

## Joseph Week 7 Notes

*Hi Ladies! I hope you had a wonderful Easter reflecting on all Jesus has done for us! We are nearing the finish line of our spring study. Please remind your ladies to save the morning of Saturday, May 18<sup>th</sup> for our spring event. We will be walking through the bible together in three shorter sessions and using some of the major themes as a catalyst for small group discussions at tables so ladies can make new friends and get connected. And, as always, fun, food, and testimonies will be sprinkled in too! This is a great time to invite newcomers who would like to learn more about Christianity and the Bible.*

### Day 1

The author points out that although Joseph's physical existence and comfort had improved drastically in this season of his life, Joseph was under a lot of stress as he juggled multiple responsibilities and emotions. Do any of your ladies feel this way in their lives right now? Take heart- God understands!

At the beginning of a day that we anticipate to be busy and stressful, we may feel we do not have time to slow down for a moment- pray, read some Scripture and have a moment with the Lord. However, I have found that after doing this, God has this way of making the rest of my day super productive- all the volunteers say "yes!", the lesson comes easily and smoothly from my head to the paper, He can make the traffic lights all green. Dedicating some time each day to the Lord is an investment of time that pays off in the long run!

We see how God had prepared Joseph for the next season of his life. Did this resonate with your ladies? How can you look back and see how God has prepared you for things? Even during times of great trials, we can live with a sense of hopeful anticipation, because we know that God will use what we are learning now, to further His kingdom in the future.

Worry and anxiety has increased tremendously over the past decade. Which scriptures stood out to your ladies? Take some time to read them out loud to comfort those plagued with worry. To rest in the knowledge that God is orchestrating the details our lives- whether good or bad- can alleviate that sense of panic when life feels out of control. When your natural reaction is to panic- recite Scripture and pray instead.

### Day 2

In this day, we take a look at how God defines success- how did your ladies definition of success compare to the biblical definition?

At the bottom of page 146, the author summarizes those excellent verses- God is seeking someone who is loyal, faithful, humble, a servant, obedient to His statutes, that considers others more important than herself. Where, in these categories, are you achieving success? What area are you blindly choosing not to cultivate, and therefore accepting failure?

Contentment is something we all desire, and yet it can be quite evasive. There is no better state of mind, than to be in a place of godly contentment. How can we work to stay there? Here are some thoughts I consider often in this battle of the mind.

- God does not always give me what I want- He gives me what I need. Sometimes what I want is the opposite of what God knows I need. Ultimately I trust Him more than myself.
- I cannot take anything but eternal treasures with me to heaven- everything else will end up in a landfill. Am I using my energy to accumulate earthly treasure, or eternal treasure?
- God sees all my efforts- even if no one else does. When push comes to shove- God will advocate for me, and that is all I need!
- I will never have “enough” earthly treasure. Contentment though earthly measures is like a mirage in the desert. It plays a trick on your mind. As soon as you think you have obtained it- it disappears. Get off that treadmill, and start walking in a new direction toward heavenly treasure.

How are you managing the process of sanctification? Are you like Joseph- taking each season as an opportunity to learn and grow? What is revealed in you during times of testing? What would those around you say? Is your faith in the Lord evident in trials? Or, is your faith proven to be contingent on your comfort and perceived control in times of trial?

#### Days 3 & 4

In this day we walk through some pivotal moment in Joseph’s private life. Historical narratives are great because we can put ourselves in the place of the characters. Who did you most relate to? Joseph? The brothers? Jacob? What insights did the ladies takeaway from this account?

The author brought up some good points that, again, I had not thought of...

- In Gen 42:1, the brothers were “just looking at each other”- knowing, and dreading, that they had to go to Egypt.
- Jacob is still favoring one son- now it is Benjamin. How must the 10 older brothers had felt, knowing that their Dad was less concerned about them, than Benjamin?
- Just because the reader knows that Jacob thought Joseph was dead, Joseph did not know. He may have wondered why Jacob never came looking for him.
- Joseph kept Simeon in Egypt, instead of Reuben- perhaps because he heard how Reuben spoke against the plan to sell him into slavery.
- Joseph changed his plan to keep only one brother, instead of sending only one brother, because he said that he feared God. How did God influence Joseph to adjust his plan? Could Joseph have been struggling to?
- Joseph’s steward also feared God.
- Jacob did not immediately send the sons back until they were starving again, leaving Simeon in Egypt, with no regard for his family.

Family drama is complicated isn’t it? There are many perspectives to consider! May we be gracious when we are navigating the deep seeded hurts of our family members.

### Day 5

Just a sidenote- the first exercise on Day 5 was too hard. I gave up. But I understand the point the bible study author was trying to make.

In this day, we look at three different topics: the administrative and organizational skills of Joseph, what God defines as success, and how God, in His wisdom, disciplines those He loves. As disjointed as those three topics seem- Joseph could have provided such godly insight on all of those because of the life that he lived.

God does not waste our pain. He uses it for His glory.

What life circumstance has God allowed the ladies in your group to experience? Have they developed biblical wisdom and insight on certain topics because of the “caravan” that God has taken them on? Are they on the lookout for people that God may place in their life that they can minister to in specific ways? Or are there places in their life that they are resisting God’s spiritual work, and are therefore slow to learn out of stubbornness and/or resentment?