

## **Life group study.**

**Genesis 37 - 50** Over the coming weeks we will be looking at the life of Joseph.

### **Discussion starter**

What can we remember about Joseph's family?

Great grandfather was Abraham

Grandfather was Isaac

Father was Jacob

Mother was Rachel - Jacob's favourite wife who had died

11 brothers and a sister. Joseph was the 11th son born

Amazing promises of God in the family line but we now discover a very dysfunctional family.

### **KEY VERSE IN THE WHOLE STORY JOSEPH**

Genesis 50:19-20, Joseph says, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today."

Who had meant to cause evil? The brothers thought they were destroying the dreams and the dreamer whilst God was in reality fulfilling the dream of the dreamer.

Joseph sees the providence of God at work even in the difficult times.

What lessons in our lives can we learn from this amazing verse?

### **QUESTION**

What challenges are we facing that seem right now as tough, unfair, contrary to the promises of God?

Pray for one another not that the difficulties will be taken away but that we would trust God that through these times we will hold on to the truth that "all things work together for good for those who love the Lord."

### **Quote to think about and talk together about.**

**"The brothers meant the sale of Joseph for evil, but God meant it for good. Notice it does not say that God used their evil for good after they meant it for evil. It says that in the very act of evil, there were two different designs: In the sinful act, they were designing evil, and in the same sinful act, God was designing good."**

Some thoughts that may help:-

In life we sometimes become very upset about things being unfair towards us. How does this quote challenge us to think differently about these things?

Has anyone experienced a time when what someone meant to do to harm us has in fact been turned around so looking back you can see that God was designing good?

In this story the very ones trying to destroy Joseph were the ones God had every intention of saving. It seems that salvation often comes through suffering!

Jesus suffered that we (sinners) would be saved!

### **Turn to Philippians 3:10-11.**

This is one of the most difficult verses to understand!

Does the story of Joseph help us understand this verse better? Salvation often comes through suffering.

How should we approach the difficult times we are going through?

We too often ask God to get us out of the suffering but perhaps we should pray differently in the middle of the suffering ?

### **A possible exercise**

As a group or as individuals write a prayer that you think Joseph might have prayed in the midst of the suffering - sold into slavery and in prison for many years as a result of a terrible sin committed against him.

Could you pray this prayer in the circumstance you are currently finding yourself in?

This story of suffering and perseverance in trusting the providence of God sets us an example in all areas of life!

### **We easily complain about all kinds of things! At home, at work, in Church. How should the example of Joseph challenge our attitudes?**

Perhaps folks in the group would be willing to share how this challenges them at the current time.

### **LEADERS NOTES**

Do not allow this last bit to become a negative time of complaining about all kinds of things. The whole point is to encourage people to approach challenges in life with a greater sense of God's guidance on it all. We call this

his providence. God is in control - this is not passive fatalism but an attitude that says, 'I will trust God to work in all the challenges for His Gory.'