

Small Group Guide: Feast with the Family

The Story of Joseph: Seeing the Bigger Picture – Week 9

Scripture: Genesis 43:19-34

Opening Prayer

Begin your group time with prayer, asking God to open hearts and minds to what He wants to reveal through this study. Pray for vulnerability, honesty, and grace as you discuss together.

Icebreaker

Share a time when you felt completely out of control of what happened next. How did you respond in that moment?

Key Takeaways

1. Fear and Uncertainty Are Universal

Joseph's brothers faced famine, pressure, and an uncertain future. Joseph himself had experienced decades of being tossed around by circumstances beyond his control.

2. Maturity Means Anchoring Emotions to God

Joseph didn't deny his emotions when he saw Benjamin—he wept. But he didn't let emotion become his god; he brought his emotions TO God.

3. God Brings Things to Light to Heal, Not Destroy

When Joseph seated his brothers in birth order, they were exposed—but instead of judgment, they received grace and provision.

Discussion Questions

Section 1: Standing in Uncertainty

1. What does it feel like to stand in a moment where you are completely out of control of what happens next? Can you relate to Joseph's brothers' fear?
2. Joseph's brothers took a defensive posture, trying to explain themselves before being accused. When have you done something similar? What drove that response?
3. Read Genesis 43:23. The steward says, "Peace to you, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has put treasure in your sacks." How does this speak to God's provision even in confusing circumstances?

Section 2: Vulnerability and Emotion

4. Joseph's brothers put themselves in a vulnerable position—preparing gifts, bowing, answering questions. What does vulnerability look like in your relationship with God? With others?
5. The sermon says, "Don't deny the emotion, anchor it to God." What's the difference between those two approaches? Which one do you tend toward?
6. Joseph wept when he saw Benjamin. Why is it significant that he stepped away to weep rather than suppressing or performing? What does this teach us about emotional health?

Section 3: Old Pain and Healing

7. The guide says, "There's a difference between being over it, or just away from it." What does that statement mean to you? Is there something in your life you've been away from but not truly over?
8. Why does God sometimes reintroduce painful memories? How can we discern whether God is bringing something up to heal us or whether we're just ruminating?
9. Read Genesis 43:31-34. Joseph controlled himself, washed his face, and came back out. What does this teach us about the balance between feeling deeply and walking forward wisely?

Section 4: The Bigger Picture

10. Joseph seated his brothers in birth order—they were "seen" and likely terrified. But then grace showed up. When have you experienced being fully known and still fully loved?
11. The sermon concludes: "God didn't send Joseph to Egypt to get even with his brothers. He sent Joseph ahead to keep them alive." How does this reframe suffering or hardship you've experienced?
12. How does this story challenge the way you view God's purposes in difficult seasons?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge:

Choose one of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: Anchor Your Emotions to God

When strong emotions arise this week, don't suppress them or let them control you. Instead, bring them to God in prayer, journaling, or worship. Write down what you feel and what God might be saying to you through it.

Option 2: Practice Vulnerability

Identify one relationship where you've been defensive or guarded. Take a step toward vulnerability—whether that's an honest conversation, an apology, or simply sharing what you're really feeling.

Option 3: Seek Healing, Not Just Distance

Is there a painful memory or situation you've been avoiding? Ask God if He wants to bring healing to it. Consider talking to a trusted friend, counselor, or pastor about it.

Option 4: Look for the Bigger Picture

Reflect on a current difficulty. Ask God, "What might You be doing in this that I can't see yet?" Write down your thoughts and revisit them in a month.

Reflection Questions for the Week

- Where am I trying to control outcomes instead of trusting God?
 - What emotions am I suppressing that need to be brought to God?
 - How has God shown me grace when I deserved judgment?
 - What "bigger picture" might God be painting in my current circumstances?
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Closing Prayer

Close by praying for one another's specific needs that came up during discussion. Pray for:

- Courage to be vulnerable
- Wisdom to anchor emotions to God
- Healing in areas of old pain

- Faith to trust God's bigger picture