage fits into the overarching story of the Bible? Discuss as a group. What questions do you have individually or as a group? Discuss potential answers.

As a group, use the following questions to apply today's Scripture passage to your life.
How does this passage affect how you view God?

How does this passage affect how you view yourself?

How does this passage affect how you will live your life?

Close in prayer, asking God to help you apply what you learned today.