

Small Group Guide: Joseph's Final Assessment

Series: The Story of Joseph: Seeing the Bigger Picture (Week 19)

Scripture: Genesis 50

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker (10 minutes)

Icebreaker Question:

Share about a time when something difficult or disappointing happened in your life, but looking back now, you can see how God used it for good or growth.

Review & Context (5 minutes)

Briefly recap Joseph's journey:

- Sold into slavery by his brothers at age 17
- Served faithfully in Potiphar's house
- Falsely accused and imprisoned
- Forgotten in prison for years
- Elevated to second-in-command in Egypt
- Reunited with his family and saved them from famine

Key Question: After all Joseph endured, how would you have felt returning to Egypt after burying your father in Canaan?

Discussion Questions (30-40 minutes)

Section 1: God's Unfolding Promises

Read Genesis 50:7-8, 13

1. Why was it significant that Joseph buried his father Jacob in Canaan rather than Egypt? What does this tell us about Joseph's faith in God's promises?
2. The sermon noted: "Israel's first foothold in the promised land was not a house. It was a grave." What does this teach us about how God fulfills His promises over time rather than instantly?
3. Joseph was away from Canaan for 39 years. How do you think he maintained faith in God's promises during such a long exile?

Section 2: Seeing Evil Transformed into Good

Read Genesis 50:15-21

4. Why do you think Joseph's brothers were still afraid of him after all these years? What does this reveal about guilt and the difficulty of accepting forgiveness?
5. Joseph says in verse 20: "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good." How does this statement show Joseph's spiritual maturity and perspective?
6. What is the difference between saying "God allowed it" versus "God meant it for good"? How does this distinction affect how we view our own difficulties?
7. Joseph comforted his brothers and spoke kindly to them. How does this demonstrate true forgiveness? What can we learn from his response?

Section 3: Trusting God's Timing

Read Genesis 50:24-26

8. Joseph died in Egypt, not in the Promised Land. He never saw the complete fulfillment of God's promises. How do you think he felt about this? What does this teach us about faith?
9. Joseph made his family promise to carry his bones back to Canaan when God eventually brought them there (which happened 400 years later in Exodus). What does this final act reveal about Joseph's faith?
10. The sermon states: "God's work isn't overnight but over time." How does our culture's demand for instant results conflict with the way God often works? Share an example from your own life.

Key Takeaways (10 minutes)

Discuss which of these truths resonates most with your group:

- **God builds character through difficulty** - Humility in the pit, faithfulness in Potiphar's house, endurance in prison, wisdom through delay
- **God's blessing extends beyond individuals** - His promises continue through generations
- **God redeems what others ruin** - What people mean for evil, God can use for good
- **Trusting God doesn't require seeing the full picture** - Joseph never saw all of God's promises fulfilled, but he trusted anyway

Practical Application (15 minutes)

Personal Reflection:

Take 2-3 minutes of silence for each person to consider:

- What situation in my life right now feels like "evil" or difficulty?
- Am I able to trust that God might be building something I cannot yet see?
- Is there someone I need to forgive or show kindness to, even though they've wronged me?

Group Sharing:

1. **Identify your "pit"** - What current struggle feels like Joseph's pit, prison, or exile? Share if you're comfortable.
2. **Look for God's faithfulness** - Where have you seen God at work, even in small ways, during this difficult season?
3. **Practice Joseph's perspective** - Is there a past hurt you've been holding onto? How might you begin to see it through Joseph's lens: "They meant evil, but God meant it for good"?

This Week's Challenge:

Choose one of the following:

Option 1: Journal each day this week about one way you see God working in a difficult situation, even if it's just building your character.

Option 2: Reach out to someone who has wronged you and extend kindness or forgiveness, following Joseph's example.

Option 3: Memorize Genesis 50:20 and pray it over your current circumstances each morning.

Option 4: Share your testimony with someone about a time God turned something meant for evil into something good.

Connection to the Gospel (5 minutes)

Read together: The sermon reminds us that "at the cross, men meant evil against Jesus; God meant it for salvation."

Discuss:

- How does Joseph's story point us to Jesus?
 - How does the cross give us confidence that God can redeem any situation?
 - What comfort does it bring to know that our God specializes in bringing life out of death and good out of evil?
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Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Pray together:

- Thank God for His faithfulness through difficult seasons
- Ask for grace to trust Him when we cannot see the bigger picture
- Pray for anyone in the group walking through a "pit" or "prison" season
- Ask God to help you forgive others as Joseph forgave his brothers