The Providence Center for Biblical Counseling

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**Joseph's Story of Suffering and Forgiveness**

Our circumstances are NEVER the problem, no matter what they are---but our REACTIONS in those circumstances. If we respond in a godly way to whatever our heavenly Father sovereignly allows in our lives, we will be blessed--even in the most difficult and unfair situations.

Questions for discussion and meditation

**READ Genesis 37**

1. Joseph, at seventeen years old, was the favorite son of his father, Jacob. Even though he was the youngest son, his father had made him the appointed leader of the family. What sort of attitude did his brothers have toward Joseph? (v11)
2. Do you think the brothers had a "right" to have that attitude toward Joseph? What does the Bible say our attitude should be toward one another? (Matthew 5:43)
3. Because the brothers sinned in their attitude to Joseph, they were tempted to commit more serious sin. What was in their heart to do to their brother? (v20)
4. What did they actually do to Joseph?(v28)
5. How do you think Joseph felt as a 17 year old, suddenly being taken away from his loving father, his home, rejected and hated by his own brothers?
6. Instead of being a favored son, he was now a slave in a foreign country with no friends, no family, no possibility of escape. Did it seem that God was around and that God cared? Did this seem "fair"? What sort of attitude do you think Joseph might have had toward his brothers for doing such a thing to him? What does God say our attitude should be? (Romans 12:14)

**READ Isaiah 43:1-2**

1. To whom do we belong? What has He done for us? MEMORIZE Isaiah 43:1.

**READ Genesis 39 and Read Psalm 105:16-22**

1. What is the phrase repeated in verses 2, 3 and 21?

Many people think that the blessing of God are manifested when everything in life goes well for us and we are not in any kind of difficulty or trial. We see in Joseph's life that he was: unjustly sold into slavery, hated and rejected by his brothers, suffered anguish in his heart, unjustly accused of sexual sin, confined as a slave in a prison in a foreign land, forgotten by his friends.

Yet, the Bible says, "The Lord was with him" and "whatever he did the Lord made it prosper." How do you account for this? (**Read Romans 8: 28-39**)

1. List several insights from Psalms 105:16-22 concerning Joseph and God's sovereignty.
2. Potipher trusted Joseph, and though he was a slave, he was good to him. Joseph did not want to betray Potipher's trust, yet, what did Joseph say when Potipher's wife was tempting him to sin? (Gen 39:9)
3. All sin is ultimately against \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
4. How often was Joseph tempted?( Gen 39:10)
5. In order to keep himself from sinning, what did Joseph do?( Gen 39:12)
6. What does the Lord tell us to do when we are in places where we might be tempted--or with people who might cause us to fall into sin? Is the Lord calling you to make some changes? If so, list. ( See 2 Timothy 2:22)
7. Even though everyone seemed against Joseph, and even though he was falsely accused and greatly mistreated, what did God do for Joseph?( Gen 39:21)
8. Did this change Joseph's outward circumstances? What does that tell you about the blessing of God?

After more than 2 years in prison, Joseph was called before Pharaoh to interpret Pharaoh's dream. Pharaoh recognized that God had given Joseph much wisdom and understanding. He raised him from being a slave in prison to being next to Pharaoh himself in power.

**READ Genesis 41:38-57**

1. How old was Joseph when he was delivered from his life as a slave? How long had it been since he had been sold by his brothers into slavery?
2. List all the things Joseph suffered during those years.
3. Now that he is in a position of power, what might be his attitude and action toward his brothers?
4. What did Joseph name his 2 sons? What are the meaning of their names? Why is this significant?(v 51-52)
5. What is happening throughout the land? (v53-57) What's its importance? How is God using Joseph?

Finally, the day did come when Joseph's brothers were brought before him. Now he had the power to make them salves and to put them into prison or even to put them to death.

**READ Genesis 45**

1. Instead of "paying back" his brothers for what they had done, what did Joseph do? (v 15,20,22)

**READ Ephesians 4:31- 5:2**

1. What sinful attitudes are we told to "put off" and begin to "put on" the practice of righteousness and holiness?
2. Why are we always to forgive, even when we have been truly wronged?

**READ again, Genesis 45: 5, 7-8**

1. Joseph did not see his brothers as ultimate source of the circumstances that had befallen him. Who did he acknowledge as the one in control of all the events of his life?
2. Even though Joseph had suffered many unfair things at the hands of others what did Joseph say in Genesis 50:20?

**READ and MEMORIZE Romans 8:28**

1. Write down the things in your life that have cause you suffering and that have seemed unfair and hurtful.
2. Who, according to God's Word, has orchestrated the events of your life?
3. What does God promise that He will do for those who love Him through all circumstances of life?
4. How does the Lord Jesus say we prove we love Him? (John 14:15,1 John 5:3-5)