

GOD PLANNED IT FOR GOOD

MAIN POINT.

God can use our **pain**
for His **glory**.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Joseph was sold into slavery by his jealous brothers and later falsely accused and sent to prison. But through it all, the Lord was with him (**Acts 7:9**). Jesus was arrested by jealous men, falsely accused, and crucified. But through it all, God was with Him and in Him to reconcile the lost world to Himself.



GOODNESS — OUT OF PAIN

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to read all of the content on the timeline as you prepare to teach.

Genesis 37

Genesis 50

WE WON'T ALWAYS ESCAPE PAIN

GENESIS 37:3-5,18-22,26-29

3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a robe of many colors. 4 But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him. 5 Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they hated him even more. . . . 18 They saw him from afar, and before he came near to them they conspired against him to kill him. 19 They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer. 20 Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits. Then we will say that a fierce animal has devoured him, and we will see what will become of his dreams." 21 But when Reuben heard it, he rescued him out of their hands, saying, "Let us not take his life." 22 And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but do not lay a hand on him"—that he might rescue him out of their hand to restore him to his father. . . . 26 Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? 27 Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers listened to him. 28 Then Midianite traders passed by. And they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. They took Joseph to Egypt. 29 When Reuben returned to the pit and saw that Joseph was not in the pit, he tore his clothes

GOD REDEEMS PAIN

GENESIS 50:15-21

15 When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "It may be that Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him." 16 So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this command before he died: 17 'Say to Joseph, "Please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil to you." And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father.'" Joseph wept when they spoke to him. 18 His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, "Behold, we are your servants." 19 But Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? 20 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. 21 So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones." Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

BEFORE YOU TEACH

MAIN POINT.

Leaders: Thank you for preparing to teach God's Word. As you do, may He teach you new and wonderful truths (Ps. 119:18).

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BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

JEALOUSY HARMS US AND OTHERS

GENESIS 37:3-5

"They certainly did not believe the dream as divine prophecy but rather the wishful fantasy of a spoiled brother. The Scriptures never evaluate the wisdom of Joseph's revealing his dreams. Of course, the dream came true as can be seen in Genesis 42:6; 43:26; 44:14; and 50:18. Perhaps this dream was for Joseph's benefit alone, and he chose to reveal it to his brothers as a reaction to their hatred of him or even to provoke them. At this point Joseph may not have been acting as the servant whom he would become through many trials and tribulations."⁷

GOD REDEEMS PAIN

GENESIS 50:19-20

"What became of Joseph in Egypt was the handiwork of God, too great for him to have accomplished alone (2 Kings 5:7). Evil succumbs to God's gracious purposes in behalf of his creation. This theology is exhibited in our passage by Joseph's assessment of his purpose in Egypt, for 'the saving of many lives' (v. 20b). The language recalls his first assessment at the brothers' reconciliation: 'But God sent me ahead of you ... to save your lives by a great deliverance' (45:7). In our passage 'many lives' appears to include the Egyptians and other peoples who had sought refuge in Egypt from the famine."⁸

GENESIS 50:19

"This godly man forgave his enemies, not so much because he had the depth of character to desire it, but because he knew that God had already offered them pardon. To hate his brothers would have been to deny the love of God offered them, and to become a little god of hate."⁹



CONTEXT

Jacob continued to perpetrate a dysfunctional behavior that had been prevalent in his family: favoritism. Joseph was born to Jacob's favored wife, Rachel. Jacob's favoritism led to a difficult journey for Joseph. Joseph exhibited immaturity in dealing with his brothers. He had a gift for interpreting dreams and would indeed rule over his brothers one day, but God would first take him through years of struggle and pain. He experienced several "pits" before God fulfilled the dreams in Genesis 37, including being sold into slavery and going to jail for an offense he didn't commit. But God was always with him. **God received glory and brought goodness from Joseph's pain, while refining him in the process.**

THEOLOGY CONNECTION



God's plan and human action

God's sovereignty over all of life encompasses the free actions of human beings. Proverbs 19:21 says, "Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand." In ways we are unable to comprehend fully, the Lord's plan goes forward through the choices of human beings as moral agents. **Even freely chosen sinful actions are factored into God's overarching plan**, as is the case with the crucifixion of Jesus—an event both purposed by God through foreknowledge and also carried out in the wicked decisions of human beings (Acts 2:23). Knowing that **God is working all things for the good of those who love Him** (Rom. 8:28), we trust in His promise to fulfill His plan, even when we do not understand our present circumstances.

LEADER'S PRAYER

WE'VE SEEN YOU BRING GOODNESS OUT OF
OUR OWN PAIN; GOD, HELP OUR STUDENTS TO
SEE YOUR GOODNESS IN THEIRS.



KICK STARTER

♡ HEARTCHECK

Let's check in on how you're doing spiritually. Have you wrestled with the Lord about any issues? Are you allowing Him to produce change in you? Explain.

These optional activities are designed to help your students interact. You'll find a Discussion Activity and a Cultural Connection, which touches on a relevant topic in today's teen culture. Each group is different, so adapt these activities to fit your group's needs. The goal is for students to connect more to the lesson as they connect to the topic and to one another.

1

NOT MY DAY

SUPPLIES LIST: NONE

Ask the following questions, allowing time for students to share responses.

- **WHEN HAVE YOU HAD A DAY THAT JUST DIDN'T GO YOUR WAY? WHAT HAPPENED?**
- **WHEN HAS LIFE FELT LIKE IT WASN'T GOING YOUR WAY?**
- **DO YOU THINK DAYS OR SEASONS LIKE THIS HAVE A PURPOSE? HOW?**

Most of us hate it when our day doesn't go as planned. Maybe you ran out of gas, forgot to study for a big test, or received bad news. Life sometimes doesn't go the way we think it will. But detours and struggles can actually have a purpose in our lives and in the lives of those around us. The detours can increase our faith when we realize God is present with us at all times.

2

CULTURAL CONNECTION

What does it mean to embrace victim mentality? Well, it means that when bad things happen, you immediately view yourself as the victim and someone else as at fault. It also usually means that you quickly adopt an attitude of despair and helplessness. You focus on what's been done to you instead of how God could use the situation. Victim mentality drags us into a self-focused state instead of helping us see what God's purpose may be in the situation. Now, this can't be confused with situations where we really are victims of someone else's bad choices. In those cases of abuse or neglect, we need to reach out for help. Even in those circumstances, God is with us. And rather than embracing victimhood, we can embrace the victory Christ has already accomplished for us in His death and resurrection. No matter what happens to us, we're conquerors in Him.

DISCUSSION

MAIN POINT.

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His **glory**.

WE WON'T ALWAYS ESCAPE PAIN

READ GENESIS 37:3-5,18-22,26-29

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE SINFUL ATTITUDES OR ACTIONS YOU SEE IN THESE FAMILY MEMBERS?

This family wasn't perfect. Jacob showed favoritism; Joseph displayed immaturity and possibly even arrogance toward his brothers; and the brothers were eaten up with jealousy and hatred. These sinful attitudes and actions only caused pain for this family; it led to attempted murder, Jacob thinking his son was dead, and slavery. But **God had bigger plans for them, and He would use them regardless of their sin.**

WHY DO WE HAVE THIS FALSE IDEA THAT CHRISTIANS WON'T HAVE TO ENDURE DIFFICULTIES?

Many of us have a mentality that if God loves us, then He won't allow us to walk through pain. We ask, "Why would God allow this to happen to me?" But in Scripture, we see God's people endure suffering, sometimes due to poor decisions and sometimes due to God's specific will. **Suffering always has a purpose in the hands of God; He won't let it be wasted.** We can expect difficulty in life, but we can trust that God is with us in it.



WHY DO WE SOMETIMES LET OUR CIRCUMSTANCES DETERMINE WHETHER WE THINK GOD IS WITH US OR NOT?

If circumstances define who God is and what He does, then we're in trouble. Because we live in a fallen world and experience the effects of sin, we'll experience pain here. It's easy to take our eyes off the hope we have in Christ and allow our eyes to zoom in on what's painful instead. Whatever our pain looks like, when we're forced into a "pit" like Joseph, we assume God has left us or that He simply doesn't care about what we're going through. We can look at Jesus's life to know this isn't true. He experienced betrayal, physical pain, and even death. But the Father never abandoned Him. **It was God's will to crush Jesus for our sake (Isa. 53:10), but Jesus never stopped trusting the Father. Even the crucifixion didn't cast a cruel light on God because Jesus knew God's character.** God isn't defined by our pain, but we can know Him in it.

GOD REDEEMS PAIN

READ GENESIS 50:15-21

Context: While Joseph was set over Pharaoh's household, his family suffered from famine in the land of Canaan. But Jacob, Joseph's father, "learned there was grain in Egypt" and sent his sons to check it out (Gen. 42:1). Joseph recognized his brothers and, after testing them, eventually revealed who he was (Gen. 42-45). When Pharaoh found out that Joseph's brothers were there, he invited Joseph's entire family to come and live in Egypt. Joseph was reunited with his father, and they all lived together in Egypt for a time before Joseph's father died. That's when his brothers began to panic, but God had a plan.



HOW DID JOSEPH'S STORY COME FULL CIRCLE? WHAT DOES THIS SHOW YOU ABOUT PAIN?

God brings purpose from pain. Joseph didn't really belong in Egypt, but God positioned him there for the purpose of saving a remnant of Israel from famine. **All of the difficulties along the way—all of other people's evil actions against him—led to Joseph being in a position to help his people.** And because Joseph knew God was sovereign over his pain, he could forgive his brothers.

WHAT DOES JOSEPH'S REACTION TO HIS BROTHERS SHOW YOU ABOUT HIS GROWTH? WHAT KEPT HIM FROM DEVELOPING A VICTIM MENTALITY?

Joseph's journey had been incredibly difficult. Many of us would have taken the opportunity to get revenge against the brothers for all the pain they helped set in motion. **He could've embraced the role of a victim, but instead, Joseph extended grace.** At seventeen, he showed some immaturity in how he shared his dreams with his brothers. But now, **he knew God had been there all along.** Joseph foreshadowed Christ, offering forgiveness and mercy in place of judgment.

WRAP-UP

HOW COULD BELIEVING GOD IS ALWAYS WITH YOU AND THAT HE BRINGS GOODNESS FROM PAIN HELP YOU APPROACH DIFFICULT SEASONS?

God isn't just present when you're worshipping Him or praying to Him. He isn't only present when you're making godly decisions. God is with you at all times because the Holy Spirit dwells within believers. God is always with you because you're a temple (1 Cor. 3:16). There is no circumstance that God won't be with you in. We also have account after account of how God somehow worked goodness from pain. **God is a redeemer of His people, and He even redeems our pain. We can place it at His feet. We can trust Him in sickness, grief, and betrayal. We can trust Him because He is faithful (2 Tim. 2:13).** When we walk through pain with this mindset, God will use it to grow us, to show us more of Himself, and to make us more like Him. Our pain can point people to God's goodness and faithfulness.