

The Story Begins



DailyLife
Five Oaks Church

Week 13: December 3–9, 2016

Day 1

December 5



Pray / Ask God for help in seeing his plans during difficult times.

JOSEPH'S DIFFICULT JOURNEY

When Joseph, the second youngest son of Jacob, was seventeen, the rift between his brothers and him was deep and broad. As we have seen, the jealousy of his brothers led them to sell him into slavery. He had been betrayed by his brothers, became a slave, and was unjustly accused and convicted of attempting to molest his master's wife. He then lived a number of years in what he described as "the pit."

However, because of his wisdom and God-given ability to interpret dreams, he was released from prison and raised up as a ruler in Egypt, and he was given the task of preserving the known world through a severe famine. Read how the story unfolds!



Read / Genesis 41:12–45



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following for reflection.

What attributes have you seen in Joseph that enabled a bad situation to be used for good?

Joseph continued to follow God through adversity. What do you think the outcome would have been if, through those difficult years, he had been godless?

Apply Joseph's example to your own life. How can you follow Christ through times of adversity? Bookmark this question in your heart, because difficult times come to all of us.

Day 2

December 6



Pray / For the grace to be faithful to God in times of blessing.

INTO BLESSING

Out of affliction and into prosperity and great responsibility, Joseph had not become a bitter man. He zealously pursued the task that God and Pharaoh had given him. He was blessed with two sons, giving them both names that glorified God. Joseph exhibited great determination and fortitude, storing up grain until it could no longer be measured. Through God's blessing, Joseph said, "God has made me forget all my hardship" (Genesis 41:51).



Read / Genesis 41:46–55



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following for reflection.

According to many Scripture verses, God is interested in wiping out the angst of bad memories. Many of us have been betrayed and suffered harm through others. One of the ways God heals us of these hurtful memories can be by pouring out blessing into our lives. As Joseph stated, “God has made me forget . . .” (Genesis 41:51). Will you choose this high road, keeping your eyes on Jesus until His blessing comes? You can count on God.

The Scriptures say, “Whoever is slack in his work is a brother to him who destroys” (Proverbs 18:9). Joseph gives us a good picture of someone with godly zeal for his work. Would you describe your approach toward work as zealous or slack?

Day 3

December 7



Pray / Pray that God would bless your family and friends.

FAMINE AND FAMILY

The plot thickens in Genesis 42–44. To Joseph’s amazement, the brothers who sold him into slavery come before him to buy grain, but they don’t recognize Joseph. Though the text is longer than typical readings, get engaged in the drama as Joseph tests his brother’s hearts some decades after they had sold him into slavery. How had twenty-plus years affected his brothers? How would Joseph handle the situation?



Read / Genesis 42–44



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following for reflection.

When God says, “Vengeance is mine,” he reserves the right to pay others back for the wrong they have committed. While we are still on earth, one of the key things God is in search of as he metes out vengeance is repentance in the offender. How do you think human vengeance is different from God’s vengeance?

Joseph tests his brothers to see where their hearts are. He has authority to do much more! Do you see a measure of God’s vengeance in what Joseph’s brothers went through?

When you consider measured vengeance, repentance, and forgiveness—all things the Scriptures focus on, what do you think is the ultimate result God is seeking through these?

Day 4
December 8



Pray / Ask God for relationships in your life to flourish.

FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION

Through Joseph's testing of his brothers, he finds in them hearts that had been tenderized by conscience, regret, and a sense of God's justice. He also considered that God had used what his brothers intended for evil to save many from starvation. Joseph depicts godly forgiveness for us and also reconciliation (restored relationships), which is God's aim.



Read / Genesis 45



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following for reflection.

We are all sinners, and life is messy. As believers, however, the Scriptures say that God has given us the ministry of reconciliation. God desires reconciliation between humans and between mankind and himself. He has taken great measures to bring it about. How does this ministry of reconciliation affect your everyday life?

We see an aid to forgiving others that Joseph couldn't see. That is, Jesus taking mankind's sin into his body on the cross, bearing our judgment. The Scriptures say, "He was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of [God's] people, to whom the stroke was due" (Isaiah 53:8 NASB). Do you feel that for you, "the stroke is due"? Or, are there people in your life "to whom the stroke is due?" Jesus took it for us!

Day 5

December 9



Pray / Ask God for a magnanimous heart.

MAGNANIMOUS HEART

In Genesis 46, Joseph and his father, Jacob, were reunited with a great outpouring of emotion. Chapters 46–49 tell the story of how Israel, comprised of some seventy people, settled into the land of Goshen. Today, however, we will read in Genesis 50. Jacob passes away. Joseph's brothers had apparently depended on their father's presence to give them a sense of security that Joseph would not take his revenge on them. Read how Joseph responds to his brothers.



Read / Genesis 50:1–21



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following for reflection.

With Jacob gone, Joseph could have thrown his brothers in prison or sold them into slavery, without fear of hurting his father. However, Joseph knew God. The Scriptures say, “Do not repay evil for evil . . . , but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing” (1 Peter 3:9). What specific way you can apply this to your life.

Joseph said, “Am I in the place of God?” (verse 19). Do you ever try to take on God’s job toward those around you?

Joseph made his former enemies to be at peace with him, and he even provided for them. The Scriptures tell us to love our enemies and pray for those who hurt us. Is there someone whom you consider an enemy to whom you can show love today?

Portions of this study were adapted from The Gospel Project Chronological: The Story Begins, Vol. 1, Adult Personal Study Guide ESV (Nashville, TN: LifeWay Christian Resources, 2015). Used by permission.

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