

Bible Essentials

Scripture Passage: Genesis 39:1-23

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 was a time in your life when you experienced peer pressure? Did you stand up against it? Or did you give in?

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

Here is some context for Genesis 39:1-23.

The story of Joseph starts in Genesis 37, where we see the animosity between Joseph and his brothers. Joseph gives bad reports about his brothers to their father, and he tells his brothers his dreams about them bowing down to him. This doesn't sit well with the brothers, so they plan to kill him. Instead of following through on this, they decide to sell him into slavery so they can get a little money out of the deal. Then they take Joseph's ornate, unique robe, spread blood on it from an animal, and report to their father that Joseph is dead.

In the meantime, Joseph is sold to a caravan of Midianite merchants headed to Egypt. There, he is sold to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials.

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.

God had a plan for Joseph, and that plan didn't end with Joseph staying in Potiphar's house. Getting sent to prison was one step of many that God used to guide Joseph to a place in Pharaoh's house. Once he was in Pharaoh's house, God used Joseph to save his family and the whole land of Egypt from a famine. Each step along the way may not have made sense to Joseph, but he kept being faithful no matter what his circumstances were.

Think about Jesus in the last hours of his life. From the outside looking in, Jesus' betrayal, arrest, torture, and crucifixion don't make any sense. But looking back from the perspective of the resurrection, and knowing Jesus' purpose on earth was to pay the penalty for our sin by becoming the perfect sacrifice, all of those steps make perfect sense. No matter what the circumstances, Jesus was faithful to his calling to be obedient.

Next time you have circumstances in life that just don't make sense, remember Joseph and Jesus. Sometimes the steps to where you need to be in life don't make sense to you. But you can trust that God is working in your life to get you to where he wants you to be. You just need to trust him and stay faithful to him no matter what your circumstances are. Someday, you will understand.

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.