

1 – Focusing on God more than the prison of your circumstances

Gen 39:13-14, 20-23 When she saw that he had left his cloak in her hand and had run out of the house, she called her household servants. "Look," she said to them, "...He came in here to sleep with me, but I screamed... Joseph's master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined. **But while Joseph was there in the prison, the LORD was with him;** he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden... The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the LORD was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.

Titus 2:9-10 Slaves must always obey their masters and do their best to please them. They must not talk back or steal (*pilfer*), but must show themselves to be entirely trustworthy and good. **Then** (*so that*) they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive in every way.

2 – Focusing on God more than having a personal pity party

Genesis 40:7-8 Joseph came to them the next morning [2 prisoners – king's cupbearer and baker], **he saw that they were dejected.** So he asked Pharaoh's officials who were in custody with him in his master's house, "**Why do you look so sad today?**" "We both had dreams," they answered, "but there is no one to interpret them."

Philippians 2:4 Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.

Gen 40:14,23 [Joseph said to the cupbearer] "When all goes well with you, remember me and show me kindness; mention me to Pharaoh and get me out of this prison. I was forcibly carried off from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing to deserve being put in a dungeon."... The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph; he forgot him.

Don't waste your PAIN. Let God turn it into GAIN for you and others.

3 – Focusing on God more than people's praise

Gen 41:1,14-16 When two full years had passed, Pharaoh had a dream... So Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and **he was quickly brought from the dungeon.** When he had shaved and changed his clothes, he came before Pharaoh. Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had a dream, and no one can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it." "**I cannot do it,**" Joseph replied to Pharaoh, "**but God** will give Pharaoh the answer he desires."

Years of LONELINESS and PAIN can change in a DAY! HURRAY!

Philippians 4:13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength. Also see 2 Chron 16:9

Gal 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

4 - Focusing on God more than the past

Gen 41:39-40 Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders.

Gen 41:50 Before the years of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph by Asenath daughter of Potiphara, priest of On. Joseph named his firstborn Manasseh and said, "It is because **God has made me forget all my trouble** and all my father's household." The second son he named Ephraim and said, "It is because God has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering."

God can take you from the promise, to the pit, to a high position, to the prison, and onto the palace!

5 – Focusing on God more than payback time

Gen 45:14 He threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin embraced him, weeping. And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them.

Gen 50:15, 18-21 When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?" ... His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. "We are your slaves," they said. But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and *spoke kindly to them*.

Eph 4:32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Table Discussion Questions for this week:

1. (Everyone) Share your name and something positive (sports, extracurricular activity, job, hobby, etc.) you were involved with in your high school years.

2-3 help answer each question:

2. What was something in Joseph's story that brought hope and encouragement to your own life?
3. What was a difficult thing you went through in the past that you feel has made you a stronger person today?
4. What did you learn about people in today's lesson?
5. What did you learn about God through the story of what happened in Joseph's life?
6. Why do you think bad things sometimes helps to good people?
7. Based on Joseph's story, what did you learn about forgiveness and being kind to people who have hurt you? Why is forgiveness so important in our lives (both the forgiveness God can give us and the forgiveness we need to extend to others)?

ICE BREAKER QUESTIONS FOR GROUP MIXER (at end of the night):

Organize into different groups of 8 (with at least 4 people that were not at your table). One person has a cup and passes it to someone and asks them to answer one of the questions below. That person then passes the cup and asks someone else a question. Keep going until time is called.

1. If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?
2. If I gave you \$10,000, what would you spend it on?
4. If you could talk to anyone in the world, who would it be?
5. If you could wish one thing to come true this year, what would it be?
6. If you could live in any period of history, when would it be?
7. If you could change anything about yourself, what would you change?
8. If you could be someone else, who would you be?
9. If you could have any question answered, what would it be?
11. If you could have any kind of pet, what would you have?
12. If you could do your dream job 10 years from now, what would it be?
14. If you sat down next to Jesus on a bus, what would you talk about?
15. If money and time was no object, what would you be doing right now?

TIPS for TABLE DISCUSSIONS

If you don't have a table host, have someone volunteer who has led Bible study or small groups in the past.

1. EVERYONE should contribute during the discussion time.
2. Smile and be friendly.
3. Be gracious and give grace to one another.
4. Keep the discussion moving, don't get too sidetracked.
5. Be kind to anyone that may be hurting, but still go through the questions.