



Bible Study 2007

Genesis 37-50 The Joseph Story

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

Colossians 3:16

To help you get the most out of bible talks on Sunday we have designed a daily bible reading program that will help you to read and apply each bible passage during the week before the bible talk. This can be a supplement to your existing bible reading program if you already have one.

We hope that you will make the most of this Bible reading program by setting aside the time to “let the word of Christ dwell in you richly”.

How to use the readings:

- Print the studies out double-sided and staple the pages as a booklet
- Set aside time
- Pray for understanding
- Read the passage
- Answer the questions
- Meditate on what you learn
- Apply what you learn
- Pray in response

This Bible reading guide is available for download from the ‘Resources’ page at www.bpc.org.au

Please note that we are open to feedback on how to improve this resource. Please email your comments to office@bpc.org.au



Set aside time to read the section this week. If you are using these for group discussion please make sure that you have read the section prior to the study.

Day 1 (Read 37:1-11) Parents and children

1. How would you describe Jacob's treatment of Joseph? (also 37:34-35)
2. How would you describe Joseph's "baby-brother" treatment of his family?
3. Have you ever experienced or seen parental favouritism in your family? How does this make you feel?
4. If you are a parent, how does God expect you to treat each of your children (Eph 6:4)?
5. Take the opportunity to pray for your kids (if applicable) and your parents.

Day 2 (Read 37:12-36) Siblings

1. What is it that Joseph's brothers are angry about (vv.19, 23)
2. How would you describe the treatment of Joseph by his brothers?
3. Who is it who saves Joseph and where does Joseph end up?
4. Have you ever experienced sibling rivalry for your parent's affection? How does this passage correct us as children and as parents?
5. How is God's love comforting to those of us who have been disappointed by earthly parents? (Ps 27:10, Isa 49:15)

Day 3 (Read 38:12-30) Bedroom Politics

1. List the dodgy things that Judah does in this chapter in relation to:
 - a. advancing his dead firstborn son's family line (v.11)
 - b. his sexual behaviour (v.15)
 - c. his hypocrisy (v.24)
 - d. his worship (notice the word "shrine" in vv.21,22)
2. Why might this chapter on Judah be in the bible when it seems that he is such an unsavoury character? (Hint: see Ruth 4:12-22 and Matthew 1:3-16)
3. Even though your family might be flawed, how can you see God achieving his purposes? Pray that God might be glorified in your family.

Day 4 (Read 39) From Slavery to Success to Cell

1. What is the reason for Joseph's change in situation? (vv.1-6)
2. Remember that Judah's bedroom politics were quite dodgy. How is Joseph different?
 - a. In his view of marriage
 - b. In his loyalty
 - c. In his attitude to God
3. What can we learn from Joseph's righteousness when faced with sexual temptation?
4. Like Joseph, how should we behave when treated unjustly? Read 1 Peter 2:13-25. How can we learn from Jesus' example? Think of practical examples.

Note: The underlined questions are to be used for homegroup/small group bible study discussion.



Please use this section to make notes, reflections, prayer points in both personal and group use.

Launch questions for group bible study:

- Who do you feel is the *favourite* in your family? How does this make you feel?



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Day 1 (Read 40:1-23) Dream, Dream, Dream

1. Joseph proves to be a dreamer and an interpreter of dreams. Why does Joseph claim to be able to interpret dreams (v.8)? And what is the result of his interpretation (v.22)?
2. Joseph makes one request (v.14) and what is the outcome (v.23)? How would you have felt if you were Joseph at this point? Remember that he was put in prison falsely (v.15).
3. Have you made plans for your life only to be disappointed? If you haven't already, submit these disappointments to God in prayer.

Day 2 (Read 41:1-40) From cell to Second-in-charge

1. Joseph remains in prison for two more long years. But his big break comes when there is another set of dreams to be interpreted. Who is the secret of Joseph's dream reading success (41:16)?
2. Joseph does more than interpret the dream for Pharaoh (vv.28-36). How does it show his wisdom, discernment and shrewdness?
3. Like Joseph, how can we people who are wise and discerning at every given opportunity (See 1 Peter 3:13-16)? Think of practical situations.

Day 3 God is with him

1. Even with previous disappointments, what evidence is there that Joseph's faith in God did not diminish but remained strong? (Think of all the ways he could have used those two years in prison).
2. At each stage of his life, Joseph has experienced disappointment: sibling jealousy, slavery, prison. Yet each time God has saved him and taken him to the top of the heap. Truly, the Spirit of God is with him (41:38) How can this encourage us to persevere in faith?
3. Like Joseph, we don't know what God has in store for the next part of our lives. Although we might plan, what is more important than making plans for our lives?

Day 4 (Read 41:41-57) Saved to save

1. Joseph has two sons. What does he name them and why? What does this tell you about his understanding of his experiences?
2. Joseph is given incredible status in the land (vv.41-44). How does he use the status and the resources entrusted to him?
3. How can you make the most of your God-given life situation to do good to others?

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Launch questions for group bible study

- Do you like to plan your life or take it as it comes? What are the pros and cons of both?



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Day 1 (Read 42:1-8) What goes around comes around

1. The famine has hit hard proving God to be in control. So Jacob sends his sons to Egypt except for Benjamin. What does this tell you about his previous loss?
2. What do his brothers do when they meet Joseph (v.6)? How does this compare to the original dream that got Joseph into so much trouble (37:7)?
3. Joseph has a unique opportunity for revenge. When we are presented with opportunities to 'take justice into our own hands', how should we respond? (See 2 Thess 1:5-7)

Day 2 (Read 42:9-36) Revenge, Justice or Reconciliation?

1. Joseph doesn't reveal his identity but deals with his brothers in an interesting way. Why do you think Joseph deals with his brothers like this? (Compare his words to his brothers with his actions towards them)
2. Note the response of the brothers (42:21-22). What does this reveal? What do Jacob's words to his sons reveal (42:36)
3. Joseph is not concerned with revenge but his dealings bring about a certain justice for his brothers. How does God's sovereignty give you confidence in dealing with people who have hurt you in the past?
4. Reflect: How does this passage serve as a warning if you think you can get away with sin rather than confess it to God?

Day 3 (Read 42:37-44:34) Judah: Road from perdition

1. When Benjamin is found to have the cup in his sack, how do the brother's respond? Who does this remind you of (37:34)?
2. All along we can see that Joseph is not after revenge (42:24, 43:30) but repentance. What indication is there that the brothers know their guilt?
3. Who is it who steps into save Benjamin and to speak for the brothers? Judah is a questionable character in chap.38 but how has he changed? (44:30-34)
4. Looking back on your own life, how has God brought repentance and change in your own life over a period of time? (remember it's not how you start but how you finish).

Day 4 (Read 45:1-28) Return to Egypt: Brothers in arms

1. Read verses 1 & 2 and try to appreciate all that Joseph has gone through in this whole experience. Imagine meeting his brother Benjamin for the first time (v.14)
2. Why doesn't Joseph respond with anger and vengeance? How does he emphasise God's role in all of this? (vv.5,7,8) Why is he able to forgive his brothers?
3. God has brought justice, repentance and reconciliation from people's sinful actions. Think of other situations in which God has done this. How does this encourage your trust in God? How can knowing God help you to be gracious like Joseph?

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Launch questions for group bible study

- Revenge and Justice. What's the difference; OR
- What do you think is necessary for true reconciliation?



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Day 1 (Read 46:1-27) Out of the Promised Land

1. God speaks again to Jacob (vv.3-4 compared to Gen 28:13-15). What does God promise and how does that compare to God's original promise to Abraham? (Gen 12:1-3)
2. How can we see a part of the promise to Abraham being fulfilled? (see 47:27) What part of the promise remains unfulfilled? (47:29,30)
3. Leaving the promised land for the unknown could have left Jacob paralyzed with fear. Why is he confident to leave? How can we also be confident when faced with the unknown?

Day 2 (Read 46:28-47:12) A New Hope

1. As the sons of Israel enter the new land, there is potential for rejection as the Egyptians detest shepherds (46:33). How does Joseph again show wisdom and mercy to those who once hurt him?
2. How does God work an even better outcome than they could imagine in Pharaoh's response (47:6)?
3. The sons of Israel are no longer in the promised land but they are in the best land of Egypt (47:11). Again God works to turn potential tragedy into a new hope through Joseph. How can God use you in your family to bring blessing to them. Pray that he might.

Day 3 (Read 49:1-28) Blessings: The line of Kings

1. Jacob's blessings for Judah stand out from the others. What in particular does Jacob promise him? (49:10) How does this figure in God's bigger plans. Compare with Ps 2:7-9 and Matt 1:17.
2. Describe the development of Judah's character from (ch.38 to 44:33).
3. "It's now how you start out that matters but how you finish". This is true of Judah and us. Think back in your life and the mistakes you've made. In what ways can you seek to finish well for God.

Day 4 (Read 50:1-26) Revenge: The final word?

1. The brothers fear revenge upon Jacob's death. How do they respond to Joseph? And what do they try to do? (50:15-17)
2. Reflect on Joseph's response to his brothers (50:20) and his final request (50:24,25). Where does his final confidence lie?
3. Read and reflect on the great promise of Romans 8:28. Think of a time in your own life when you have seen God intend good from the difficult circumstances of your life. Why can we be even more confident than Joseph that God will keep this promise?
4. Spend time thanking God for his sovereign power and mercy in your life

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Launch questions for group bible study

- What's the best thing and worst thing about the unknown?; OR
- "Finishing well is more important than starting well". Comment
- How do you cope with broken dreams?