

CGYG & LIFE Bible Study – Genesis 40:1 – 42:38

Read Genesis 40:1-23

1. For review: How did Joseph come to be in prison? How did he conduct himself in the hardships he faced?
2. Summarize the dreams that the king's cupbearer and baker had, and their meanings.
3. What elements of Joseph's character can we learn from in this chapter?

Read Genesis 41:1-57

1. Why do you think God left Joseph in prison for 2 more years after the cupbearer was released?
2. What were Pharaoh's dreams, and what was God saying through them?
3. How did Joseph know the meaning of Pharaoh's dreams? What does this chapter tell us about the kind of man Joseph was? (you might also consider Psalm 25:14; 119:97-104; Proverbs 24:16)
4. How long did Joseph spend in slavery/prison in Egypt before being exalted (v.46, with 37:2)? What does his example through those years teach us about dealing with hardship and suffering, even 'unjust' suffering? (cf. Romans 8:28; 1 Peter 4:19)

5. In what ways is Joseph a 'type' of Jesus Christ? (a type is a figure, representation, or symbol of something to come) (you might consider Matthew 21:42; Hebrews 5:7-9; Genesis 3:14-15 with Psalm 105:16-22, esp. v.18)

Read Genesis 42:1-38

1. What was the dream Joseph had had regarding his brothers? (v.9; cf. 37:5-8)
2. Why did Joseph treat his brothers harshly, and why did he keep Simeon in jail? Was he trying to get revenge?
3. What was God doing to Joseph's brothers (v.28) through these events?
4. How did Jacob react to his sons' report about the trip to Egypt? (v.36-38) What does this say about his faith?
5. With whom do you identify more, Joseph or Jacob? Why?

Aliens and Strangers

Joseph's life is typical of a pattern often repeated in Scripture that the leaders of God's people often experience more hardship and suffering in their lives, for it is in the fires of suffering that God forges the perseverance, character, and hope (Romans 5:1-5) that must characterize the leaders of His people. This was certainly true of Joseph, who was persecuted because of his righteousness, and who suffered servitude and bondage for 13 years. Through this time, God was shaping his character and equipping him for greater service. For his part, Joseph submitted to the Lord's discipline in his life and continued to trust in God and to walk in His ways, faithfully working as one serving God, even in the face of the unjust suffering. As a result, when God's time came, Joseph was ready for the task for which he had been raised – the saving of many lives, including those of his own family.

Are you letting hardships and difficulties in your life rob you of joy and keep you from following God faithfully? Take heart, knowing that God uses hardships to discipline us for our good, so that we may share in His holiness, and that we might reap a harvest of righteousness and peace as we submit our lives to Him and are trained by His discipline (Heb. 12:7-11). Through hardship, He shapes us to be more like Him and prepares us for greater service to Him. Thus, as Peter writes, "So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good." (1 Peter 4:19)

"Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything." (James 1:2-4)