



JOSEPH

A 7-WEEK SERIES

CONTENTS



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INTRO TO JOSEPH

Joseph is a story of epic proportion. It's a story of a boy becoming a man. Of dreams coming true in the most unexpected ways.

Over the next 50 days, we'll walk with Joseph through the mess of a dysfunctional family, through the pain of adversity and through the challenge of temptation. We'll root for Joseph through discouragement and delay. We'll marvel at God plucking Joseph out of the pit and into prosperity. We'll be humbled by Joseph's heart to forgive. And in the end, we'll stand as witnesses of what God can do through a life faithful to the end.



**“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

We have so much to learn from this rotten-kid-in-a-fancy-coat turned respected leader of Egypt. And much more to learn about a God who orchestrates the lives of broken people to write a beautiful masterpiece.

THE GROUP **EXPERIENCE**





We believe you would enjoy this upcoming series even better in a group setting. That's why we've developed this guidebook and instructions for gathering a group.

It's really simple, and we have all the tools and tips to make it easy for you.

In a group setting, you will have the chance to dive deeper into the study topics by looking directly at Scripture, hearing stories from real people in our church family and a short teaching from Lead Pastor Steve Poe. Together, you'll answer questions and discuss the content further.

We believe the group experience will greatly enrich the Joseph teaching series for you and strongly encourage you to give it a try.

HOW TO GATHER A GROUP

All of us have faced the challenges we address in this series. Joseph is a great opportunity to invite your friends, family, coworkers and neighbors to do a seven-week Bible study with you in your home. The topics covered from the life of Joseph are relevant and will resonate with most anyone you might invite.

Take a look at the Circles of Life diagram on the next page and write the names of two or three people you know — especially people who do not know Christ. Commit to pray for God’s guidance and an opportunity to invite them.

If your group starts with just a few people, that’s all right. Include the group in this process of inviting people. The ideal Life Group size is between 10 and 14 adults, but it is fine to start smaller and grow.

FAMILY
(IMMEDIATE OR EXTENDED)

.....
.....
.....

FAMILIAR
(NEIGHBORS, KIDS'
SPORTS TEAMS, SCHOOL,
AND SO FORTH)

.....
.....
.....

FRIENDS

.....
.....
.....

FUN
(GYM, HOBBIES, HANGOUTS)

.....
.....
.....
.....

FIRM
(WORK)

.....
.....
.....
.....

HOW TO HOST A GROUP

Hosting a group is as simple as opening your home, reading questions aloud and playing a DVD. After your first meeting, you'll find your group will fall into a familiar rhythm. Here are a few tips for you as you get ready for your first meeting:

POUR ON THE HOSPITALITY

Keep in mind that for many people, the thought of going to someone's house to have a spiritual conversation can be intimidating. It can trigger all kinds of insecurities. So, even little things, from your email communication to the way you greet them at the door, will go a long way toward easing their fears.

PROVIDE NAMETAGS

If the group does not know each other, nametags are a great way to accelerate connection within the group.

START WITH INTRODUCTIONS

Go around the circle and have everyone introduce themselves. A good introductory tool is to have everyone use the acronym FORD to introduce themselves. FORD stands for telling a little bit about Family, Occupation, Recreation and Dreams.

USE THE LIFE GROUP GROUND RULES

The key to getting off on the right foot is to appropriately discuss and set expectations. Start the study by reading through the Life Group Ground Rules on page 205.

For more information about the way we encourage folks to facilitate their groups, check out the Frequently Asked Questions on page 200.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDEBOOK

You'll see in the Table of Contents that in addition to the introductory information, you have the 50-Day Bible Study Challenge, sessions and appendices. Just take the time in advance of your first meeting to get familiar with the whole thing.

Use the guidebook as a guide, not a straitjacket. If the group responds to the lesson in an unexpected but honest way, go with that. If you think of a better question than the next one in the lesson, ask it. Take to heart the insights included in the Frequently Asked Questions section.

If you approach each meeting with prayer and a little preparation, you will find this guidebook easy to use.

Before each week, take the time to review that week's session. Make notes that will help you as you facilitate your group.

Here is how each session is broken down:

OPENING SCENE

Getting to know your group is important in creating a strong foundation and building trust. Each week of the 50-Day Bible Study Challenge starts with a personal challenge on Sunday. You'll begin each meeting by sharing insights gained as you processed that day's questions.

ACT 1: WATCH THE DVD

After your icebreaker, you will be prompted to start your DVD to hear a teaching on Joseph, along with an impactful story.

There is power in a story. Through story, we learn we are not alone in our struggles. You will listen to someone from Northview with a powerful story of how God worked in their life through a difficult experience.

Along with the story, there is a brief teaching about Joseph. Use the fill-in-the-blank notes section as you follow along.

ACT 2: GROUP DISCUSSION

After the DVD, you'll then have an opportunity to discuss the content using the questions provided.

CLOSING CREDITS: WEEKLY CHALLENGE

As you wrap up your group time, take a minute to look ahead together to the next week's personal challenge.

We encourage you to end your group time in prayer. You can go around the circle and take prayer requests. Use the Prayer Request Log on page 206 to record your group's requests.

INTRO TO THE 50-DAY BIBLE STUDY CHALLENGE

It all points to Jesus: every story, every promise, every prophecy, every command. When we open our Bibles and begin to read, we are reading our salvation story. A story that begins at the beginning of time and continues in our lives today.

The story of Joseph is no exception. You'll hear this amazing story unfold through our Spiritual Growth Campaign. But we also want to invite you to dive into the story for yourself.

You hear all the time at Northview the importance of reading the Bible. But, when it comes down to it, you may not know where to start or how to study it.

Over the next 50 days, we want to help remove obstacles to studying your Bible. We believe if you'll commit to show up and do the work, you will begin to see how God can speak directly into your life through His Word.

SIMPLE FORMAT

We have designed this study of Joseph to be simple and empowering. Some of it will be guided or include teaching to illuminate key points in the story, but our goal is to give you the tools to study for yourself.

We hope at the end of these 50 days, you will see how a few simple study methods can be applied to any Scripture to help it come alive and make sense to you.

The amazing thing about studying Scripture is when you *commit to read it* and faithfully show up to do the work, Jesus will meet you there. *He is anxious to meet you there.* So, all you have to do is show up, open your Bible and prepare your heart to hear from God.

In fact, before you get started, let's pray this prayer together:

"Dear God, I want to be a student of your Word. I want to hear what you want to say in my life through the story of Joseph. Give me your wisdom and your eyes to see the truth of the Scripture. I pray against any discouragement or doubt that could creep in as I commit to study the Bible over the next 50 days. Amen."



STUDY FORMAT

This study in Genesis of the story of Joseph is guided with small bits of teaching and questions. Each week is broken down into six days of study, along with a “Prepare For The Weekend” section, designed to take about 10 to 15 minutes each day.

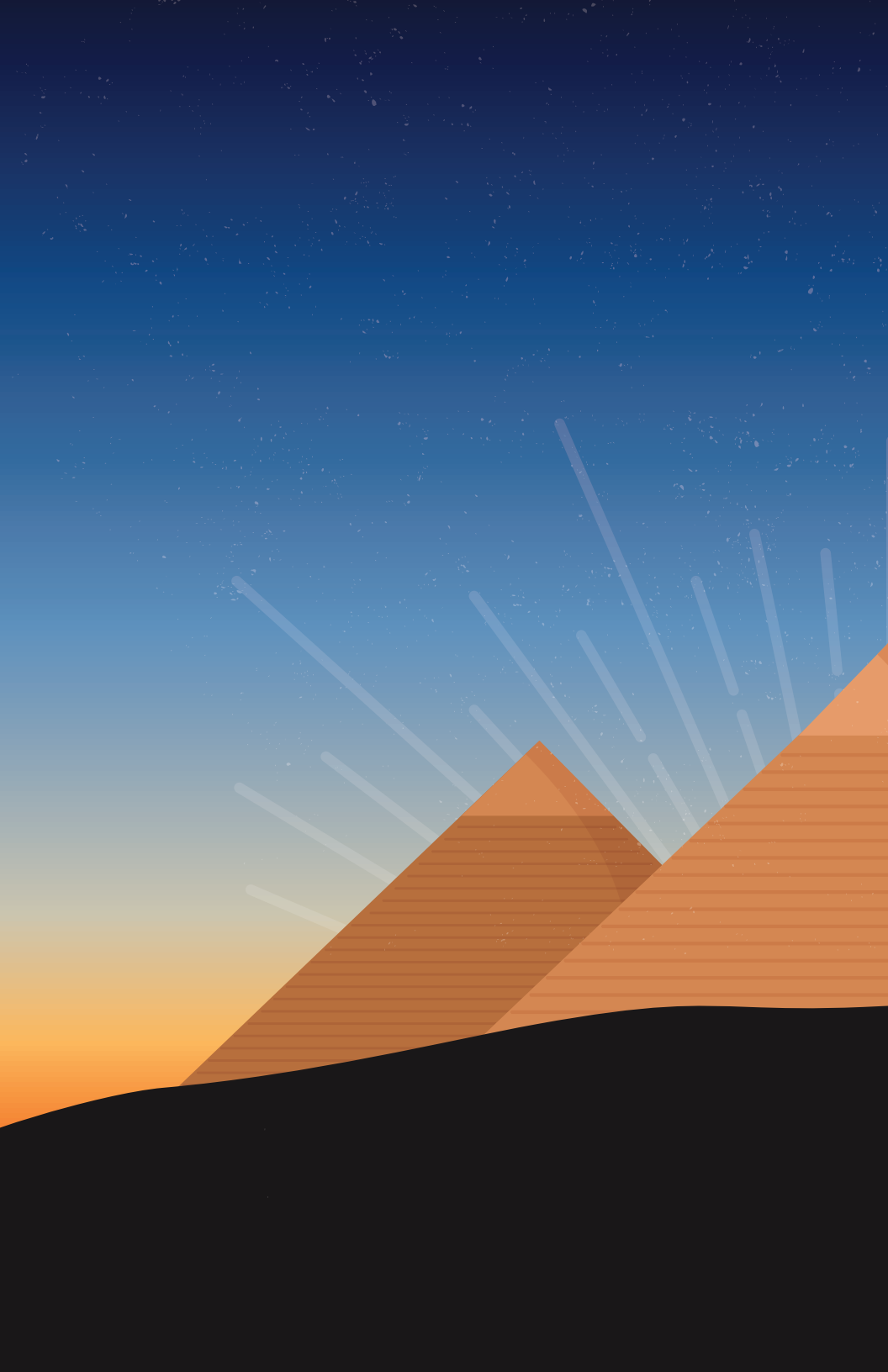


Over 50 days of study, you will read all 14 chapters in the story of Joseph, Genesis 37-50. Each day, after you've read the portion of Scripture, there will be questions or further reading to help expound on different points or point you to other places in Scripture significant to the story.

NORTHVIEW CHURCH BIBLE STUDY METHOD

Our questions are designed to help you look at three components of Bible study. You hear Pastor Steve often refer to the “upper story” and the “lower story.” The upper story is God’s role in the story and the lower story is what’s happening with the characters. We’re going to look at those two perspectives in the story of Joseph. The third component you’re invited to consider is how the Scripture relates to your story.

Each day the questions are different, but they’re all questions considering one of these three perspectives. **This is a method of Bible study you can apply to any Scripture you read.**



The graphic features a dark blue background with a subtle starry pattern. In the lower half, there are stylized orange and black mountain-like shapes. Several thin, light blue lines radiate upwards from the orange shapes, resembling sunbeams or light rays. The text is centered in the upper half of the image.

50-DAY
**BIBLE STUDY
CHALLENGE**

JOSEPH: THE BACKSTORY

Before we start reading the story, it's always helpful to get a little background information to help develop context for the characters in the story.

Joseph, our lead character, is the son of Jacob.

If we track back a bit further, we learn Jacob is the son of Isaac. And Isaac was the son of Abraham.

Abraham was chosen by God to become the father of many nations. We find God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 22:17:

"I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore."

Abraham was 100 years old and his wife was 90 when they were blessed with their one and only son, Isaac.

Hard to believe that God could make descendants as numerous as sand with only one son. But that's just what God did. *That's just what God does.*

Isaac and his wife had twins: Jacob and Esau. Esau was technically the firstborn, but Jacob tricked his father into giving him his brother's blessing. If you have time, read Jacob and Esau's story in Genesis 27.

So Jacob's life, from the beginning, was wrapped up in struggle with others. But he has finally come to a place in life where he can acknowledge the importance of being blessed by God. The God of his forefathers, Isaac and Abraham, has finally become his God, too.

"Then come, let us go up to Bethel, where I will build an altar to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and who has been with me wherever I have gone." Genesis 35:3

This verse is a sneak peak at evidence that Jacob's heart is fully surrendered to God. **Here we see Jacob affirm that God has answered him and has been with him all along.**

Because Jacob has surrendered his heart to God and because he was heir to the promise God gave to Abraham and Isaac, God changed Jacob's name.

"Then the man said, 'Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome.'" Genesis 32:28

God has given Jacob a new name: Israel. Jacob has struggled through life, struggled against men and against God and prevailed. He's a new man and God marks the change by giving him a new name.

Jacob has four wives. (It's complicated.) Rachel is the one he loves the most. She is barren, but God opens her womb and she has two sons: Joseph and Benjamin.

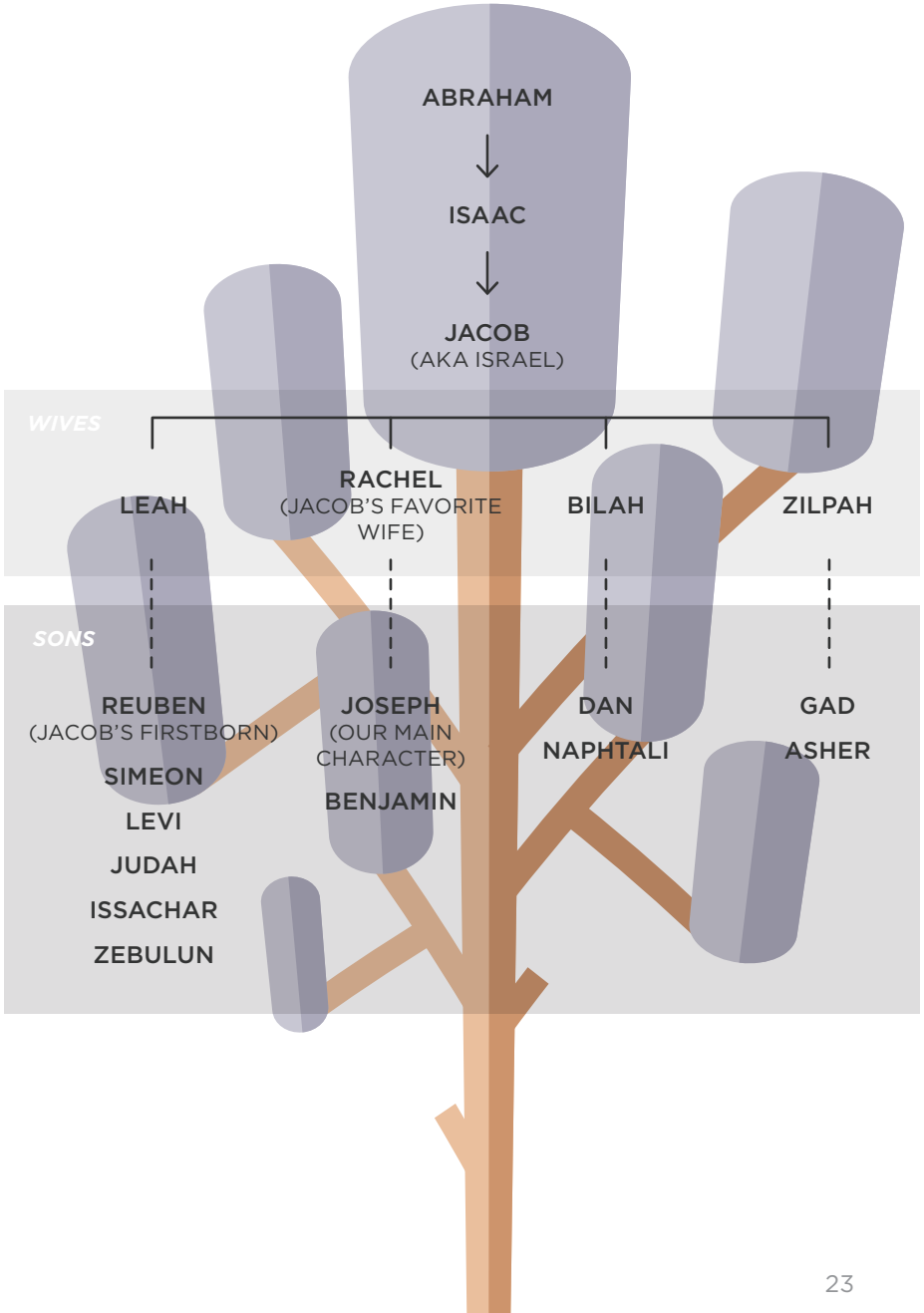
Imagine your favorite wife has been unable to have children for years and finally has a baby! Okay, this may be hard to imagine. But you can understand how Joseph becomes Jacob's favorite son. And why he's so protective of Joseph's little brother, Benjamin, later in the story of Joseph.

From Jacob's four wives, he has 12 sons, who grow and multiply and become known later in the Old Testament as the twelve tribes of Israel. Did you catch that? Jacob (Israel) and his 12 sons. God's chosen people. A people as numerous as the stars. God's promise fulfilled.

So the stage has been set. We understand who Joseph is and why his story is so significant.

Use Jacob's family tree as a visual of the cast of characters in Joseph's story.

JACOB'S FAMILY TREE





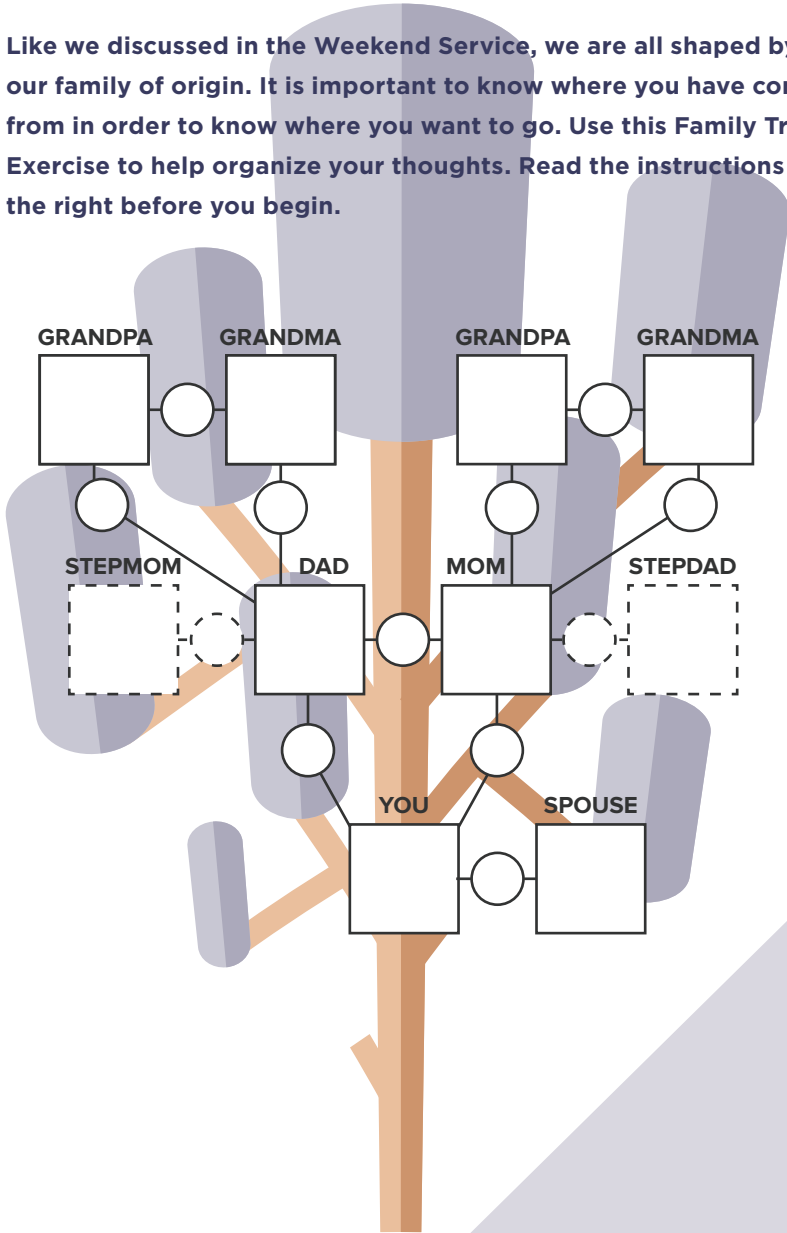


WEEK ONE

GENESIS 37-38



Like we discussed in the Weekend Service, we are all shaped by our family of origin. It is important to know where you have come from in order to know where you want to go. Use this Family Tree Exercise to help organize your thoughts. Read the instructions to the right before you begin.



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Write the names of your family members in the corresponding boxes
2. Write the relationship strength for each relationship in the circle: Scale of 1 to 5 (with 5 being the highest positive relationship strength)
3. Write how long each relationship has lasted in years
4. Write any adjectives that describe the relationship (i.e. compassionate, angry, distant)
5. Write any of the following codes that apply:
ST = Strong Faith
DV = Domestic Violence
AB = Abuse
AD = Addiction
MI = Mental Illness

As you look at your family tree, what things do you want to continue?

As you look at your family tree, what things do you want to leave behind?



In week one of our series, we look at Joseph's dysfunctional family, and that's where the story begins in Scripture, too.

READ GENESIS 37:1-11:

Jacob lived in the land where his father had stayed, the land of Canaan.

2 This is the account of Jacob's family line. Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives, and he brought their father a bad report about them.

3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate robe for him. 4 When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.

5 Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. 6 He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had: 7 We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and

stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it."

8 His brothers said to him, "Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?" And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said.

9 Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. "Listen," he said, "I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me."

10 When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, "What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?" 11 His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind."



In Scripture, sometimes we can clearly see what's going on between the characters, and sometimes we can only speculate based on our own human experiences. In the following lists, write what is clear and also include things you suspect to be true.

What characteristics and emotions do you see in each character?

JACOB:

JOSEPH:

JOSEPH'S
BROTHERS:

Look at the lists you've made of characteristics and emotions.

How did these things create a perfect storm for dysfunction?

What parenting mistakes did Jacob make?

In the weekend message, Pastor Steve addressed how Jacob's passiveness as a father led to much of the trouble with this family. As parents, we have to take an active role in parenting our children, providing discipline and leadership.

Why do you think God chose to use a family like this to tell His story?



READ GENESIS 37:12-28:

Now his brothers had gone to graze their father's flocks near Shechem, 13 and Israel said to Joseph, "As you know, your brothers are grazing the flocks near Shechem. Come, I am going to send you to them."

"Very well," he replied.

14 So he said to him, "Go and see if all is well with your brothers and with the flocks, and bring word back to me." Then he sent him off from the Valley of Hebron.

When Joseph arrived at Shechem, 15 a man found him wandering around in the fields and asked him, "What are you looking for?"

16 He replied, "I'm looking for my brothers. Can you tell me where they are grazing their flocks?"

17 "They have moved on from here," the man answered. "I heard them say, 'Let's go to Dothan.'"

So Joseph went after his brothers and found them near Dothan. 18 But they saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him.

19 "Here comes that dreamer!" they said to each other. 20 "Come now, let's kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we'll see what comes of his dreams."

21 When Reuben heard this, he tried to rescue him from their hands. "Let's not take his life," he said. 22 "Don't shed any blood. Throw him into this cistern here in the wilderness, but don't lay a hand on him." Reuben said this to rescue him from them and take him back to his father.

23 So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe—the ornate robe he was wearing— 24 and they took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern was empty; there was no water in it.

25 As they sat down to eat their meal, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. Their camels were loaded with spices, balm and myrrh, and they were on their way to take them down to Egypt. 26 Judah said to his brothers, "What will we gain if we kill our

brother and cover up his blood?
27 Come, let's sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood." His brothers agreed.

merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt.

28 So when the Midianite

This is where the story starts to get real. Anger, pride and jealousy can cause a person to do things that from the outside seem crazy, but emotions have a way of clouding our judgment. Recall a time when your emotions led you to make a choice you regret.

When Joseph approaches the brothers and they see him a long way off, their first response is to plot his murder. I'm sure this wasn't the first time the brothers had talked about doing this.



In fact, I wonder (a speculation) if part of the reason they went the further distance, from Shechem to Dothan, was to better hide the evidence.

What do you think was going on in the hearts of Reuben and Judah in this part of the story? Why do you think they act the way they do?

“In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry...” Ephesians 4:26

“My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry...” James 1:19

According to these verses, what are God-honoring ways for you to deal with anger in your life?





READ GENESIS 37:29-36:

“When Reuben returned to the cistern and saw that Joseph was not there, he tore his clothes. 30 He went back to his brothers and said, “The boy isn’t there! Where can I turn now?”

31 Then they got Joseph’s robe, slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. 32 They took the ornate robe back to their father and said, “We found this. Examine it to see whether it is your son’s robe.”

33 He recognized it and said, “It is my son’s robe! Some ferocious

animal has devoured him. Joseph has surely been torn to pieces.”

34 Then Jacob tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and mourned for his son many days. 35 All his sons and daughters came to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. “No,” he said, “I will continue to mourn until I join my son in the grave.” So his father wept for him.

36 Meanwhile, the Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh’s officials, the captain of the guard.”

Earlier in Genesis, Reuben made some mistakes that angered his father (Genesis 35:22). He was worried these mistakes would cost him his rights and blessings as Jacob’s firstborn son. Many commentaries say that Reuben’s motivation in saving his brother, while it could have been in part from the heart, was likely in hopes of restoring favor with his father.

In this passage, we also read of the grief of a father who has lost his son. **What does Jacob refuse in verse 35? Where does he say he will go?**

Not much is known about the afterlife at this time, but Sheol was the proper name for where people go after they die. Jacob is saying he will never stop mourning.

It doesn't appear that Jacob turns to God with his grief. At least we don't see that in this passage. But God promises we are not alone when we grieve.

"The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." Psalm 34:18

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God." 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

What promises do you see in these verses regarding how God helps us in our grief?

The chapter ends with an update on Joseph. **To whom is Joseph sold?**



READ GENESIS 38:1-23:

"At that time, Judah left his brothers and went down to stay with a man of Adullam named Hirah. 2 There Judah met the daughter of a Canaanite man named Shua. He married her and made love to her; 3 she became pregnant and gave birth to a son, who was named Er. 4 She conceived again and gave birth to a son and named him Onan. 5 She gave birth to still another son and named him Shelah. It was at Kezib that she gave birth to him.

6 Judah got a wife for Er, his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. 7 But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the LORD's sight; so the LORD put him to death.

8 Then Judah said to Onan, "Sleep with your brother's wife and fulfill your duty to her as a brother-in-law to raise up offspring for your brother." 9 But Onan knew that the child would not be his; so whenever he slept with his brother's wife, he spilled his semen on the ground to keep from providing offspring for his brother. 10 What he did was wicked in the LORD's sight; so the LORD put him to death also.

11 Judah then said to his daughter-

in-law Tamar, "Live as a widow in your father's household until my son Shelah grows up." For he thought, "He may die too, just like his brothers." So Tamar went to live in her father's household.

12 After a long time Judah's wife, the daughter of Shua, died. When Judah had recovered from his grief, he went up to Timnah, to the men who were shearing his sheep, and his friend Hirah the Adullamite went with him.

13 When Tamar was told, "Your father-in-law is on his way to Timnah to shear his sheep," 14 she took off her widow's clothes, covered herself with a veil to disguise herself, and then sat down at the entrance to Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah. For she saw that, though Shelah had now grown up, she had not been given to him as his wife.

15 When Judah saw her, he thought she was a prostitute, for she had covered her face. 16 Not realizing that she was his daughter-in-law, he went over to her by the roadside and said, "Come now, let me sleep with you."



“And what will you give me to sleep with you?” she asked.

17 “I’ll send you a young goat from my flock,” he said.

“Will you give me something as a pledge until you send it?” she asked.

18 He said, “What pledge should I give you?”

“Your seal and its cord, and the staff in your hand,” she answered. So he gave them to her and slept with her, and she became pregnant by him. 19 After she left, she took off her veil and put on her widow’s clothes again.

20 Meanwhile Judah sent the young goat by his friend the Adullamite in order to get his

pledge back from the woman, but he did not find her. 21 He asked the men who lived there, “Where is the shrine prostitute who was beside the road at Enaim?”

“There hasn’t been any shrine prostitute here,” they said. 22 So he went back to Judah and said, “I didn’t find her. Besides, the men who lived there said, ‘There hasn’t been any shrine prostitute here.’”

23 Then Judah said, “Let her keep what she has, or we will become a laughingstock. After all, I did send her this young goat, but you didn’t find her.”

The contents of this chapter are a little bit shocking and are a sudden shift from the story of Joseph. But Judah is an important character in this story, and it’s important to know the details of his family. Tomorrow, we’ll look more at one reason his family is significant. Today, we will look at Judah’s surprising choices.

First, what did Judah do, according to verse 1?

Judah separates himself from his brothers. **Have you ever run from your pain?**

The first choice Judah makes is to leave his brothers. **What was the second choice he made in verse 2?**

Marrying a Canaanite was never celebrated. But together they had three sons. **What does God do to Judah's first two sons?**

What two sins does Judah commit against his daughter-in-law, Tamar (see verses 14 and 16)?

It's clear Judah made a series of poor choices, likely fueled by pain and personal gratification.



READ GENESIS 38:24-30:

“About three months later Judah was told, “Your daughter-in-law Tamar is guilty of prostitution, and as a result she is now pregnant.”

Judah said, “Bring her out and have her burned to death!”

25 As she was being brought out, she sent a message to her father-in-law. “I am pregnant by the man who owns these,” she said. And she added, “See if you recognize whose seal and cord and staff these are.”

26 Judah recognized them and said, “She is more righteous than I, since I wouldn’t give her to my son Shelah.” And he did not sleep with

her again.

27 When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. 28 As she was giving birth, one of them put out his hand; so the midwife took a scarlet thread and tied it on his wrist and said, “This one came out first.” 29 But when he drew back his hand, his brother came out, and she said, “So this is how you have broken out!” And he was named Perez. 30 Then his brother, who had the scarlet thread on his wrist, came out. And he was named Zerah.”

Tamar has taken matters into her own hands. **How does Judah react initially in verse 24? How does he react after the truth is revealed in verse 26?**

Judah’s confession of wrongdoing is a turning point in his life.

Yesterday, we alluded to Judah’s family having significance. Let’s take a closer look at that today. **What are the names of Judah and Tamar’s twin sons?**

READ MATTHEW 1:1-3:

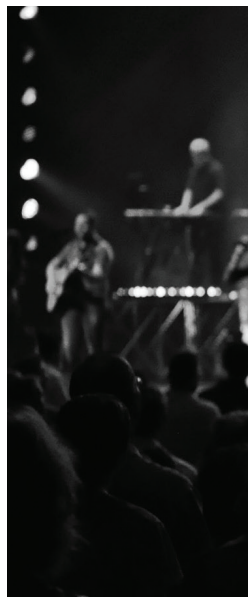
“This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham:

2 Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,

3 Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar, Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram...”

It’s easy to gloss over names in a list like this in the Bible, but this list is the genealogy of Jesus. God chose a man on a path of poor choices, who impregnated his son’s widow in sin, to be in the direct lineage of Jesus, our Messiah. **What does this fact reveal about God?**

Jesus’ entire lineage is made up of imperfect people chosen to carry out his perfect plan. *Kind of like you and me.*



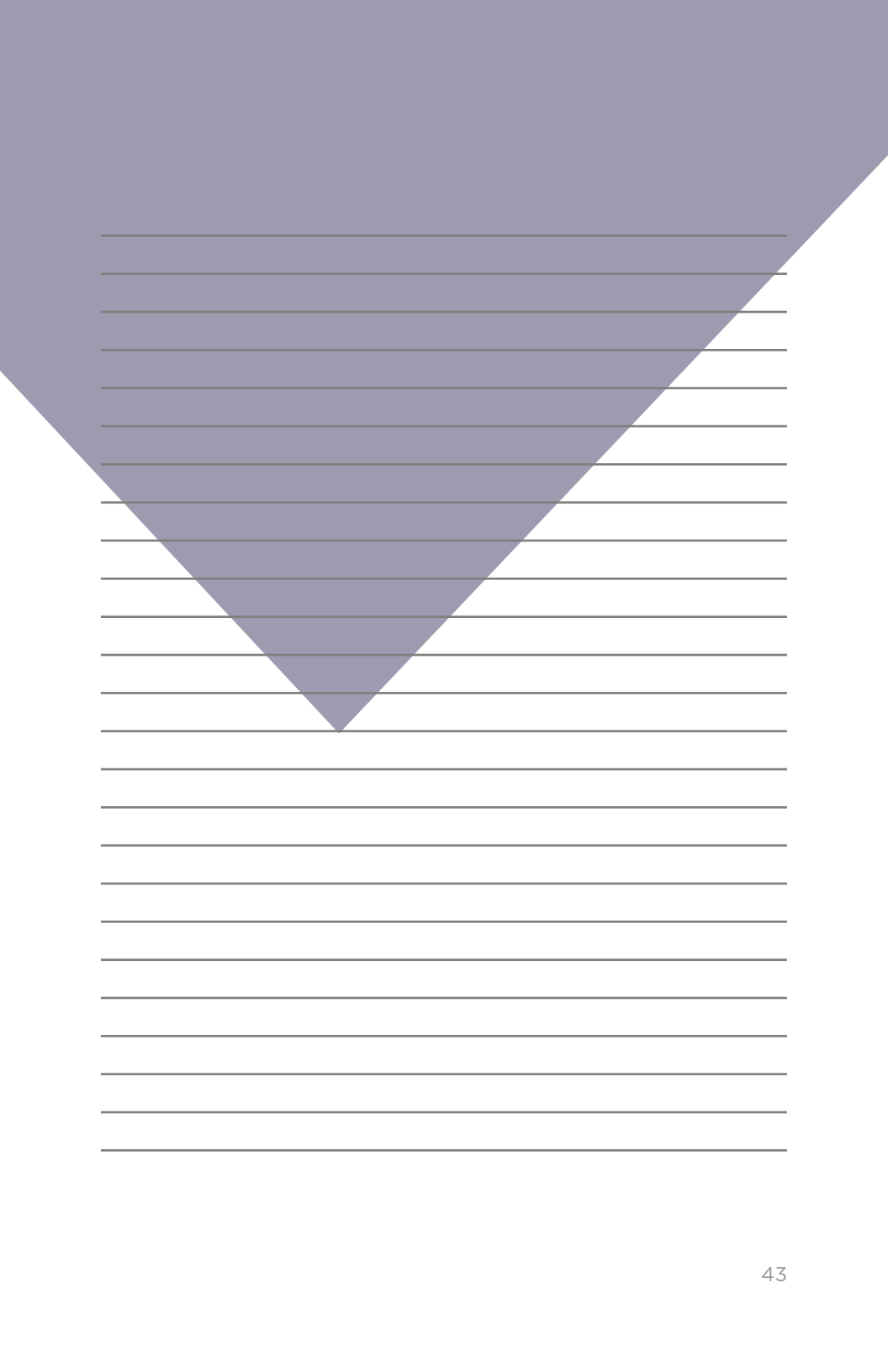


WEEK 1 | DAY 7: SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

PREPARE FOR THE WEEKEND

In this weekend's message, Pastor Steve will talk about the adversity faced by Joseph and how he made the most of the difficulties in his life. It would be helpful to reread a portion of Scripture before you come to church this weekend. **Reread Genesis 37:12-36 and 39:1-5.**









WEEK TWO

GENESIS 39-40



When Joseph is sold into slavery, there is a lot of pain that results. Joseph is betrayed by his brothers, gives up the life he has always dreamed of, and goes from the beloved son to a lowly slave. We often forget, however, the pain and loss that Jacob felt. His son, the first-born son of the woman he loved, has died. We have all experienced pain and loss in some way. Take some time with this exercise to process through the loss of a loved one in your life.

REMEMBERING EXERCISE

As you reflect on someone in your life who has passed away...

What are some of your fondest memories you have of this person? Place something in the space below that reminds you of that person.

How did they shape and influence who you are today?

If you had the opportunity, what would you want to tell them today?



READ GENESIS 39:1-6A:

“Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. Potiphar, an Egyptian who was one of Pharaoh’s officials, the captain of the guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him there.

2 The LORD was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master.

3 When his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD gave him success in everything he did, 4 Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his

attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned. 5 From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the LORD blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the LORD was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field. 6 So Potiphar left everything he had in Joseph’s care; with Joseph in charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate.”

What was the key to Joseph’s success (see verses 2 and 3)?

Joseph was a teenage slave. He had no experience to show or position to help him: only God's favor. **Recall a time when you have seen God's favor in your life or the life of someone you know.**





READ GENESIS 39:6B-18:

Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, 7 and after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, "Come to bed with me!"

8 But he refused. "With me in charge," he told her, "my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. 9 No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" 10 And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.

11 One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside. 12 She caught him by his

cloak and said, "Come to bed with me!" But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house.

13 When she saw that he had left his cloak in her hand and had run out of the house, 14 she called her household servants. "Look," she said to them, "this Hebrew has been brought to us to make sport of us! He came in here to sleep with me, but I screamed. 15 When he heard me scream for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house."

16 She kept his cloak beside her until his master came home. 17 Then she told him this story: "That Hebrew slave you brought us came to me to make sport of me. 18 But as soon as I screamed for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house."

This passage begins with the important technicality that Joseph was a good-looking dude. And while this may seem like a minor detail, still, it's written in the Bible, so it's our job to pay attention. This minor detail in Joseph's life was a detail God used in part for his earning favor in the house of Potiphar, but we see here also how it was a detail that lead him on a course of tremendous grief. *God uses all things.*

Imagine what this temptation must have been like for Joseph. We will revisit this passage again in Pastor Steve's message next weekend on resisting temptation.

How often does Potiphar's wife try to seduce Joseph (see verse 10)?

What two reasons does Joseph give for saying no to this temptation (see verses 8-10)?

Look back at the list you made of characteristics of Joseph on Week 1, Day 2, page 29. **How do you see his character developing? What characteristics would you use to describe Joseph at this point in the story?**



READ GENESIS 39:19-23:

When his master heard the story his wife told him, saying, “This is how your slave treated me,” he burned with anger. 20 Joseph’s master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king’s prisoners were confined.

But while Joseph was there in the prison, 21 the LORD was with him; he showed him kindness

and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. 22 So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there. 23 The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph’s care, because the LORD was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.

Potiphar’s wife is angry, and her anger incites her husband’s anger.

What does Joseph’s integrity cost him?

Joseph went from most-favored-son status to slave, and from head of Potiphar’s household to prisoner. Imagine how Joseph must have felt. If anyone had a reason to get lost in self-pity and discouragement, it was Joseph. Sometimes the most difficult temptation to overcome is the temptation to lose hope and give in to discouragement.

In what areas of your life are you easily discouraged?

What does verse 23 tell us about Joseph’s character again in the story?



READ GENESIS 40:1-8:

Some time later, the cup-bearer and the baker of the king of Egypt offended their master, the king of Egypt. 2 Pharaoh was angry with his two officials, the chief cup-bearer and the chief baker, 3 and put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the same prison where Joseph was confined. 4 The captain of the guard assigned them to Joseph, and he attended them.

After they had been in custody for some time, 5 each of the two men—the cup-bearer and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were being held in prison—had a

dream the same night, and each dream had a meaning of its own.

6 When Joseph came to them the next morning, he saw that they were dejected. 7 So he asked Pharaoh's officials who were in custody with him in his master's house, "Why do you look so sad today?"

8 "We both had dreams, they answered, 'but there is no one to interpret them.'" Then Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me your dreams."

What do these verses tell us about Pharaoh?

Dreams are a significant part of Joseph's story. Not only his own dreams, but now the dreams of his fellow prisoners. During this time and in this location, in the ancient Near East, dreams were viewed as a medium of divine revelation — a message from God (or whatever gods they happened to serve). Often they were interpreted by magicians or wise men. In prison, without access to an interpreter, they can't discover the meaning of their dreams.

But again, Joseph points to God. **How is it that Joseph had such confidence he would be able to interpret the dreams?**



READ GENESIS 40:9-23:

So the chief cup-bearer told Joseph his dream. He said to him, "In my dream I saw a vine in front of me, 10 and on the vine were three branches. As soon as it budded, it blossomed, and its clusters ripened into grapes. 11 Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes, squeezed them into Pharaoh's cup and put the cup in his hand."

12 "This is what it means," Joseph said to him. "The three branches are three days. 13 Within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your position, and you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand, just as you used to do when you were his cup-bearer. 14 But when all goes well with you, remember me and show me kindness; mention me to Pharaoh and get me out of this prison. 15 I was forcibly carried off from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing to deserve being put in a dungeon." 16 When the chief baker saw that Joseph had given a favorable interpretation, he said to Joseph,

"I too had a dream: On my head were three baskets of bread. 17 In the top basket were all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating them out of the basket on my head."

18 "This is what it means," Joseph said. "The three baskets are three days. 19 Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head and impale your body on a pole. And the birds will eat away your flesh." 20 Now the third day was Pharaoh's birthday, and he gave a feast for all his officials. He lifted up the heads of the chief cup-bearer and the chief baker in the presence of his officials: 21 He restored the chief cup-bearer to his position, so that he once again put the cup into Pharaoh's hand— 22 but he impaled the chief baker, just as Joseph had said to them in his interpretation.

23 The chief cup-bearer, however, did not remember Joseph; he forgot him.



Here the two dreams are shared with Joseph. **What similarities do you see between the two dreams? What differences?**

What request does Joseph make to the cupbearer in verse 14? What does the cupbearer do after all the commotion (see verse 23)?

So close. Joseph was so close to freedom, or at least a shot at freedom. But his freedom is delayed once again.



PREPARE FOR THE WEEKEND

In this weekend's message, we will look at the temptations Joseph faced. We'll look specifically at the temptation recorded between Joseph and Potiphar's wife. Even though you've read this passage before, it's a great practice to reread. As you get further into the story and begin to see the bigger picture, looking back at earlier portions of the story may feel different to you as you read them again. **Reread Genesis 39:6-23.**









WEEK THREE

GENESIS 41-42



OVERCOMING TEMPTATION EXERCISE

In the weekend message, Pastor Steve talks about five keys to handling temptation in life. Take some time to process how these principles work in your life:

1

Anticipate it.

In what specific areas of your life are you vulnerable to temptation?

2

Accept responsibility.

When are times you find yourself more susceptible to these temptations?

3

Ask God for help.

Take a moment to reflect on your walk with God. Write down what you think God would want to say to you about this area of temptation in which you are struggling.

4

Admit the struggle to a friend.

Who are some people in your life with whom you could establish an accountability relationship?

5

Avoid tempting situations.

What boundaries should you establish in your life to avoid falling into this temptation?



READ GENESIS 41:1-13:

When two full years had passed, Pharaoh had a dream: He was standing by the Nile, 2 when out of the river there came up seven cows, sleek and fat, and they grazed among the reeds. 3 After them, seven other cows, ugly and gaunt, came up out of the Nile and stood beside those on the riverbank. 4 And the cows that were ugly and gaunt ate up the seven sleek, fat cows. Then Pharaoh woke up.

5 He fell asleep again and had a second dream: Seven heads of grain, healthy and good, were growing on a single stalk. 6 After them, seven other heads of grain sprouted—thin and scorched by the east wind. 7 The thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven healthy, full heads. Then Pharaoh woke up; it had been a dream. 8 In the morning his mind was

troubled, so he sent for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but no one could interpret them for him.

9 Then the chief cup-bearer said to Pharaoh, “Today I am reminded of my shortcomings. 10 Pharaoh was once angry with his servants, and he imprisoned me and the chief baker in the house of the captain of the guard. 11 Each of us had a dream the same night, and each dream had a meaning of its own. 12 Now a young Hebrew was there with us, a servant of the captain of the guard. We told him our dreams, and he interpreted them for us, giving each man the interpretation of his dream. 13 And things turned out exactly as he interpreted them to us: I was restored to my position, and the other man was impaled.”

Again, we see Joseph’s story is centered around dreams.



How much time has passed since the cupbearer forgot about him (see verse 1)?

What event jogs the cupbearer's memory (see verses 8 and 9)?

By this time, Joseph is about 30 years old. He has been in Egypt for around 12 to 13 years. And, after more than two full years in prison, Joseph's story was about to change.

Let's take a look at Pharaoh's two dreams. **First, write out or draw a picture or word picture of Pharaoh's first dream in verses 1-4. Next, do the same for Pharaoh's second dream in verses 5-7.**



READ GENESIS 41:14-36:

So Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and he was quickly brought from the dungeon. When he had shaved and changed his clothes, he came before Pharaoh.

15 Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had a dream, and no one can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it."

16 "I cannot do it," Joseph replied to Pharaoh, "but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires."

17 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "In my dream I was standing on the bank of the Nile, 18 when out of the river there came up seven cows, fat and sleek, and they grazed among the reeds. 19 After them, seven other cows came up—scrawny and very ugly and lean. I had never seen such ugly cows in all the land of Egypt. 20 The lean, ugly cows ate up the seven fat cows that came up first. 21 But even after they ate them, no one could tell that they had done so; they looked just as ugly as before. Then I woke up.

22 "In my dream I saw seven

heads of grain, full and good, growing on a single stalk. 23 After them, seven other heads sprouted—withered and thin and scorched by the east wind. 24 The thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven good heads. I told this to the magicians, but none of them could explain it to me."

25 Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "The dreams of Pharaoh are one and the same. God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do. 26 The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good heads of grain are seven years; it is one and the same dream. 27 The seven lean, ugly cows that came up afterward are seven years, and so are the seven worthless heads of grain scorched by the east wind: They are seven years of famine.

28 "It is just as I said to Pharaoh: God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do. 29 Seven years of great abundance are coming throughout the land of Egypt, 30 but seven years of famine will follow them. Then all the abundance in Egypt will be forgotten, and the famine will ravage the land. 31 The

abundance in the land will not be remembered, because the famine that follows it will be so severe. 32 The reason the dream was given to Pharaoh in two forms is that the matter has been firmly decided by God, and God will do it soon.

33 “And now let Pharaoh look for a discerning and wise man and put him in charge of the land of Egypt. 34 Let Pharaoh appoint commissioners over the land to take a fifth of the harvest of Egypt during the seven years of abundance. 35 They should collect all the food of these good years that are coming and store up the grain under the authority of Pharaoh, to be kept in the cities for food. 36 This food should be held in reserve for the country, to be used during the seven years of famine that will come upon Egypt, so that the country may not be ruined by the famine.”

What does Joseph say to Pharaoh that shows his heart is still surrendered to God (see verses 16 and 32)?

Joseph's response to Pharaoh was immediate. He didn't ask to go away and pray, or for advice, or time to analyze. He trusted God to equip Him. He was confident God would work through him. He had been walking faithfully with God and was ready for this day.

"Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction." 2 Timothy 4:2

What does it mean to be prepared "in season and out of season?"

What character traits do you see in Joseph from this passage (especially his actions in verses 33-36)?

God has given Joseph the wisdom not only to interpret the dreams, but to propose a plan on the spot for how Pharaoh should proceed. *Talk about impressing the boss.*



READ GENESIS 41:37-57:

The plan seemed good to Pharaoh and to all his officials. 38 So Pharaoh asked them, "Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God?"

39 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. 40 You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you."

41 So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt." 42 Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his finger and put it on Joseph's finger. He dressed him in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. 43 He had him ride in a chariot as his second-in-command, and people shouted before him, "Make way!" Thus he put him in charge of the whole land of Egypt.

44 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I am Pharaoh, but without your word no one will lift hand or foot in all Egypt." 45 Pharaoh gave

Joseph the name Zaphenath-Paneah and gave him Asenath daughter of Potiphara, priest of On, to be his wife. And Joseph went throughout the land of Egypt.

46 Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from Pharaoh's presence and traveled throughout Egypt. 47 During the seven years of abundance the land produced plentifully. 48 Joseph collected all the food produced in those seven years of abundance in Egypt and stored it in the cities. In each city he put the food grown in the fields surrounding it. 49 Joseph stored up huge quantities of grain, like the sand of the sea; it was so much that he stopped keeping records because it was beyond measure.

50 Before the years of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph by Asenath daughter of Potiphara, priest of On. 51 Joseph named his firstborn Manasseh and said, "It is because God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father's household." 52 The

second son he named Ephraim and said, "It is because God has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering."

53 The seven years of abundance in Egypt came to an end, 54 and the seven years of famine began, just as Joseph had said. There was famine in all the other lands, but in the whole land of Egypt there was food. 55 When all Egypt began to feel the famine, the people cried to Pharaoh for food. Then

Pharaoh told all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph and do what he tells you."

56 When the famine had spread over the whole country, Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold grain to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe throughout Egypt. 57 And all the world came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe everywhere.

What a difference a day makes. Joseph goes from rags to royalty overnight. Imagine what must have been going through Joseph's mind. He is made second only to the king, given fine clothes, a signet ring, a chariot, the respect of the entire kingdom, and an Egyptian wife, which sealed his integration into royal Egyptian culture.

What is the name and its meaning of Joseph's first son (verse 51)?

What is the name and its meaning of Joseph's second-born son (verse 52)?

What clues do the sons' names and their meanings give you about the condition of Joseph's heart toward his past and his family?



READ GENESIS 42:1-25:

When Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt, he said to his sons, "Why do you just keep looking at each other?" 2 He continued, "I have heard that there is grain in Egypt. Go down there and buy some for us, so that we may live and not die."

3 Then ten of Joseph's brothers went down to buy grain from Egypt. 4 But Jacob did not send Benjamin, Joseph's brother, with the others, because he was afraid that harm might come to him. 5 So Israel's sons were among those who went to buy grain, for there was famine in the land of Canaan also.

6 Now Joseph was the governor of the land, the person who sold grain to all its people. So when Joseph's brothers arrived, they bowed down to him with their faces to the ground. 7 As soon as Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them, but he pretended to be a stranger and spoke harshly to them. "Where do you come from?" he asked.

"From the land of Canaan," they replied, "to buy food."

8 Although Joseph recognized his brothers, they did not recognize him. 9 Then he remembered his dreams about them and said to them, "You are spies! You have come to see where our land is unprotected."

10 "No, my lord," they answered. "Your servants have come to buy food. 11 We are all the sons of one man. Your servants are honest men, not spies."

12 "No!" he said to them. "You have come to see where our land is unprotected."

13 But they replied, "Your servants were twelve brothers, the sons of one man, who lives in the land of Canaan. The youngest is now with our father, and one is no more."

14 Joseph said to them, "It is just as I told you: You are spies! 15 And this is how you will be tested: As surely as Pharaoh lives, you will not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here. 16 Send one of your number to get your brother; the rest of you will be kept in prison, so that your words may be tested to see if you

are telling the truth. If you are not, then as surely as Pharaoh lives, you are spies!" 17 And he put them all in custody for three days.

18 On the third day, Joseph said to them, "Do this and you will live, for I fear God: 19 If you are honest men, let one of your brothers stay here in prison, while the rest of you go and take grain back for your starving households. 20 But you must bring your youngest brother to me, so that your words may be verified and that you may not die." This they proceeded to do.

21 They said to one another, "Surely we are being punished because of our brother. We saw how distressed he was when he pleaded with us for his life, but we

would not listen; that's why this distress has come on us."

22 Reuben replied, "Didn't I tell you not to sin against the boy? But you wouldn't listen! Now we must give an accounting for his blood." 23 They did not realize that Joseph could understand them, since he was using an interpreter.

24 He turned away from them and began to weep, but then came back and spoke to them again. He had Simeon taken from them and bound before their eyes.

25 Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain, to put each man's silver back in his sack, and to give them provisions for their journey. After this was done for them...

The story returns to Jacob and his sons. The scene opens with Jacob barking at his boys, "*Don't just stand there, do something!*" We quickly see there is contempt between the members of the family. Imagine the animosity that has built up in the 20 years that the boys have concealed the truth of what they did to their brother.

Why do you think Jacob refuses to send Benjamin? Remember Benjamin is Joseph's little brother (from the same mother).

Joseph's dream as a 17-year-old kid comes to pass as his brothers kneel before him in verse 6. Often the dreams we dream are realized in ways we could never imagine.

This is such a dramatic point in the story. We see Joseph experience many emotions in this passage. **What was his immediate response to his brothers in verse 7?**

What is his immediate action toward them in verse 17?

After three days, it seems his heart has softened. **What response does Joseph have toward his brothers in verse 24?**

What action does he take toward them in verse 25?



READ GENESIS 42:26-38:

They loaded their grain on their donkeys and left.

27 At the place where they stopped for the night one of them opened his sack to get feed for his donkey, and he saw his silver in the mouth of his sack. 28 "My silver has been returned," he said to his brothers. "Here it is in my sack."

Their hearts sank and they turned to each other trembling and said, "What is this that God has done to us?"

29 When they came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan, they told him all that had happened to them. They said, 30 "The man who is lord over the land spoke harshly to us and treated us as though we were spying on the land. 31 But we said to him, 'We are honest men; we are not spies. 32 We were twelve brothers, sons of one father. One is no more, and the youngest is now with our father in Canaan.'

33 "Then the man who is lord over the land said to us, 'This is how I will know whether you are honest men: Leave one of your brothers

here with me, and take food for your starving households and go. 34 But bring your youngest brother to me so I will know that you are not spies but honest men. Then I will give your brother back to you, and you can trade in the land.'"

35 As they were emptying their sacks, there in each man's sack was his pouch of silver! When they and their father saw the money pouches, they were frightened. 36 Their father Jacob said to them, "You have deprived me of my children. Joseph is no more and Simeon is no more, and now you want to take Benjamin. Everything is against me!"

37 Then Reuben said to his father, "You may put both of my sons to death if I do not bring him back to you. Entrust him to my care, and I will bring him back."

38 But Jacob said, "My son will not go down there with you; his brother is dead and he is the only one left. If harm comes to him on the journey you are taking, you will bring my gray head down to the grave in sorrow."

Joseph's brothers are flipping out at this point. **How does verse 28 describe their emotional response to finding the money in the sacks?**

What does Jacob's response to his son's request to take Benjamin back with them reveal about Jacob's heart?

The brothers are afraid. Jacob is afraid. God does not seem to be a factor in this equation, except that they fear His wrath.

"For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline." 2 Timothy 1:7

God didn't give us a spirit of fear. What area in your life do you tend to respond to in fear?

How would this part of your life be different if you were motivated by a spirit of love, power and self-discipline?



PREPARE FOR THE WEEKEND

This weekend’s message will look at discouragement and delay. Pastor Steve will share about two guarantees in life: There will be difficult times in life, and you can trust God. We’ll look at Joseph’s character and his faith and how God used it to bring him through a difficult time. **Reread Genesis 39:21-23, Genesis 40 and Genesis 41:1.**









WEEK FOUR

GENESIS 43-44



HIGH/LOW EXERCISE

As Joseph’s story reminds us, life is full of peaks and valleys. The peaks are full of fond memories. The valleys seem to last much too long, yet they have a way of marking us and shaping us in ways we could have never imagined.

In this exercise, take some time to reflect on some of the things you have experienced in your life. Identify three highs and three lows in your life and write them in the boxes below. Then follow the directions in the prompts as you gain perspective and find God in the midst of both the high and low times.

3 HIGHS:

3 LOWS:



READ GENESIS 43:1-15:

Now the famine was still severe in the land. 2 So when they had eaten all the grain they had brought from Egypt, their father said to them, "Go back and buy us a little more food."

3 But Judah said to him, "The man warned us solemnly, 'You will not see my face again unless your brother is with you.' 4 If you will send our brother along with us, we will go down and buy food for you. 5 But if you will not send him, we will not go down, because the man said to us, 'You will not see my face again unless your brother is with you.'"

6 Israel asked, "Why did you bring this trouble on me by telling the man you had another brother?"

7 They replied, "The man questioned us closely about ourselves and our family. 'Is your father still living?' he asked us. 'Do you have another brother?' We simply answered his questions.

How were we to know he would say, 'Bring your brother down here'?"

8 Then Judah said to Israel his father, "Send the boy along with me and we will go at once, so that we and you and our children may live and not die. 9 I myself will guarantee his safety; you can hold me personally responsible for him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him here before you, I will bear the blame before you all my life. 10 As it is, if we had not delayed, we could have gone and returned twice."

11 Then their father Israel said to them, "If it must be, then do this: Put some of the best products of the land in your bags and take them down to the man as a gift—a little balm and a little honey, some spices and myrrh, some pistachio nuts and almonds. 12 Take double the amount of silver with you, for you must return the silver that was put back into the mouths

of your sacks. Perhaps it was a mistake. 13 Take your brother also and go back to the man at once. 14 And may God Almighty grant you mercy before the man so that he will let your other brother and Benjamin come back with you. As for me, if I am bereaved, I am bereaved."

15 So the men took the gifts and double the amount of silver, and Benjamin also. They hurried down to Egypt and presented themselves to Joseph.

Jacob and his family find themselves in the same situation they were before: hungry and without food. Judah steps up to convince his father to let Benjamin go with him.

What is Judah's approach in convincing his father (verses 3-10)?

What is Jacob's suggested plan of action (verses 11-14)?



READ GENESIS 43:16-34:

When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, “Take these men to my house, slaughter an animal and prepare a meal; they are to eat with me at noon.”

17 The man did as Joseph told him and took the men to Joseph’s house. 18 Now the men were frightened when they were taken to his house. They thought, “We were brought here because of the silver that was put back into our sacks the first time. He wants to attack us and overpower us and seize us as slaves and take our donkeys.”

19 So they went up to Joseph’s steward and spoke to him at the entrance to the house. 20 “We beg your pardon, our lord,” they said, “we came down here the first time to buy food. 21 But at the place where we stopped for the night we opened our sacks and each of us found his silver—the exact weight—in the mouth of his sack. So we have brought it back with us. 22 We have also brought additional silver with us to buy food. We don’t know who put our silver in our sacks.”

23 “It’s all right,” he said. “Don’t be afraid. Your God, the God of your father, has given you treasure in your sacks; I received your silver.” Then he brought Simeon out to them.

24 The steward took the men into Joseph’s house, gave them water to wash their feet and provided fodder for their donkeys. 25 They prepared their gifts for Joseph’s arrival at noon, because they had heard that they were to eat there.

26 When Joseph came home, they presented to him the gifts they had brought into the house, and they bowed down before him to the ground. 27 He asked them how they were, and then he said, “How is your aged father you told me about? Is he still living?”

28 They replied, “Your servant our father is still alive and well.” And they bowed down, prostrating themselves before him.

29 As he looked about and saw his brother Benjamin, his own mother’s son, he asked, “Is this your youngest brother, the one you told me about?” And he said,

*“God be gracious to you, my son.”
30 Deeply moved at the sight of his brother, Joseph hurried out and looked for a place to weep. He went into his private room and wept there.*

31 After he had washed his face, he came out and, controlling himself, said, “Serve the food.”

32 They served him by himself, the brothers by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, because Egyptians

could not eat with Hebrews, for that is detestable to Egyptians.

33 The men had been seated before him in the order of their ages, from the firstborn to the youngest; and they looked at each other in astonishment. 34 When portions were served to them from Joseph’s table, Benjamin’s portion was five times as much as anyone else’s. So they feasted and drank freely with him.

What was the brothers’ immediate response again to Joseph’s actions (verse 18)?

Joseph sees his baby brother for the first time in 20 years. He keeps up his act as an Egyptian in this interaction with his brothers. But his heart is longing to reunite with them.

What do you suspect Joseph was feeling at this moment (verse 30)?



READ GENESIS 44:1-13:

Now Joseph gave these instructions to the steward of his house: “Fill the men’s sacks with as much food as they can carry, and put each man’s silver in the mouth of his sack. 2 Then put my cup, the silver one, in the mouth of the youngest one’s sack, along with the silver for his grain.” And he did as Joseph said.

3 As morning dawned, the men were sent on their way with their donkeys. 4 They had not gone far from the city when Joseph said to his steward, “Go after those men at once, and when you catch up with them, say to them, ‘Why have you repaid good with evil? 5 Isn’t this the cup my master drinks from and also uses for divination? This is a wicked thing you have done.’”

6 When he caught up with them, he repeated these words to them. 7 But they said to him, “Why does my lord say such things? Far be it

from your servants to do anything like that! 8 We even brought back to you from the land of Canaan the silver we found inside the mouths of our sacks. So why would we steal silver or gold from your master’s house? 9 If any of your servants is found to have it, he will die; and the rest of us will become my lord’s slaves.”

10 “Very well, then,” he said, “let it be as you say. Whoever is found to have it will become my slave; the rest of you will be free from blame.”

11 Each of them quickly lowered his sack to the ground and opened it. 12 Then the steward proceeded to search, beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest. And the cup was found in Benjamin’s sack. 13 At this, they tore their clothes. Then they all loaded their donkeys and returned to the city.

Joseph is testing the brothers. Or maybe he just wants to make them squirm a bit.

What do the brothers do to convince the steward of their innocence (verses 7-9)?

When Benjamin is found with the silver cup in his sack, the brothers tear their clothes as a sign of deep anguish. **When the brothers betrayed Joseph, they lied and covered it up. Yet they have a huge emotional response to the thought of losing Benjamin. Why do you think their two responses are so different?**





READ GENESIS 44:14-23:

Joseph was still in the house when Judah and his brothers came in, and they threw themselves to the ground before him. 15 Joseph said to them, “What is this you have done? Don’t you know that a man like me can find things out by divination?”

16 “What can we say to my lord?” Judah replied. “What can we say? How can we prove our innocence? God has uncovered your servants’ guilt. We are now my lord’s slaves—we ourselves and the one who was found to have the cup.”

17 But Joseph said, “Far be it from me to do such a thing! Only the man who was found to have the cup will become my slave. The rest of you, go back to your father in peace.”

18 Then Judah went up to him and said: “Pardon your servant, my

lord, let me speak a word to my lord. Do not be angry with your servant, though you are equal to Pharaoh himself. 19 My lord asked his servants, ‘Do you have a father or a brother?’ 20 And we answered, ‘We have an aged father, and there is a young son born to him in his old age. His brother is dead, and he is the only one of his mother’s sons left, and his father loves him.’

21 “Then you said to your servants, ‘Bring him down to me so I can see him for myself.’ 22 And we said to my lord, ‘The boy cannot leave his father; if he leaves him, his father will die.’ 23 But you told your servants, ‘Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you will not see my face again.’

The test of the brothers continues. It seems Joseph wants to know the condition of their hearts. Would they betray another brother to save their own hides?

But Judah steps in. Recall that Judah is the brother who left his family in chapter 38, after Joseph was sold as a slave. It seems this time away and the experiences he had have changed his heart and matured him. **Can you think of a time in your life when being separated from a situation shifted your perspective?**



READ GENESIS 44:24-34:

When we went back to your servant my father, we told him what my lord had said.

25 "Then our father said, 'Go back and buy a little more food.' 26 But we said, 'We cannot go down. Only if our youngest brother is with us will we go. We cannot see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us.'

27 "Your servant my father said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me two sons. 28 One of them went away from me, and I said, "He has surely been torn to pieces." And I have not seen him since. 29 If you take this one from me too and harm comes to him, you will bring my gray head down to the grave in misery.'

30 "So now, if the boy is not with us when I go back to your servant my father, and if my father, whose life is closely bound up with the boy's life, 31 sees that the boy isn't there, he will die. Your servants will bring the gray head of our father down to the grave in sorrow. 32 Your servant guaranteed the boy's safety to my father. I said, 'If I do not bring him back to you, I will bear the blame before you, my father, all my life!'

33 "Now then, please let your servant remain here as my lord's slave in place of the boy, and let the boy return with his brothers. 34 How can I go back to my father if the boy is not with me? No! Do not let me see the misery that would come on my father."



Judah tells Joseph that his father will literally die if they don't bring Benjamin back to him. **What do verses 30-31 say about how Jacob feels about Benjamin?**

The ESV version of verse 30 says “his life is bound up in the boy's life.” Is your life “bound up” in something or someone else? This is a tough one for parents, but for anyone who would say, “I couldn't survive if something happened to (fill in the blank) ... ,” this dream, that person, these plans, *this is dangerous territory*.

Anything in your life you're “bound up” with other than God could be an idol in your life. Take a minute to examine your heart. **What are some things you might say you can't live without?** Ask God to help you acknowledge these areas and give you wisdom in how to prioritize these areas of your life in a way that honors Him.





WEEK 4 | DAY 28: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10

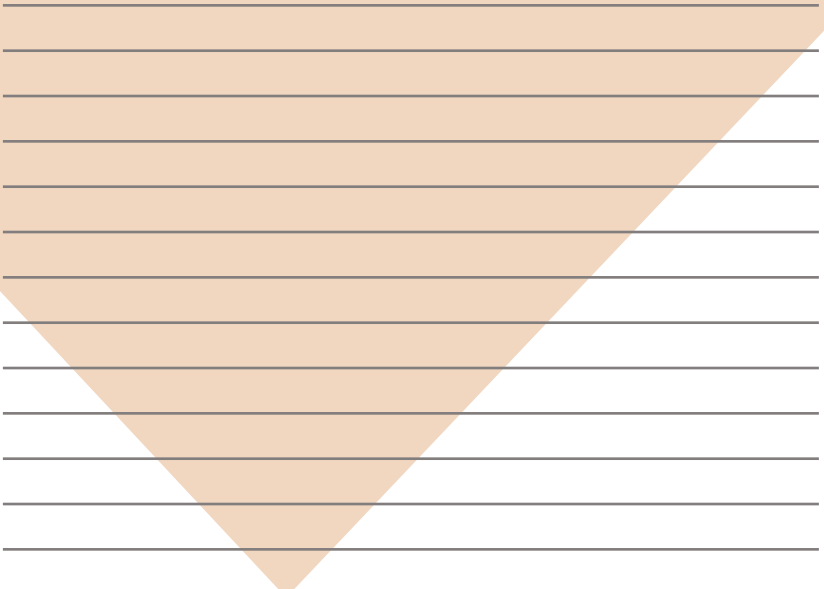
PREPARE FOR THE WEEKEND

Sometimes it can be a challenge to serve God when, due to prosperity, it seems you're in control of your own destiny.

This weekend, we will talk about Joseph's quick rise to prosperity and his faithfulness to God, even with great wealth. **Reread**

Genesis 41:37-57.





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WEEK FIVE

GENESIS 45-46



FAITHFULNESS EXERCISE

As we discussed in the Weekend Service, sometimes the only thing more difficult than remaining focused on God when things are difficult is staying faithful to God once you have achieved success. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your faithfulness in these areas (put a checkmark in the circle above the number):

Work

○ 1 — ○ 2 — ○ 3 — ○ 4 — ○ 5 — ○ 6 — ○ 7 — ○ 8 — ○ 9 — ○ 10

Work-life balance

○ 1 — ○ 2 — ○ 3 — ○ 4 — ○ 5 — ○ 6 — ○ 7 — ○ 8 — ○ 9 — ○ 10

Purity

○ 1 — ○ 2 — ○ 3 — ○ 4 — ○ 5 — ○ 6 — ○ 7 — ○ 8 — ○ 9 — ○ 10

Relationship with spouse

○ 1 — ○ 2 — ○ 3 — ○ 4 — ○ 5 — ○ 6 — ○ 7 — ○ 8 — ○ 9 — ○ 10

Relationship with kids

○ 1 — ○ 2 — ○ 3 — ○ 4 — ○ 5 — ○ 6 — ○ 7 — ○ 8 — ○ 9 — ○ 10

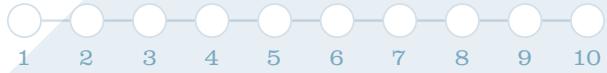
Relationship with friends

○ 1 — ○ 2 — ○ 3 — ○ 4 — ○ 5 — ○ 6 — ○ 7 — ○ 8 — ○ 9 — ○ 10

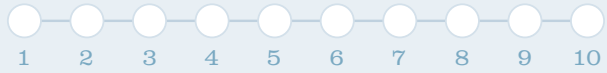
Money

○ 1 — ○ 2 — ○ 3 — ○ 4 — ○ 5 — ○ 6 — ○ 7 — ○ 8 — ○ 9 — ○ 10

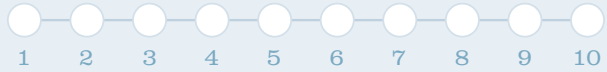
**Serving
others**



**Personal
health**



**Time
with God**



Pick one of the items you rated higher than others and write some of the reasons why you think you are succeeding in this area.

Pick one of the items you would like to improve. Why are you less satisfied with this level of faithfulness in your life?

How would you like to improve in this area?

What one or two things are you going to start doing differently in this area?



READ GENESIS 45:1-15:

Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, "Have everyone leave my presence!" So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers. 2 And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and Pharaoh's household heard about it.

3 Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still living?" But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence.

4 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me." When they had done so, he said, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! 5 And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. 6 For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will be no plowing and reaping. 7 But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

8 "So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt. 9 Now hurry back to my father and say to him, 'This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; don't delay. 10 You shall live in the region of Goshen and be near me—you, your children and grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and all you have. 11 I will provide for you there, because five years of famine are still to come. Otherwise you and your household and all who belong to you will become destitute.'

12 "You can see for yourselves, and so can my brother Benjamin, that it is really I who am speaking to you. 13 Tell my father about all the honor accorded me in Egypt and about everything you have seen. And bring my father down here quickly."

14 Then he threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin embraced him, weeping. 15 And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterward his brothers talked with him.



Talk about perspective. Joseph could have led with telling his brothers all of the horrible things that happened to him. He could have yelled and screamed at them. He had the power to ruin or even end their lives with one word. **But what does Joseph lead with (in verses 4 and 5) when revealing his identity?**

Don't feel bad. It's OK. Joseph leads with grace and a tremendous faith in God. He invites them to “come near.” Anger and resentment put up walls. Forgiveness and compassion come near. In fact, he says it again in verse 10, that he wants his family to be near him.

What lessons on forgiveness can we learn from Joseph?

With whom in your life have you built up walls?

How can you take steps to come near to that person(s)?





READ GENESIS 45:16-28:

When the news reached Pharaoh's palace that Joseph's brothers had come, Pharaoh and all his officials were pleased. 17 Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Tell your brothers, 'Do this: Load your animals and return to the land of Canaan, 18 and bring your father and your families back to me. I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you can enjoy the fat of the land.'

19 "You are also directed to tell them, 'Do this: Take some carts from Egypt for your children and your wives, and get your father and come. 20 Never mind about your belongings, because the best of all Egypt will be yours.'"

21 So the sons of Israel did this. Joseph gave them carts, as Pharaoh had commanded, and he also gave them provisions for their journey. 22 To each of them he gave new clothing, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred shekels of silver and five sets of

clothes. 23 And this is what he sent to his father: ten donkeys loaded with the best things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain and bread and other provisions for his journey.

24 Then he sent his brothers away, and as they were leaving he said to them, "Don't quarrel on the way!"

25 So they went up out of Egypt and came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan. 26 They told him, "Joseph is still alive! In fact, he is ruler of all Egypt." Jacob was stunned; he did not believe them. 27 But when they told him everything Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts Joseph had sent to carry him back, the spirit of their father Jacob revived. 28 And Israel said, "I'm convinced! My son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."

Generosity is the theme that stands out in this passage. Joseph didn't hesitate in sharing the favor he earned in Egypt. Sharing is hard, but the Bible instructs us to be generous.

“Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. 18 Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. 19 In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.” 1 Timothy 6:17-19

What commands are we given in this passage?

“One person gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. 25 A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.” Proverbs 11:24-25

How is this godly perspective on generosity counter-intuitive to the world?

What happens to Jacob when he learns his son Joseph is alive? What convinces him to go?

Faith. Faith makes us move. Fear immobilizes. Jacob believed what they said was true and was able to put his fear aside.



READ GENESIS 46:1-7:

So Israel set out with all that was his, and when he reached Beersheba, he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.

2 And God spoke to Israel in a vision at night and said, "Jacob! Jacob!"

"Here I am," he replied.

3 "I am God, the God of your father," he said. "Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. 4 I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again. And Joseph's own

hand will close your eyes."

5 Then Jacob left Beersheba, and Israel's sons took their father Jacob and their children and their wives in the carts that Pharaoh had sent to transport him. 6 So Jacob and all his offspring went to Egypt, taking with them their livestock and the possessions they had acquired in Canaan. 7 Jacob brought with him to Egypt his sons and grandsons and his daughters and granddaughters—all his offspring.



The family is loaded up and ready to go, and God speaks to Jacob.
What four promises does God make to Jacob in verses 3-4?

Up to this point in the story, it seems Jacob's heart was far from God. But one tiny step in faith, one teensy move out of his comfort zone, and God comes alongside with overwhelming assurance and comfort. **Recall a time when you stepped out of your comfort zone in faith and God met you there.**





READ GENESIS 46:8-27:

These are the names of the sons of Israel (Jacob and his descendants) who went to Egypt:

Reuben the firstborn of Jacob.

9 The sons of Reuben: Hanok, Pallu, Hezron and Karmi.

10 The sons of Simeon: Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jakin, Zohar and Shaul the son of a Canaanite woman.

11 The sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath and Merari.

12 The sons of Judah: Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez and Zerah (but Er and Onan had died in the land of Canaan). The sons of Perez: Hezron and Hamul.

13 The sons of Issachar: Tola, Puah, Jashub and Shimron.

14 The sons of Zebulun: Sered, Elon and Jahleel.

15 These were the sons Leah bore to Jacob in Paddan Aram, besides his daughter Dinah. These sons and daughters of his were thirty-three in all.

16 The sons of Gad: Zephon, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi and Areli.

17 The sons of Asher: Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi and Beriah. Their sister was Serah. The sons of Beriah: Heber and Malkiel.

18 These were the children born to Jacob by Zilpah, whom Laban had given to his daughter Leah—sixteen in all.

19 The sons of Jacob's wife Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin.



20 In Egypt, Manasseh and Ephraim were born to Joseph by Asenath daughter of Potiphara, priest of On.

21 The sons of Benjamin: Bela, Beker, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim and Ard.

22 These were the sons of Rachel who were born to Jacob—fourteen in all.

23 The son of Dan: Hushim.

24 The sons of Naphtali: Jahziel, Guni, Jezer and Shillem.

25 These were the sons born to Jacob by Bilhah, whom Laban had given to his daughter Rachel—seven in all.

26 All those who went to Egypt with Jacob—those who were his

direct descendants, not counting his sons' wives—numbered sixty-six persons. 27 With the two sons who had been born to Joseph in Egypt, the members of Jacob's family, which went to Egypt, were seventy in all.

There are a lot of names on this list. And if you try to match up the numbers they give with the number of names listed, it gets even more confusing.

There are two important things we can consider when looking at this list:

1. After 20 years (from when we first looked at Jacob's family tree on page 23), the family has grown. God's promise to make them numerous is coming to fruition.
2. Only God could orchestrate Joseph earning the favor of an ungodly king to bless and provide abundantly for his family of more than 100 people.





READ GENESIS 46:28-34:

Now Jacob sent Judah ahead of him to Joseph to get directions to Goshen. When they arrived in the region of Goshen, 29 Joseph had his chariot made ready and went to Goshen to meet his father Israel. As soon as Joseph appeared before him, he threw his arms around his father and wept for a long time.

30 Israel said to Joseph, “Now I am ready to die, since I have seen for myself that you are still alive.”

31 Then Joseph said to his brothers and to his father’s household, “I will go up and speak

to Pharaoh and will say to him, ‘My brothers and my father’s household, who were living in the land of Canaan, have come to me. 32 The men are shepherds; they tend livestock, and they have brought along their flocks and herds and everything they own.’

33 When Pharaoh calls you in and asks, ‘What is your occupation?’

34 you should answer, ‘Your servants have tended livestock from our boyhood on, just as our fathers did.’ Then you will be allowed to settle in the region of Goshen, for all shepherds are detestable to the Egyptians.”

This is an emotional time for Joseph. **But even in the midst of great emotions, how do we see Joseph’s confidence, wisdom and love at work on behalf of his family?**

What can we learn from Joseph about leadership in this passage?




WEEK 5 | DAY 35: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17

PREPARE FOR THE WEEKEND

This weekend, we will look at the power of forgiveness.

Pastor Steve will teach how God enabled Joseph to forgive his brothers, even though they didn't deserve it. **Reread Genesis 42:1-11 and Genesis 45:1-15.**



A series of 25 horizontal lines for writing, with a large light blue triangle pointing downwards overlaid on the top portion of the page.





WEEK SIX

GENESIS 47-48



FORGIVENESS EXERCISE

Joseph gives us an incredible example of what it looks like to forgive the unforgivable. But how do we apply his example in our context?

The following five-step process was created by Dr. Everett Worthington, a psychologist who has researched forgiveness for decades. The process, called REACH, walks a person through forgiveness.

- 1.** In the following blank, write down someone you need to forgive: _____. (If you need to forgive yourself, then put your name in the blank.)
- 2.** Work through each of the prompts in the REACH exercise.
- 3.** If nobody comes to mind who you need to forgive, work through the REACH exercise by answering the question, “Why is this important?” for each of the prompts.

R

R is for Recall. Recall the events and the hurt as accurately and objectively as you can.

E

E is for Empathize. Try to understand what happened from the point of view of the person who wronged you.



A

A is for the Altruistic gift of forgiveness. Recall a time you hurt someone else and were forgiven. Offer this gift to the person who wronged you.

C

C is for Committing yourself to forgive publicly.

Write a letter of forgiveness (whether you send it or not), write it in a journal, tell a trusted friend, or, if you can, tell the person who wronged you.

H

H is for Holding onto forgiveness. Forgiving is not forgetting. Memories and feelings will come up. Remind yourself you have made a choice to forgive.



READ GENESIS 47:1-12:

Joseph went and told Pharaoh, “My father and brothers, with their flocks and herds and everything they own, have come from the land of Canaan and are now in Goshen.” 2 He chose five of his brothers and presented them before Pharaoh.

3 Pharaoh asked the brothers, “What is your occupation?” “Your servants are shepherds,” they replied to Pharaoh, “just as our fathers were.” 4 They also said to him, “We have come to live here for a while, because the famine is severe in Canaan and your servants’ flocks have no pasture. So now, please let your servants settle in Goshen.”

5 Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Your father and your brothers have come to you, 6 and the land of Egypt is before you; settle your father and your brothers in the best part of the land. Let them live in Goshen. And if you know of any among them with special ability, put them in charge of my own livestock.”

7 Then Joseph brought his father Jacob in and presented him before Pharaoh. After Jacob blessed Pharaoh, 8 Pharaoh asked him, “How old are you?”

9 And Jacob said to Pharaoh, “The years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty. My years have been few and difficult, and they do not equal the years of the pilgrimage of my fathers.” 10 Then Jacob blessed Pharaoh and went out from his presence.

11 So Joseph settled his father and his brothers in Egypt and gave them property in the best part of the land, the district of Rameses, as Pharaoh directed. 12 Joseph also provided his father and his brothers and all his father’s household with food, according to the number of their children.

The brothers do exactly as Joseph instructs them, and Pharaoh is satisfied. He clearly favors Joseph and the favor extends to his family. **What extra offer does Pharaoh extend in verse 6?**

Pharaoh meets Jacob. **What does Jacob do that Scripture mentions twice, in verses 7 and 10?**

“The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.” Proverbs 18:21

Our words are powerful and have the power to bless or to curse. **Do you use your words to bless others?** It’s a powerful gift we can easily share.



READ GENESIS 47:13-26:

There was no food, however, in the whole region because the famine was severe; both Egypt and Canaan wasted away because of the famine. 14 Joseph collected all the money that was to be found in Egypt and Canaan in payment for the grain they were buying, and he brought it to Pharaoh's palace. 15 When the money of the people of Egypt and Canaan was gone, all Egypt came to Joseph and said, "Give us food. Why should we die before your eyes? Our money is all gone."

16 "Then bring your livestock," said Joseph. "I will sell you food in exchange for your livestock, since your money is gone." 17 So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and he gave them food in exchange for their horses, their sheep and goats, their cattle and donkeys. And he brought them through that year with food in exchange for all their livestock.

18 When that year was over, they came to him the following year and said, "We cannot hide from our lord the fact that since our money is gone and our livestock belongs to you, there is nothing

left for our lord except our bodies and our land. 19 Why should we perish before your eyes—we and our land as well? Buy us and our land in exchange for food, and we with our land will be in bondage to Pharaoh. Give us seed so that we may live and not die, and that the land may not become desolate."

20 So Joseph bought all the land in Egypt for Pharaoh. The Egyptians, one and all, sold their fields, because the famine was too severe for them. The land became Pharaoh's, 21 and Joseph reduced the people to servitude, from one end of Egypt to the other. 22 However, he did not buy the land of the priests, because they received a regular allotment from Pharaoh and had food enough from the allotment Pharaoh gave them. That is why they did not sell their land.

23 Joseph said to the people, "Now that I have bought you and your land today for Pharaoh, here is seed for you so you can plant the ground. 24 But when the crop comes in, give a fifth of it to Pharaoh. The other four-fifths you may keep as seed for the fields



and as food for yourselves and your households and your children.”

25 “You have saved our lives,” they said. “May we find favor in the eyes of our lord; we will be in bondage to Pharaoh.”

26 So Joseph established it as a law concerning land in Egypt—still in force today—that a fifth of the produce belongs to Pharaoh. It was only the land of the priests that did not become Pharaoh’s.

In the midst of settling his family, Joseph still has a job to do. The lands of Egypt and Canaan are still facing the famine. In exchange for food, the people progressively offer all they have. **Note the order in which they give all they have:**

- 1. _____ vs. 14
- 2. _____ vs. 16
- 3. _____ and _____ vs. 19
- 4. _____ vs. 24

Who is the only group of people who don’t have to sell their land (in verse 22)?

Because of the famine and the leadership of Joseph, Pharaoh owns it all.



READ GENESIS 47:27-31:

Now the Israelites settled in Egypt in the region of Goshen. They acquired property there and were fruitful and increased greatly in number.

*28 Jacob lived in Egypt seventeen years, and the years of his life were a hundred and forty-seven.
29 When the time drew near for Israel to die, he called for his son Joseph and said to him, "If I have found favor in your eyes, put your hand under my thigh and promise that you will show me kindness*

and faithfulness. Do not bury me in Egypt, 30 but when I rest with my fathers, carry me out of Egypt and bury me where they are buried."

"I will do as you say," he said.

31 "Swear to me," he said. Then Joseph swore to him, and Israel worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff.

While many suffered through the famine in Egypt, Jacob's family continues to thrive. **What three things happened according to verse 27?**

Jacob's life is coming to an end. Remember God promised Jacob that he would not be buried in Egypt, and here Joseph swears to bury him with his father, at Jacob's request.



READ GENESIS 48:1-16:

Some time later Joseph was told, "Your father is ill." So he took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim along with him. 2 When Jacob was told, "Your son Joseph has come to you," Israel rallied his strength and sat up on the bed.

3 Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and there he blessed me 4 and said to me, 'I am going to make you fruitful and increase your numbers. I will make you a community of peoples, and I will give this land as an everlasting possession to your descendants after you.'

5 "Now then, your two sons born to you in Egypt before I came to you here will be reckoned as mine; Ephraim and Manasseh will be mine, just as Reuben and Simeon are mine. 6 Any children born to you after them will be yours; in the territory they inherit they will be reckoned under the names of their brothers. 7 As I was returning from Paddan, to my sorrow Rachel died in the land of Canaan while we were still on the way, a little distance from Ephrath. So I buried her there beside the road to

Ephrath" (that is, Bethlehem).

8 When Israel saw the sons of Joseph, he asked, "Who are these?"

9 "They are the sons God has given me here," Joseph said to his father.

Then Israel said, "Bring them to me so I may bless them."

10 Now Israel's eyes were failing because of old age, and he could hardly see. So Joseph brought his sons close to him, and his father kissed them and embraced them.

11 Israel said to Joseph, "I never expected to see your face again, and now God has allowed me to see your children too."

12 Then Joseph removed them from Israel's knees and bowed down with his face to the ground.

13 And Joseph took both of them, Ephraim on his right toward Israel's left hand and Manasseh on his left toward Israel's right hand, and brought them close to him. 14 But Israel reached out his right hand and put it on Ephraim's

head, though he was the younger, and crossing his arms, he put his left hand on Manasseh's head, even though Manasseh was the firstborn.

15 Then he blessed Joseph and said, "May the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked faithfully, the God who has

been my shepherd all my life to this day,

16 the Angel who has delivered me from all harm —may he bless these boys. May they be called by my name and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac, and may they increase greatly on the earth."

I would imagine this is the way Jacob always dreamed, but hardly could believe, his life would end. He's on his deathbed, surrounded by all of his sons, with the ability to speak a final blessing over each one.

What does Jacob say about Joseph's sons in verse 5?

Jacob elevates Joseph's sons from grandson status to the status of son. This means that later all the descendants of Joseph, through Ephraim and Manasseh, are viewed as two separate tribes of Israel.

What are the three parts of Jacob's blessing in verse 16?



READ GENESIS 48:17-22:

When Joseph saw his father placing his right hand on Ephraim's head he was displeased; so he took hold of his father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. 18 Joseph said to him, "No, my father, this one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head."

19 But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He too will become a people, and he too will become great. Nevertheless, his younger brother will be greater than he, and his descendants will become a group of nations." 20 He blessed them that day and

said, "In your name will Israel pronounce this blessing: 'May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.'"

So he put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh.

21 Then Israel said to Joseph, "I am about to die, but God will be with you and take you back to the land of your fathers. 22 And to you I give one more ridge of land than to your brothers, the ridge I took from the Amorites with my sword and my bow."

Jacob colored outside the lines in many ways throughout his life. His decision to place his right hand on Joseph's second-born's head signified he would receive the highest blessing instead of his first-born son. Joseph assumed it was a mistake, given his dad is so elderly and had poor eyesight, but Jacob knew exactly what he was doing.

Not all of Jacob's intentions in life were God-honoring, but God used Him and his poor choices anyway. **Think of someone you know who likes to push the boundaries. How have you seen that play out positively or negatively in their life?**

What gift does Jacob give Joseph in verse 22?



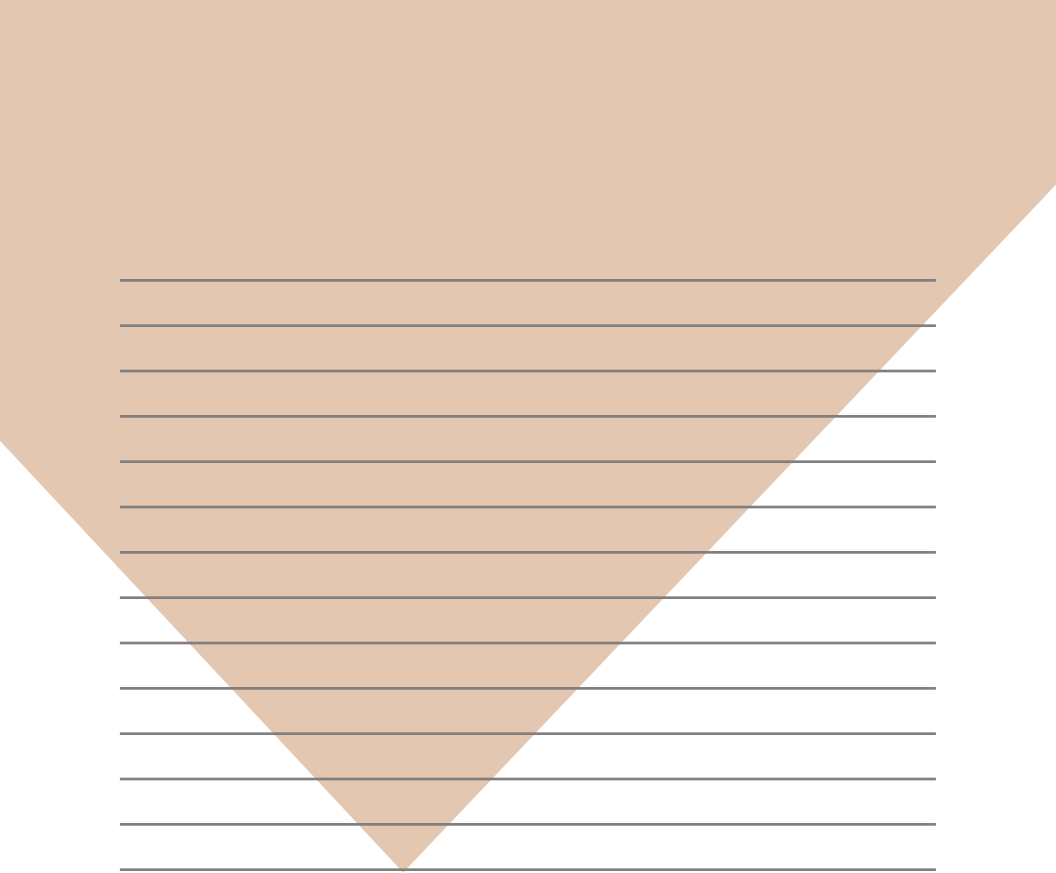


WEEK 6 | DAY 42: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24

PREPARE FOR THE WEEKEND

In this final weekend of the series of Joseph, we will look at Joseph's legacy and his faithfulness to God, even to his final breath. Reread Genesis 46:28-34 and Genesis 50:15-26.





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WEEK SEVEN

GENESIS 49-50



WEEK 7 | DAY 43: SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25

LEGACY HIGHLIGHT EXERCISE

Joseph's story reminds us that a lifelong legacy is created one choice at a time. We all have memories and moments in our lives that have significantly impacted us, changed the way we think and shaped who we have become. Take a moment to reflect and process some of these moments.

Scene 1:

Person:

Moment:

How it shaped you:

Scene 2:

Person:

Moment:

How it shaped you:

Scene 3:

Person:

Moment:

How it shaped you:

Scene 4:

Person:

Moment:

How it shaped you:

Scene 5:

Person:

Moment:

How it shaped you:

Why do you think these moments were so memorable in your life?

How can you make this type of contribution in the lives of others?

Is it easier for you to stay focused and faithful to God in the hard times or the good times? Why?





READ GENESIS 49:1-27:

Then Jacob called for his sons and said: "Gather around so I can tell you what will happen to you in days to come.

2 "Assemble and listen, sons of Jacob; listen to your father Israel.

3 "Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might, the first sign of my strength, excelling in honor, excelling in power.

4 Turbulent as the waters, you will no longer excel, for you went up onto your father's bed, onto my couch and defiled it.

5 "Simeon and Levi are brothers—their swords are weapons of violence.

6 Let me not enter their council, let me not join their assembly, for they have killed men in their anger and hamstringed oxen as they pleased.

7 Cursed be their anger, so fierce, and their fury, so cruel! I will scatter them in Jacob and disperse them in Israel.

8 "Judah, your brothers will praise you; your hand will be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons will bow down to you.

9 You are a lion's cub, Judah; you return from the prey, my son. Like a lion he crouches and lies down, like a lioness—who dares to rouse him?

10 The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be his.

11 He will tether his donkey to a vine, his colt to the choicest branch; he will wash his garments in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes.

12 His eyes will be darker than wine, his teeth whiter than milk.

13 "Zebulun will live by the seashore and become a haven for ships; his border will extend toward Sidon.

14 "Issachar is a rawboned donkey

lying down among the sheep pens.

15 When he sees how good is his resting place and how pleasant is his land, he will bend his shoulder to the burden and submit to forced labor.

16 "Dan will provide justice for his people as one of the tribes of Israel.

17 Dan will be a snake by the roadside, a viper along the path, that bites the horse's heels so that its rider tumbles backward.

18 "I look for your deliverance, LORD.

19 "Gad will be attacked by a band of raiders, but he will attack them at their heels.

20 "Asher's food will be rich; he will provide delicacies fit for a king.

21 "Naphtali is a doe set free that bears beautiful fawns.

22 "Joseph is a fruitful vine, a fruitful vine near a spring, whose branches climb over a wall.

23 With bitterness archers attacked him; they shot at him with hostility.

24 But his bow remained steady, his strong arms stayed limber, because of the hand of the Mighty One of Jacob, because of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel,

25 because of your father's God, who helps you, because of the Almighty, who blesses you with blessings of the skies above, blessings of the deep springs below, blessings of the breast and womb.

26 Your father's blessings are greater than the blessings of the ancient mountains, than the bounty of the age-old hills. Let all these rest on the head of Joseph, on the brow of the prince among his brothers.

27 "Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; in the morning he devours the prey, in the evening he divides the plunder."

Jacob gives a blessing to each of his sons. Some may just view these words as well wishes, but they are much more. The writer of Genesis is sure to include the phrase, “in days to come,” (verse 1). There is a predictive element to Jacob’s words over his sons.

Back in week one, we looked at Reuben and what motivated him to come to Joseph’s rescue when his brothers wanted to kill him. He was hoping to earn back the favor of his father. But we see in verses 3 and 4 that Reuben’s concern was valid. **What does Jacob say about Reuben in verse 4?** *Ouch.*

Which of the son’s blessings would you want spoken over your life?

Which of the two sons (tribes) are clearly the leaders (have the most spoken over them)?



READ GENESIS 49:28-33:

All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father said to them when he blessed them, giving each the blessing appropriate to him.

29 Then he gave them these instructions: "I am about to be gathered to my people. Bury me with my fathers in the cave in the field of Ephron the Hittite, 30 the cave in the field of Machpelah, near Mamre in Canaan, which Abraham bought along with the

field as a burial place from Ephron the Hittite. 31 There Abraham and his wife Sarah were buried, there Isaac and his wife Rebekah were buried, and there I buried Leah. 32 The field and the cave in it were bought from the Hittites."

33 When Jacob had finished giving instructions to his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed, breathed his last and was gathered to his people.

Jacob reiterates the importance of being buried in Canaan, not Egypt. This shows, too, how confident Jacob was that the future of his descendants was in Canaan. God did not intend for them all to stay in Egypt.

Have you ever had someone speak a blessing over you? What did that experience mean to you?



READ GENESIS 50:1-14:

Joseph threw himself on his father and wept over him and kissed him. 2 Then Joseph directed the physicians in his service to embalm his father Israel. So the physicians embalmed him, 3 taking a full forty days, for that was the time required for embalming. And the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days.

4 When the days of mourning had passed, Joseph said to Pharaoh's court, "If I have found favor in your eyes, speak to Pharaoh for me. Tell him, 5 'My father made me swear an oath and said, "I am about to die; bury me in the tomb I dug for myself in the land of Canaan." Now let me go up and bury my father; then I will return.'"

6 Pharaoh said, "Go up and bury your father, as he made you swear to do."

7 So Joseph went up to bury his father. All Pharaoh's officials accompanied him—the dignitaries of his court and all the dignitaries of Egypt— 8 besides all the members of Joseph's household and his brothers and those belonging to his father's

household. Only their children and their flocks and herds were left in Goshen. 9 Chariots and horsemen also went up with him. It was a very large company.

10 When they reached the threshing floor of Atad, near the Jordan, they lamented loudly and bitterly; and there Joseph observed a seven-day period of mourning for his father. 11 When the Canaanites who lived there saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, they said, "The Egyptians are holding a solemn ceremony of mourning." That is why that place near the Jordan is called Abel Mizraim.

12 So Jacob's sons did as he had commanded them: 13 They carried him to the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave in the field of Machpelah, near Mamre, which Abraham had bought along with the field as a burial place from Ephron the Hittite. 14 After burying his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, together with his brothers and all the others who had gone with him to bury his father.

Notice the Egyptians mourned for Joseph for 70 days. This length of mourning reflects the Egyptian royal practice. **What does this say about the Egyptians' high regard for Joseph?**

Everyone, except the kids and the animals, went up to bury Jacob — even prominent Egyptian officials and public figures. Joseph was one highly regarded guy. After all he had been through, this was Joseph's legacy.

"Praise the LORD.

*Blessed are those who fear the LORD,
who find great delight in his commands.*

*2 Their children will be mighty in the land;
the generation of the upright will be blessed.*

*3 Wealth and riches are in their houses,
and their righteousness endures forever." Psalm 112:1-3*

What does this verse teach us about legacy?

What do you want your legacy to be?



READ GENESIS 50:15-21:

When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?" 16 So they sent word to Joseph, saying, "Your father left these instructions before he died: 17 'This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly.' Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father." When their message came to him, Joseph wept.

18 His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. "We are your slaves," they said.

19 But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? 20 You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. 21 So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.

Again, so much grace. The brothers clearly had uncertainty about the sincerity of Joseph's forgiveness. This has more to do with their own guilt and fear than anything to do with Joseph's acts of forgiveness.

Write out verse 20. This verse beautifully sums up Joseph's story.



READ GENESIS 50:22-26:

Joseph stayed in Egypt, along with all his father's family. He lived a hundred and ten years 23 and saw the third generation of Ephraim's children. Also the children of Makir son of Manasseh were placed at birth on Joseph's knees.

24 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die. But God will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land

to the land he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." 25 And Joseph made the Israelites swear an oath and said, "God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up from this place."

26 So Joseph died at the age of a hundred and ten. And after they embalmed him, he was placed in a coffin in Egypt.

It's hard to name a greater blessing than the blessing of living a long and happy life, watching your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren grow.

What does Joseph say in verse 24?

Here, Joseph affirms what his father Jacob had said: their descendants won't be in Egypt forever. Joseph believes this in faith and instructs his brothers that when it happens, to take his remains and bury him in Canaan. Even his final statement points to his trust in God's promises.

Joseph: Faithful to the end.



WEEK 7 | DAY 49: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31

PREPARE FOR THE WEEKEND

This weekend, Northview has canceled weekend services so you can go out and serve your community. Good Neighbor Weekend, as we call it, has become an annual event for us, and we look forward to it every year.

Serving with your Life Group can be a rewarding experience, because honestly, we were created to serve. When we serve, we follow Jesus' example.

"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Mark 10:45

Serving others allows us to humble ourselves, to get outside of the rut of simply meeting our own personal needs, and to see what God is doing in and through the lives of other people in our community. It helps others and it connects us closer to God. Win-win.

How can you better prepare your heart for service?

How can you look for opportunities beyond the task as you serve?

What do you hope will be the outcome of your service experience this weekend?



NEXT STEPS

Congratulations on making it to the end of the 50-Day Bible Study Challenge! We're confident you've grown, not only in your Bible knowledge, but also your ability to read Scripture for yourself. Now that you're done, it's time to consider your next steps.

Don't let this awesome momentum you've developed go to waste. There is no right or wrong way to approach Bible study. But we hope you've seen for yourself what a blessing this discipline can be in your life.

God wants to speak to us directly through His Word, but he can't speak to us through it unless we open it.

Here are a few suggestions for next steps:

SET THE TIMER

Commit to daily Bible reading each day. Simply start at the beginning (Genesis) and set a timer each day (we suggest 20 minutes), and you can read the entire thing in about a year.

FOUR CHAPTERS A DAY

Beginning in Genesis and Matthew, read one chapter each day from the Old Testament, one chapter from the New Testament, one chapter in Psalms and one chapter in Proverbs. This method will take you through the entire Bible, with a heavy emphasis on wisdom literature.

READING PLANS

It's easy to find a Bible reading plan if you search online or on your Bible App (we recommend YouVersion). Also, many Bibles actually have Bible reading plan resources in them.

BIBLE STUDY GUIDES

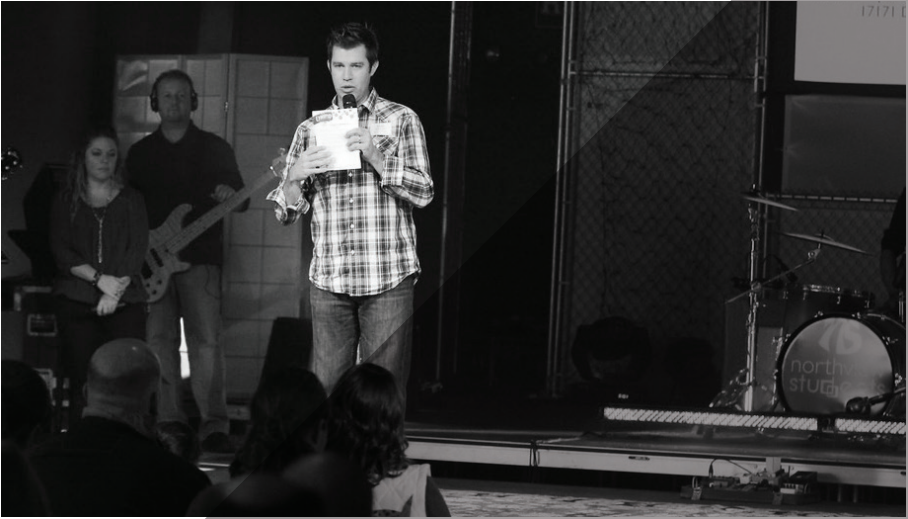
You can purchase a Bible study to help you continue to study God's Word. Capstone Cafe & Bookstore at our Carmel Campus (as well as other Christian bookstores and online retailers) offers many helpful Bible study guides. If you prefer a book of the Bible, a character or a topic, we encourage you to ask the bookstore staff for a recommendation.

Make a list of books, topics or characters in the Bible you're interested in studying.

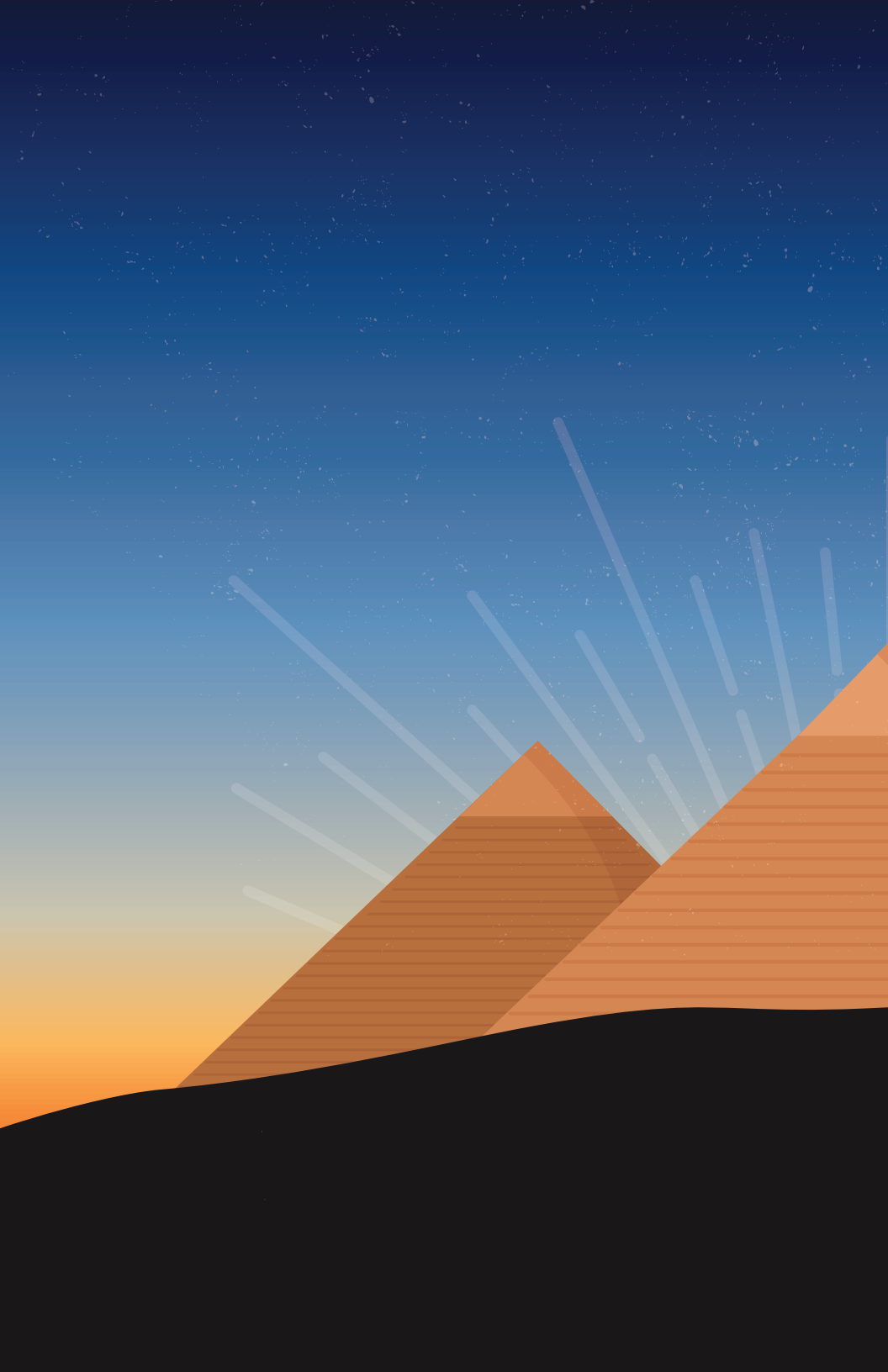
Commit that in the next week you will determine what you'll study next and get started. Tell a friend or Life Group member what you plan to do and commit to keep each other accountable.

My next area of study will be: _____

My friend, _____, will keep me accountable.



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LIFE GROUP MATERIAL

The image features a dark blue background with a subtle starry pattern. In the lower half, there are abstract geometric shapes in shades of orange and brown, resembling a stylized landscape or mountains. Several thin, light blue lines radiate upwards from the orange shapes, creating a sense of movement or light rays. The text 'LIFE GROUP MATERIAL' is prominently displayed in the upper left quadrant, with 'LIFE GROUP' in a bold orange font and 'MATERIAL' in a white font below it.



SESSION ONE

MY BIG FAT DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILY

OPENING SCENE

The three main components to this year's Spiritual Growth Campaign are the weekend messages, gathering with your Life Group, and the 50-Day Bible Study Challenge starting on page 18. As a fun way to start the challenge, we are going to raise the stakes a bit with the Ain't-Gonna-Happen Challenge. We will all agree to engage in the 50-Day Bible Study Challenge, and if we don't follow through, we will do something we normally wouldn't do. There is nothing like a little accountability to keep us focused, and Pastor Steve has led the way.



Go around the circle and commit to engage everyday in the 50-Day Bible Study Challenge, OR ELSE...

"I will _____
_____.

(What would you not want to do)

This is just a little bit of positive peer pressure to keep things fun and exciting as we go through this series together!

ACT 1: WATCH THE DVD

Watch the teaching and story from Session 1. Use the notes space provided on this page to fill in the blanks from Pastor Steve's talk, record key thoughts, questions and things you want to remember or study later.

NOTES

- One of the first commandments in the Bible: Be _____ and _____.
- A dysfunctional family is one that isn't _____ the way _____.

| *Psalm 23:4*

| *Joshua 1:9*

| *Genesis 37:3*

Joseph's Mistakes:

1. Joseph was a _____.
Genesis 37:2
 2. Joseph _____ his favored status.
 3. Joseph was _____.
- We will never _____ all the ways of God.

| *Isaiah 55:9*

ACT 2: GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Take a moment to share any thoughts or insights on Kim's story.
2. Turn to page 26. As you look at the Family Tree Exercise, what things do you want to continue and what things do you want to leave behind?
3. Joseph was betrayed in the worst way imaginable. How do you keep from hardening your heart when you have been hurt by your family?
4. If your parent(s) didn't give you everything you needed, how does God fill in the gaps left by our imperfect parents and families?
5. Kids are quick to point out when something is not fair. As a parent, how do you keep things equal when some kids need more of you than others?
6. How do Christian parents help their children to own their faith as they grow up?

CLOSING CREDITS:

- Be sure to bring your calendars next week. We will begin our discussion next week by working out details for Good Neighbor Weekend. Good Neighbor Weekend, for those of you who don't know, is when all of our Northview campuses serve in our community as we suspend our normal weekend services on October 31 and November 1.
- Close your meeting with prayer. Make sure to use the Prayer Request Log on page 206.

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SESSION TWO

LIFE IS THE PITS

OPENING SCENE:

Before we get started, please help your group (and us) prepare for Good Neighbor Weekend by reading the email sent to your Life Group leader or the green sheet that was packaged in your DVD box.

ACT 1: WATCH THE DVD

Watch the teaching and story from Session 2. Use the notes space provided on this page to fill in the blanks from Pastor Steve's talk, record key thoughts, questions and things you want to remember or study later.

NOTES:

- Every believer will face _____ .

| *James 1:2-4*

| *Ecclesiastes 3:1, 4*

- God is the creator of _____ .

| *Psalms 34:18*

- In our pain, God comes _____ to us.

| *2 Corinthians 1:3-4*

- God is the God of _____ comfort.
- After God comforts us, we have a _____ to be a comfort to others.

ACT 2: GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Take a moment to share any thoughts or insights on Jeff and Karen's story.
2. As Joseph's story illustrates, sometimes in life we get blindsided. When was a time in your life when your world was turned upside down and how did you deal with it?
3. Turn to page 46. As you look at the Remembering Exercise, share any memories or reflections of your loved one.
4. When someone is hurting, what are some ways that well-meaning people can do more harm than good?

5. What are some constructive and destructive ways to deal with pain and loss?
6. As you look back on your life, where do you see God bringing good out of pain in your past?

CLOSING CREDITS:

- Next week, we will begin our discussion by sharing insights gained from the Overcoming Temptation Exercise (page 62), which you will do on Day 15 of the Bible Study Challenge (Sept. 27.)
- Close your meeting with prayer. Make sure to use the Prayer Request Log on page 206.



SESSION THREE

TEMPTED

OPENING SCENE

Turn to page 62. As you look at the Overcoming Temptation Exercise, share any insights from processing through this challenge.

ACT 1: WATCH THE DVD

Watch the teaching and story from Session 3. Use the notes space provided on the next page to fill in the blanks from Pastor Steve's talk, record key thoughts, questions and things you want to remember or study later.

NOTES:

| *1 Corinthians 10:12*

- Temptation _____ at every corner of our lives.

| *Genesis 39:6*

To overcome temptation, you need to:

1. Learn to _____ the voice of the Holy Spirit.
2. _____ the lies of the enemy.

| *Isaiah 48:10*

_____ in life is necessary to produce _____.

| *Genesis 39:9*

ACT 2: GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Take a moment to share any thoughts or insights on Chris and Mindi's story.
2. Do you struggle more with temptation when things are really good or when things are really difficult? Why?
3. Why is it so difficult to see the consequences of sin when we are being tempted?
4. Every temptation is based on a lie (i.e. "no one will find out" or "this isn't hurting anyone"). What are some other examples of the lies that Satan uses to tempt us?

5. What temptations or sins are made more difficult because of the culture in which we live?

6. Read 1 Corinthians 10:13

No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

7. What does it mean that God “will also provide a way out” of temptation?

CLOSING CREDITS:

- Next week, we will begin our discussion by sharing insights gained from the High/Low Exercise (page 82), which you will do on Day 22 of the Bible Study Challenge (Oct. 4.)
- Close your meeting with prayer. Make sure to use the Prayer Request Log on page 206.



SESSION FOUR

THE WAITING GAME

OPENING SCENE

Turn to page 82. As you look at the High/Low Exercise, share any insights gained from processing through this challenge.

ACT 1: WATCH THE DVD

Watch the teaching and story from Session 4. Use the notes space provided on the next page to fill in the blanks from Pastor Steve's talk, record key thoughts, questions and things you want to remember or study later.

NOTES:

- God gave Joseph a _____ early on.

| *James 1:12*

- God rewards _____.
- Both a _____ and a _____
_____ can coexist.

Joseph's Perseverance

1. Joseph had a good _____.

| *John 13:35*

| *Proverbs 17:22*

2. Joseph _____ on the _____ of others.

| *Genesis 40:5-8*

| *Philippians 2:3-4*

3. Joseph _____ his eyes on God.

ACT 2: GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Take a moment to share any thoughts or insights on Sham's story.
2. Why do difficult times draw some people closer to God and drive others away from Him?
3. Have you ever had a time when you were angry with God or felt forgotten by Him? What did you do?

4. Why is it so difficult for some people to ask for help when they are going through a difficult time?
5. How do you handle being authentic with what you feel without getting stuck in negative emotions?
6. How do you trust God even when the future is very uncertain?

CLOSING CREDITS:

- Next week, we will begin our discussion by sharing insights gained from the Faithfulness Exercise (page 100), which you will do on Day 29 of the Bible Study Challenge (Oct. 11.)
- Close your meeting with prayer. Ask the group if there are any challenges, struggles, delayed hopes or unfulfilled dreams that the group can pray for tonight. Make sure to use the Prayer Request Log on page 206.



SESSION FIVE

EASY STREET?

OPENING SCENE

Turn to page 100. As you look at the Faithfulness Exercise, share any insights gained from processing through this challenge.

ACT 1: WATCH THE DVD

Watch the teaching and story from Session 5. Use the notes space provided on the next page to fill in the blanks from Pastor Steve's talk, record key thoughts, questions and things you want to remember or study later.

NOTES:

Genesis 41:42-43

Genesis 41:38

- We are just _____ of God's stuff.

1 Timothy 6:10

1 Timothy 6:9

- The desire for wealth can _____ you.

The Rich Young Ruler | Mark 10:17-27

- You can't serve both _____ and _____.

Joseph's Example

1. Joseph didn't _____ his walk with the Lord.
2. Joseph kept his _____.

ACT 2: GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Take a moment to share any thoughts or insights on Bob's story.
2. Why do you think it's so difficult for most people to live on less than they make?
3. When was a time in your life when you had been the recipient of someone else's generosity?
4. What things make it difficult for you to be content?
5. How has God used difficult times in your life to prepare you for where you are now?

6. How do you teach the next generation to have a right view of “things” in a very materialist culture?

CLOSING CREDITS:

- Next week, we will begin our discussion by sharing insights gained from the Forgiveness Exercise (page 118), which you will do on Day 36 of the Bible Study Challenge (Oct. 18.)
- Close your meeting with prayer. Make sure to use the Prayer Request Log on page 206.

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SESSION SIX

A CLEAN SLATE

OPENING SCENE

Turn to page 118. As you look at the Forgiveness Exercise, share any insights gained from processing through this challenge.

ACT 1: WATCH THE DVD

Watch the teaching and story from Session 6. Use the notes space provided on the next page to fill in the blanks from Pastor Steve's talk, record key thoughts, questions and things you want to remember or study later.

NOTES:

- Forgiveness is not an _____.

| *Matthew 6:14-15*

- Forgiveness is an _____ in faith.
- Without God, we make ourselves _____, _____ and _____ of our offenders.

Lessons on Forgiveness

1. Joseph didn't _____ to his emotions.

| *James 1:5*

Don't take _____ from your emotions.

2. Joseph looked past the _____ and saw his _____.

| *Genesis 45:4*

3. Joseph trusted God with the _____.

| *Genesis 45:5-8*

- Forgiveness isn't about our _____.

ACT 2: GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Take a moment to share any thoughts or insights on Vickie's story.
2. Why is forgiveness so difficult?
3. What happens to our hearts when we refuse to forgive?

4. Share a story from your life of forgiving someone or being forgiven.
5. Once you have forgiven, how do you know whether to end the relationship or rebuild it?
6. How do you rebuild trust in a fractured relationship?

CLOSING CREDITS:

- Next week, we will begin our discussion by sharing insights gained from the Legacy Highlight Exercise on (page 136), which you will do on Day 43 of the Bible Study Challenge (Oct. 25.)
- Close your meeting with prayer. Make sure to use the Prayer Request Log on page 206.



SESSION SEVEN

THE LONG RUN

OPENING SCENE

Turn to page 136. As you look at the Legacy Highlight Exercise, share any insights gained from processing through this challenge.

ACT 1: WATCH THE DVD

Watch the teaching and story from Session 7. Use the notes space provided on the next page to fill in the blanks from Pastor Steve's talk, record key thoughts, questions and things you want to remember or study later.

NOTES:

- Legacy is defined as anything that is passed down from one _____ to the next.
- Legacy isn't about where your story _____, it's about where it _____.

Legacy Principles

| *Deuteronomy 6:5-7*

1. Influence your _____.
2. Leave significant _____.

| *2 Peter 1:12-15*

| *Genesis 50:24, 25*

- Joseph is a story of someone that is _____ to the end.
- A smooth ride is not the mark of a life _____, but a life _____.

| *Genesis 50:20*

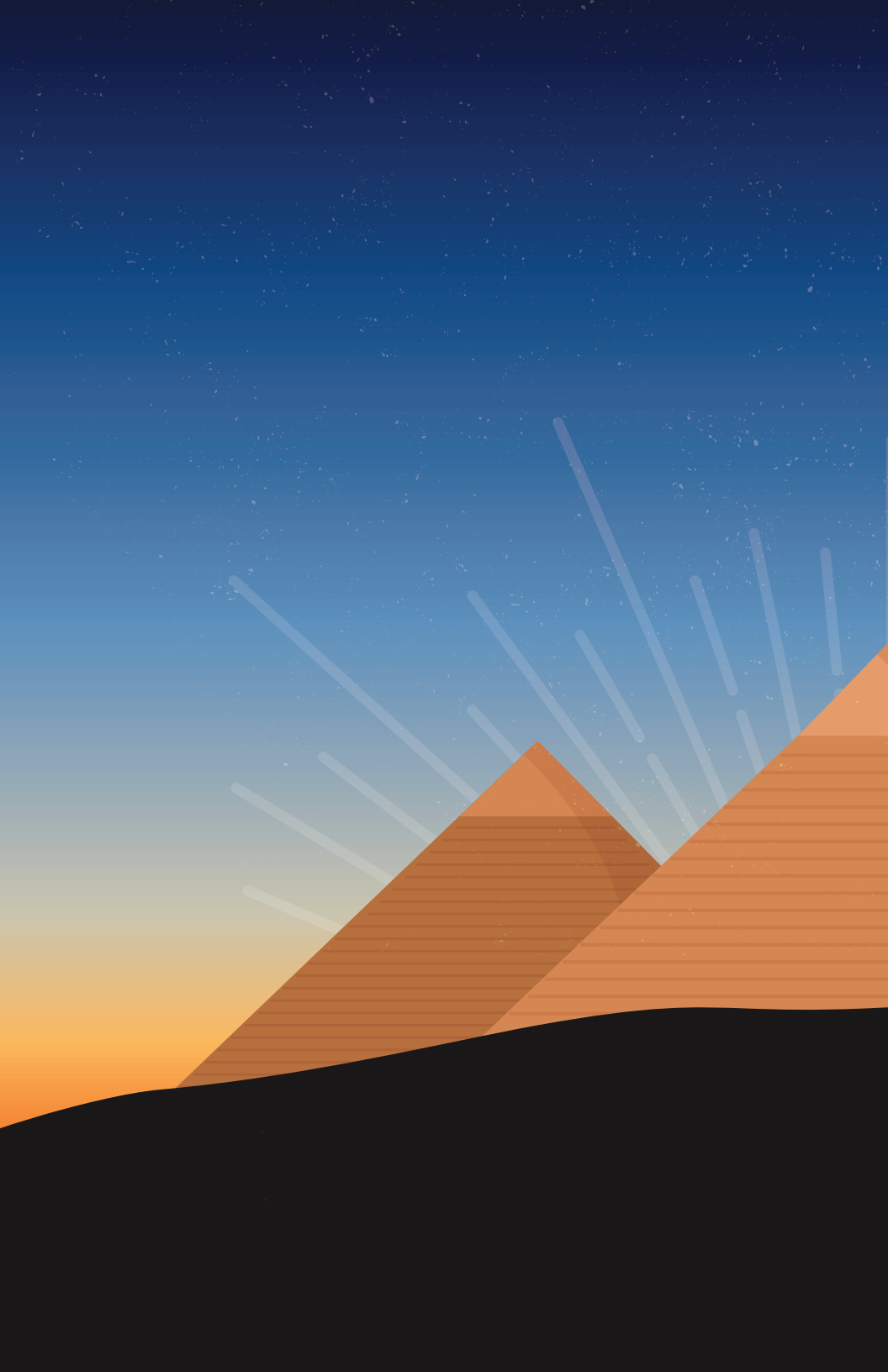
ACT 2: GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Take a moment to share any thoughts or insights on Jeff and Sue's story.
2. What do you know now that you wish you would have known when you were younger?
3. What things get in the way of leaving the legacy you desire?

4. What family traditions, values or qualities are most important to you?
5. How do you successfully pass on your faith to your kids or grandkids (the next generation)?
6. What is the difference between achieving success versus significance in life?

CLOSING CREDITS:

- Turn to page 149, Day 50 of the Bible Study Challenge. Here, you are challenged to look ahead to your next steps in studying God's Word. If you have time, go around the room and discuss what you would like to do next in your personal study time.
- Close your meeting with prayer. Make sure to use the Prayer Request Log on page 206.



APPENDICES

The image features a dark blue background with a subtle pattern of white stars. The word "APPENDICES" is written in a large, bold, white sans-serif font, centered in the upper half of the image. Below the text, there are several light blue diagonal lines of varying lengths and orientations, creating a sense of movement or data. At the bottom of the image, there are large, overlapping orange and yellow geometric shapes, including triangles and trapezoids, which appear to be part of a stylized landscape or abstract composition. The overall aesthetic is modern and professional.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

HOW DO I STRUCTURE A MEETING?

The following is an example of how one group structures their meeting. Other groups will vary the structure to fit their group's personality.

- 7:00 - 7:30 p.m. - **Welcome / Snacks:** People will arrive at different times, and this allows everyone to meet each other informally and catch up with one another prior.
- 7:30 - 8:00 p.m. - **Intro:** Each of us has a story. The events of our lives—good, bad, wonderful or challenging—have shaped who we are. As you start the study, say, “I will go first and then we will go around the circle to my right.” As you pick one of the questions and answer first, you set an example of how much detail to give and time to take in answering the question.
- 8:00 - 8:45 p.m. - **In the Bible, Real Life and In-Depth Look:** Read the Scripture and answer the discussion questions, watch the video and discuss the application questions. If you don't make it through all of the questions, that's OK. The questions are there to spark good discussion. Be willing to be flexible.
- 8:45 - 9 p.m. - **Prayer:** Group members will share prayer

requests and the group prays together. For some people in the group, this will be the first time they have ever prayed out loud. Please remember to be patient with them and avoid putting them on the spot.

HOW DO WE HANDLE THE CHILDCARE NEEDS IN OUR GROUP?

Very carefully. Seriously, this can be a sensitive issue. We suggest you empower the group to openly brainstorm solutions. You may try one option that works for a while and then adjust over time. Our favorite approach is for adults to meet in the living room or dining room and share the cost of a babysitter (or two) who can watch the kids in a different part of the house. This way, parents don't have to be away from their children all evening when their children are too young to be left at home.

A second option is to use one home for the kids and a second home (close by or a phone call away) for the adults.

A final option is to decide you need to have a night to invest in your spiritual lives individually or as a couple and to make your own arrangements for childcare. No matter what decision the group makes, the best approach is to dialogue openly about both the problem and the solution.

IF I FACILITATE OR HOST THE LIFE GROUP, DO WE HAVE TO MEET IN MY HOME?

No. Many groups share the role of having the group meet in their homes.

HOW BIG SHOULD MY LIFE GROUP BE?

Ten to fourteen people is a good target range. If there are too

many people or too few people in a group, it may become difficult to create and sustain a healthy environment. However, if your group starts with just a few people, that is all right. Include the group in this process of inviting people. It is fine to start small and grow.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE REACH THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN OUR GROUP?

Some groups will choose to close once they have reached a predetermined, maximum number of people. Some groups will continue to add people. Sub-grouping is a strategy which helps in this process. With this strategy, a group may have 18 people meet together for snacks and fellowship and then break into two groups of nine, for example, once the discussion starts. This strategy allows a group to ease into multiplying.

SHOULD WE HAVE DINNER WITH OUR MEETING?

Ultimately, this is a group decision. Be aware that having a dinner will typically add significantly to the meeting time length. If you have a dinner together, decide beforehand as a group how the evening will flow (i.e. Have dinner from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. and then have the normal meeting time from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.). In general, we would recommend not having a dinner with every meeting. Instead, consider having a dinner periodically throughout the year. Some groups will have a special dinner together after they finish a particular curriculum.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO AFTER THIS STUDY IS COMPLETED?

At the end of this study, each group member may decide if he or she wants to continue on as a group for another study. Some groups launch relationships for years to come, and others are

stepping stones into another group experience. Either way, enjoy the journey.

If you decide to continue, the Life Group ministry team will make recommendations on what to study next. They also will equip you with what you will need to successfully continue as a group.

WHEN SHOULD I CALL THE LIFE GROUP MINISTRY TEAM FOR HELP?

Don't feel like it has to be something big or really important to call us. We love to be a sounding board for you. Call us early. Call us often.

WHAT IF THIS GROUP IS NOT WORKING FOR US?

You're not alone! This could be the result of a personality conflict, life stage difference, geographical distance, level of spiritual maturity, or any number of things. Relax. Pray for God's direction, and at the end of this seven-week study, decide whether to continue with this group or find another. You don't typically buy the first car you look at or marry the first person you date, and the same goes with a group. However, don't bail out before the seven weeks are up—God might have something to teach you. Also, don't run from conflict or prejudge people before you give them a chance. God is still working in your life, too!

WHAT DO I DO IF PEOPLE ARE NOT SHOWING UP CONSISTENTLY?

Define mutual expectations early on with the Life Group Ground Rules. If attendance becomes an issue with someone in the group, address it with them in person, not via email. Contact someone in the Life Group ministry prior to approaching the person to develop a plan and to have someone praying for you. Again, in this type of

situation, err on the side of grace. Be in a place emotionally where you are more saddened that you didn't get to see the person at group than you are frustrated they didn't show up.

WE SPEND A HUGE AMOUNT OF TIME ON PRAYER REQUESTS. DO YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS?

Have people send their prayer requests via email prior to the meeting. Emphasize the idea of praying for each other during the week. Explain that in the interest of time, everyone will pray for the one or two most pressing things for each person, but a more comprehensive email will be sent out so that the group can pray more thoroughly throughout the week. Have people share requests and pray together in smaller groups.

IS IT OK TO INVITE SOMEONE TO OUR GROUP WHO DOESN'T GO TO OUR CHURCH?

If the person does not have a home church, Life Group can be a great 'on-ramp' to the Christian faith and to getting connected to a local church. If the person has a home church, ideally they would get connected in their own church. Joining a Life Group provides a way to get to know fellow church attendees on a deeper level. While this is the general principle, there are times when it may be appropriate to make an exception.

LIFE GROUP GROUND RULES

SHOW UP. I'll prioritize the scheduled Life Group meeting and call in advance if I'm going to miss the meeting.

SHOW RESPECT. I'll accept everyone without judgment. I'll listen well and refrain from giving quick answers and simple fixes or engaging in side conversations.

BE SELF-AWARE. I'll stretch myself to be as open and honest as I can with my perspectives and experiences. I understand some of us are talkers and some are quieter, so I'll be aware of not dominating the discussion or always leaving the weight of it to others.

TAKE OWNERSHIP. I'll do my part to help create the group. (Translation: I won't stick the host/leader with all the work.) The group will be as good as I make it. I'll share roles within the group and help challenge everyone to grow.

FACE CONFLICT. Community can be very messy, and conflicts may arise. I'll offer grace to others and won't leave the group over disagreements, realizing God might use conflict in my spiritual formation in some way I don't currently understand.

KEEP IT CONFIDENTIAL. I'll vigorously respect confidentiality. What I hear and say in the group stays in the group (unless a person is a danger to themselves or others or engaged in illegal activity).



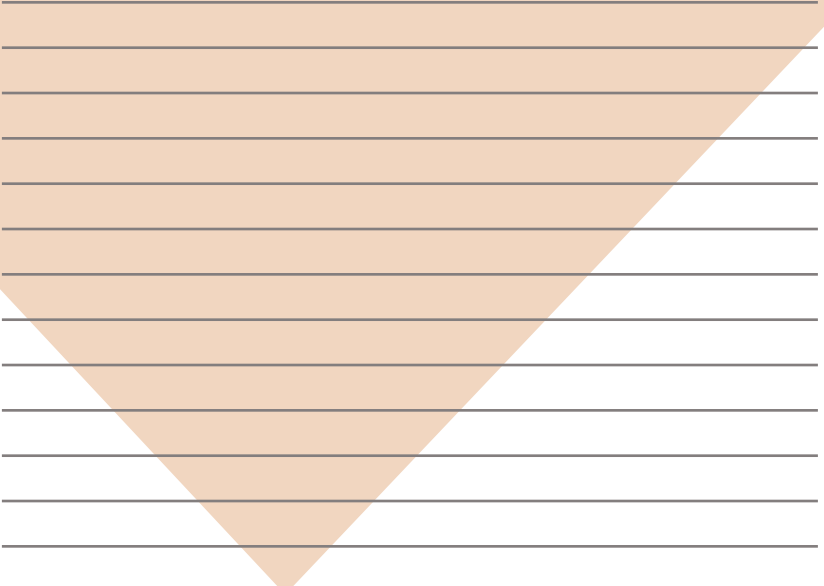
PRAYER
REQUEST LOG

A page with horizontal lines for writing. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across most of the page width. In the bottom-left corner, there is a solid blue triangle. The background is decorated with several light blue, diagonal brush strokes of varying lengths and orientations, creating a modern, artistic feel.

A page with a light blue background and a white diagonal stripe. The page contains 25 horizontal lines for writing.

A page of horizontal lines for writing. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. The background is a light blue color, and there is a diagonal shadow effect on the right side, suggesting the page is part of a notebook or binder.

LIFE GROUP ROSTER



A series of 20 horizontal lines, evenly spaced, extending across the width of the page. A large, light brown triangle points downwards from the top edge, overlapping the lines. The triangle's base is at the top, and its apex is located approximately halfway down the page, between the 11th and 12th lines. The lines continue below the triangle's apex.

A page with a diagonal split: the top-left is white and the bottom-right is light orange. The page contains 20 horizontal lines for writing, spanning across the diagonal boundary.