

JOSEPH

The Dreamer – Genesis 37

BIBLE STUDY



STARTER: What do you think the perfect family looks like?

Read Genesis 37

THE FAMILY

- What impression do you get of the family in this story?
- Look at the passages where **Jacob** is mentioned in this story. Do you think Jacob was a loving father? Why or why not? *(note: the long sleeves on Joseph's coat signified that he was not intended to go and work in the fields – as the rest of his brothers did – but had a higher status of overseer).*
- Look at all the passages where we see **Joseph** in the chapter. Do you think Joseph was a loving brother or son? Why or why not?
- What does the story teach us about how God works in dysfunctional situations?



Remember that even Jesus came from a tough family background. Don't feel that your less-than-perfect family situation means that God can't work in you.

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The Dreamer - Genesis 37

BIBLE STUDY



THE DREAMS

- God speaks through dreams but not all dreams are a message from God! If you think your dream is from God, pray about it, talk and pray with a wise Christian friend, and ask God to confirm it. But remember that in general, God doesn't use dreams to communicate as much as other ways. **What might some of those other ways be?**
- Joseph seemed to recognise that his dreams were significant. Should he have kept them to himself for the sake of peace and humility, or did he do well to declare it to his family?
- **Verse 11** tells us that Jacob 'kept the matter in mind'. How in particular might he have been thinking bearing in mind his past experience with dreams being sent from God (**Genesis 28 : 10-22**)?



Discuss what are the things to bear in mind in sharing what we believe to come from God, especially with those who are in a more difficult place.

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The Dreamer – Genesis 37

GOING DEEPER

Compare **Genesis 37:18-20** to **James 1:15**.
How could the brothers have stopped their desire before it led to sin?

Later in **Genesis 37:26**, Judah presents an alternative to killing Joseph that seems to benefit everybody (the brothers make money and Joseph gets to live) but it was really deceit.

Sin always presents itself as a beneficial alternative, but inevitably leads to regret.
Why, then, do we fall for its lies?
How might we, like Judah, justify sinning?



As we make our way through these chapters looking at the life of Joseph, we will be considering how he gives us a picture of Jesus.

In what ways is Joseph like Jesus in this chapter?
In which ways is he different?

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The Dreamer - Genesis 37

LISTEN | PRAY

LISTEN

**CASTING
CROWNS:**

**PRAISE YOU
IN THIS
STORM**



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dB4eC55dh-U>

PRAY

Use some of the thoughts that have come up in today's reading and conversation to guide your prayers as you ask God to use your life to honour him, even when things are bleak.

JOSEPH

Up and Down - Genesis 39

BIBLE STUDY



STARTER:

Do you think our spiritual growth is something we are aware of? How might we monitor it?

Read Genesis 39

We join Joseph in Egypt, now working in an Egyptian official's house.

- Look at **verse 2**. Do you think the two clauses 'the Lord was with Joseph' and 'he prospered' are linked? Look at **Deuteronomy 29 : 9**. Do you think we always prosper as a result of God being with us?
- **Verse 3** - How might people observe that the Lord is with us when we work? (*it's not always about 'being successful at everything we do'!*)



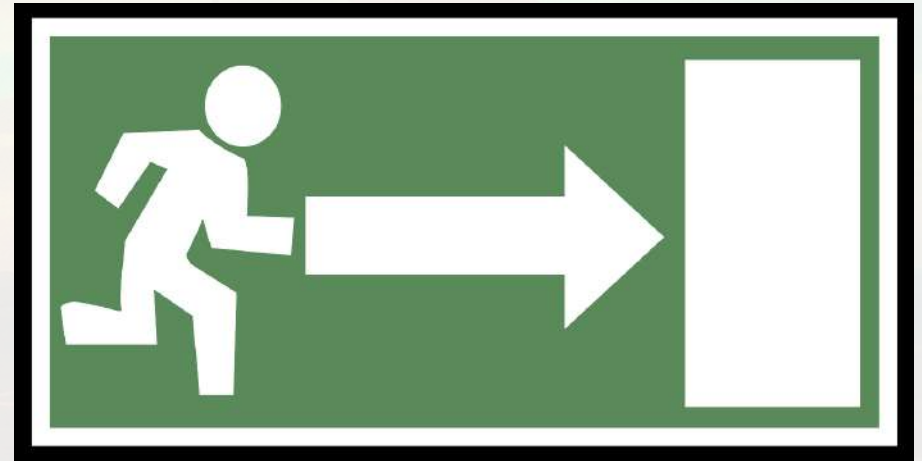
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Up and Down - Genesis 39

BIBLE STUDY



- In an age of health and safety, we are always clearly notified of fire exits and escape routes when we attend any event with potential for disaster. Joseph was very careful to avoid being drawn into an affair with Potiphar's wife in this chapter.
- Look at **1 Corinthians 10 : 13**. If you feel able to do so, talk about which areas of your life you might need to plan better 'escape routes'.
- Temptation is obviously something that we can't completely avoid, but we can be prepared. How might we be so? How can we support each other as a group?



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Up and Down – Genesis 39

BIBLE STUDY



- Joseph is changing from the lad we saw in **chapter 37**. What do you notice about his character in this chapter? Try to look at both sides of it – is there anywhere he should have acted differently?
- If Joseph was the same person as in **chapter 37**, do you think he would have been so highly regarded – both by Potiphar and by the prison warden?
- What do you think specifically had changed as ‘the Lord was with him’. Think about how you might humanly have expected him to act after the journey he had been on.

THE LORD WAS WITH HIM;
HE SHOWED HIM KINDNESS AND
GRANTED HIM FAVOUR IN THE EYES
OF THE PRISON WARDEN

Genesis 39:21

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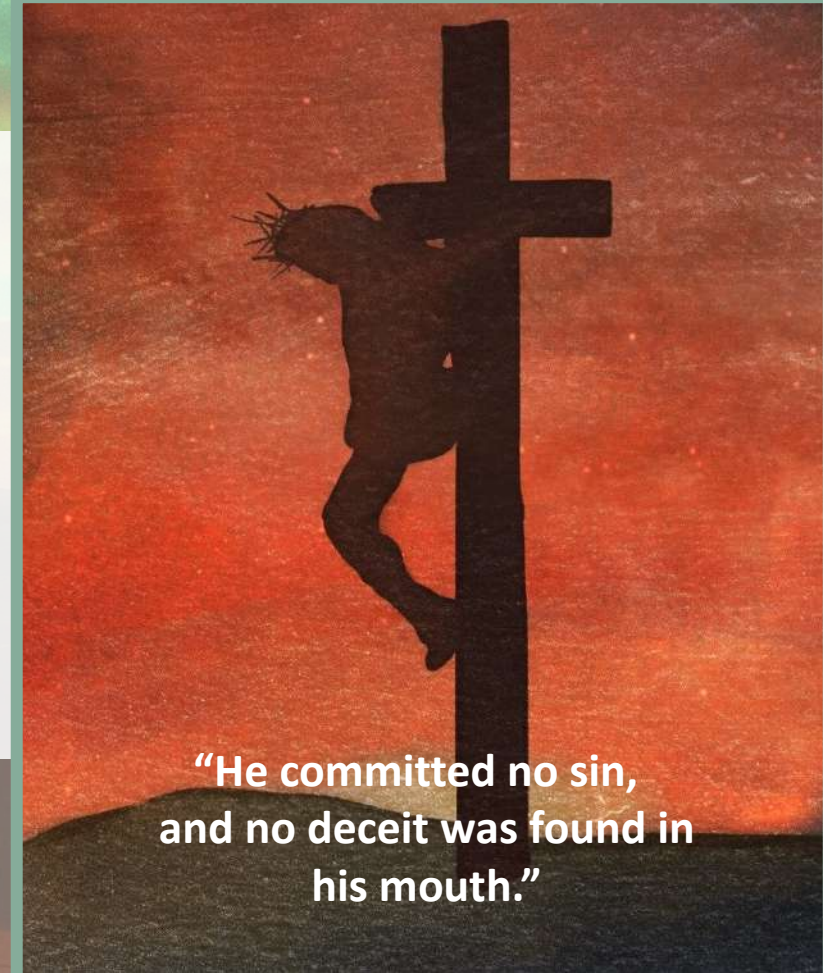
Up and Down - Genesis 39

GOING DEEPER

Joseph must have felt as if he was being punished for his faithfulness.

Have you ever felt a sense of injustice, believing that you are doing your best to behave correctly, only to have someone spread lies about you? Look at **1 Peter 2 : 19-24** and talk about it.

Jesus continued in obedience through hardship. Where else might you have seen Joseph as a 'type' of Jesus in this chapter?



**“He committed no sin,
and no deceit was found in
his mouth.”**

JOSEPH

Up and Down - Genesis 39

LISTEN | PRAY

LISTEN

CHRIS
TOMLIN:
SOVEREIGN



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KaO8U70M9Hs>

PRAY

As you finish, pray that you would be able to know that 'the Lord is with you' as you go through tough times.

Specifically pray for each other if any of you are struggling with holding on to this at the moment.

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God Knows – Genesis 40 & 41

BIBLE STUDY



STARTER:

If a non-believer asked you how you continue to have faith in God even when your prayers aren't answered, what would you answer?

Read Genesis 40 & 41

Note: these are long chapters! It may be a good idea to ask your group to read them in advance of coming to the session.

Alternatively, you could divide them up into parts for different people to read to maintain interest. Whatever you decide you do need to be aware this will take a little while!



JOSEPH

God Knows – Genesis 40 & 41

BIBLE STUDY



- In **Genesis 40 : 14-15**, Joseph asks the cupbearer to remember him when he is himself freed. As he expectantly waits for God's deliverance, what do you think Joseph is anticipating? As **verse 23** tells us, however, the cupbearer forgot him.
 - Has it ever happened to you that you have interpreted something as an answer to prayer - with all the doors opening - only to have it not work out?
 - What might we learn from Joseph's story about how God operates differently from us? (See **Isaiah 55 :8**).
- Just as in **chapter 39**, Joseph is seemingly overlooked by God. In **chapter 41 : 12**, he is simply described as 'a servant of the captain of the guard' – when he had previously overseen the whole household.
 - Have you known God to bring you low spiritually, only to look back later and realise it was an opportunity for spiritual growth?



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God Knows – Genesis 40 & 41

BIBLE STUDY



- We have already talked a little about dreams and their significance when we looked at Joseph's dreams in **Genesis 37**. Several years later, Joseph understands dreams from a more mature perspective (**see 40 : 8**).
 - Have you experienced a similar realisation of God as the great choreographer working behind the scenes of your life?
- The rollercoaster continues and Joseph is finally summoned by Pharaoh (**41 : 14**).
 - What does the Bible repeatedly reassure us when it feels as if God has forgotten us? (Look back at **chapter 39 : 2,3,21,23** to see examples in this particular story).
 - What other promises do you hold on to when life feels desperately hard?



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God Knows – Genesis 40 & 41

GOING DEEPER

- Look at **1 Peter 5 : 6**. What does it mean for us to walk in trust? Can you think of practical examples?
- In what ways do you see Joseph as a type of Jesus in this week's story? When did Jesus walk in trust?



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God Knows – Genesis 40 & 41

LISTEN | PRAY

LISTEN

**LAUREN
DAIGLE:
TRUST IN YOU**



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n_aVFVveJNs

PRAY

Ask God to help you to
continue to learn to trust him
with what is going
on in your life.

JOSEPH

Hidden favour – Genesis 42

BIBLE STUDY



STARTER:

Think about crossroads moments in your life, which have changed its direction.

Today's chapter is a 'crossroads' moment in Joseph's life. Many years have passed since he last saw his brothers. Then circumstances interweave with God's overseeing of events to bring about a meeting between them.

Read Genesis 42

(If it has worked well for your group to read these passages in dramatized parts, you could do so here)

- Look at **verse 6**. What do you think was going through Joseph's mind as he recognised his brothers?
- Look at **Gen 37 :7**. How did his dream from **chapter 37** come true before Joseph's eyes?
- Remember the second dream? (**Gen 37 : 9**). Do you think this may have influenced what Joseph asked of his brothers? (**v12 & v20**).



JOSEPH

Hidden favour – Genesis 42

BIBLE STUDY



- Does it surprise you that Joseph was so harsh with the brothers he had not seen for about 20 years? When did they last see each other – what were the circumstances? (**Gen 37: 28**).
- Do you think we see ways in this chapter that Joseph had it in mind to forgive his brothers?
- In **verse 21**, we are given a detail missing from what happened in **chapter 37**.
 - What did the brothers confess that has not been revealed to the reader before?
 - Why do you think they were remembering this episode from their past, since they did not recognise Joseph?
- What do you think it might have meant to Joseph to hear them talking about this painful episode in the way they did?
- How did Jacob and the brothers react to the returned silver? Why had Joseph returned it?



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Hidden favour – Genesis 42

GOING DEEPER

- One commentary says ‘Joseph’s brothers were trapped by their past’.
- Look at **Matthew 7 : 2** and **Galatians 6:7**.
- What do these verses teach us about the consequences of our actions? Can you think of any examples where this has been shown to be true – in the news or in our personal lives?
- We have been thinking about how Joseph is a ‘type’ of Jesus. Can you see places here where Joseph and Jesus walk similar paths?



JOSEPH

Hidden favour – Genesis 42

LISTEN | PRAY

LISTEN

AUDREY
ASSAD :

IT IS WELL
WITH MY
SOUL



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zY5o9mP22V0>

PRAY

Thank God that he delights to redeem situations that appear hopeless and commit any such situations in your lives to him today in trust.

JOSEPH

The long road of reconciliation – Genesis 43

BIBLE STUDY



STARTER:

What are some of the ways God uses to soften hard hearts?

Read: Genesis 43

- Look at **verse 2**. How do you think God was using the ongoing situation to speak to Jacob the patriarch? In your experience, when life gets very tough, does it cause you to doubt God?
- Jacob was a follower of God, with personal experience of God's leading and forgiveness. He almost certainly prayed for the famine to end, but God didn't answer.
 - What might we learn from this chapter about why God sometimes says no to our prayers?
 - Do you have experience of God seeming to ignore your prayers, only to look back and see he had another plan?



JOSEPH

The long road of reconciliation – Genesis 43

BIBLE STUDY



- Talk about the transformation of Judah from **Gen 37 : 27 (and chapter 38)** to the man who offers to act as a guarantee for Benjamin's safety in **verses 8-10**.
 - What do you think caused the softening of Judah's hard heart?
- Look at Jacob's approach in **verse 14** – 'If I am bereaved, I am bereaved'.
 - Do you have sympathy with Jacob's rather fatalistic approach here? How do you think we ourselves can change from a 'shrug of the shoulders' approach to life, to one that is built on trust in God's promises?
 - Look at **verse 23**. What is interesting about the steward's words as he talks to these Israelites, followers of the one true God?

*"It takes a deep
commitment to change
and an even deeper
commitment to grow."*

As we look back over this chapter, where do you think Joseph may have noticed the biggest change in the brothers who sold him into slavery?

JOSEPH

The long road of reconciliation – Genesis 43

GOING DEEPER

In **verse 16**, we understand with our Western eyes that Joseph is simply inviting his brothers for a meal. But far more than that, this hospitality is an invitation to relationship.

Read **Luke 19 : 1-10** to see the impact it had on a New Testament seeker, and **Revelation 3 : 20** to understand the significance of Jesus' desire for us.

Where else do we see Joseph as a 'type' of Jesus here? Think about how grace is shown in today's story, for example.

When are the times when you feel God's love the most – when you're praying, serving him, reading the Bible, or during hard times? Why do you think this is true?



JOSEPH

The long road of reconciliation – Genesis 43

LISTEN | PRAY

LISTEN

FORGIVENESS

Matthew West



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h1Lu5udXEZI>

PRAY

Ask God to help your faith not to be 'like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind' (**James 1 : 6**), but to learn to stand firm as you face up to many and varied situations in life.

JOSEPH

I am Joseph - Genesis 44 & 45

BIBLE STUDY



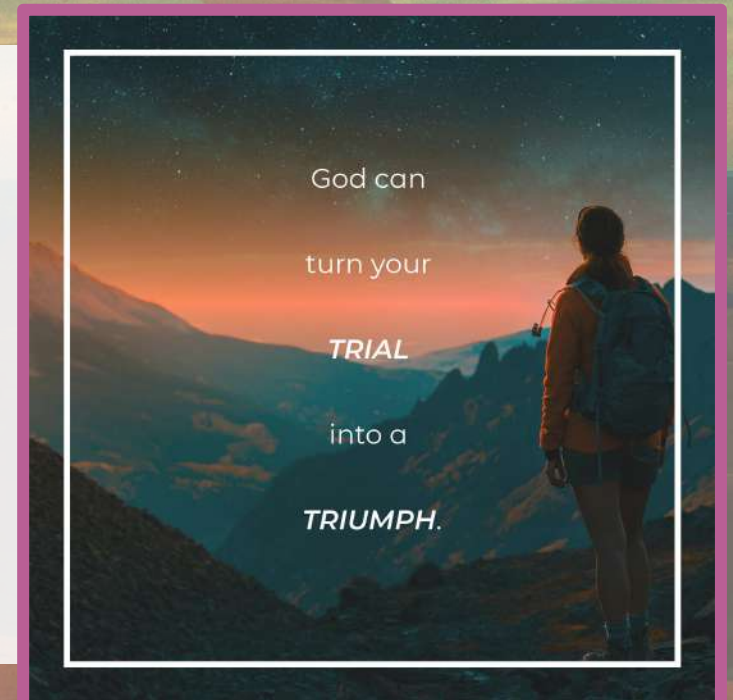
STARTER:

This is a starter and a finisher as we come to the end of our series....so you can decide when you spend time thinking about it in your group today.

What do you think you have come to appreciate most about God through the story of Joseph?

Read: Genesis 44: 1-21

- Do you think Joseph's brothers needed to be tested? Why?
- Can you think of other places in the Bible where God works through testing?
 - Why do we think he uses testing as a means to help our faith to grow?
Look at 1 Peter 1 : 6-7.
 - What are some practices that mean we pass our tests instead of failing them?



JOSEPH

I am Joseph – Genesis 44 & 45

BIBLE STUDY



Read: Genesis 44: 22-30

- We already know the details of this story from earlier in the book of Genesis.
 - Why do you think it is included again here?
 - What do you think we (and Joseph) learn about Judah from this story?



Read: Genesis 45: 1-15

- Looking at **verses 5-8**, how does Joseph bring God into the story of what has happened to him?
- Flick back through the chapters we have looked at in the last few weeks (**from chapter 37**). Think not only about the events going on in today's chapter but about the places where God has been mentioned in previous chapters.
 - Why is Joseph able to talk about God in these verses in the way he does, instead of feeling bitter for the years that have been lost?

JOSEPH

I am Joseph – Genesis 44 & 45

BIBLE STUDY



Read: Genesis 45: 25-28

Think about Jacob.

- He begins the final episode in the story of Joseph by asking the brothers to go and buy food **(at the start of chapters 42 and 43)**. Now, at the end of **chapter 45**, we see him preparing to be reunited with the son who he thought had been lost.
- Jacob is known as one of the great patriarchs of the Old Testament **(Abraham, Isaac and Jacob)**. When you consider his role in the story of Joseph, and his treatment of various members of his family, does this astonish you? What does it teach us about our never-changing God?



JOSEPH

I am Joseph - Genesis 44 & 45

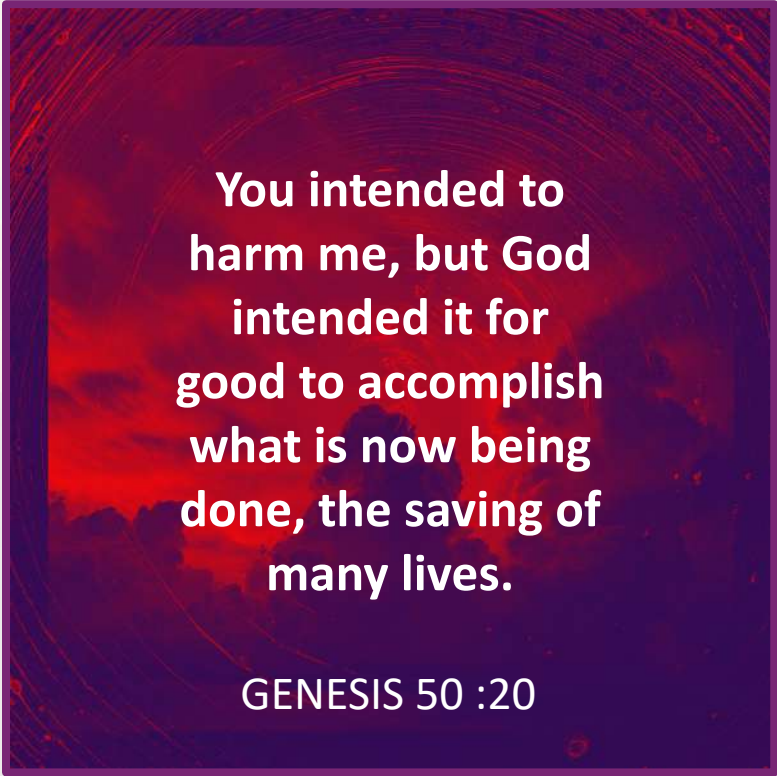
GOING DEEPER

Look forward to **Genesis 50 : 20**. This verse is a reminder of the great redemption plan of our God. Could you explain the gospel plan of redemption in simple language if someone asked you to do so?

Are you able to look back over your life and see places where God has **'redeemed'** that which seemed lost? How does he work redemptively in the lives of us as believers?

Talk about how sharing our testimony can be a blessing to others who are trapped in their past.

Thinking about redemption, how is Joseph a picture of Jesus in this part of the story?



**You intended to
harm me, but God
intended it for
good to accomplish
what is now being
done, the saving of
many lives.**

GENESIS 50 :20

JOSEPH

I am Joseph – Genesis 44 & 45

LISTEN | PRAY

LISTEN

I AM REDEEMED
Big Daddy Weave



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VzGAYNKDyIU>

PRAY

Thank God for his amazing plan of redemption that we see throughout Scripture, pointing us towards Jesus. Thank God for what Jesus has done to give us freedom from our past.