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GENESIS 39:2-4,7-9,13-21

IN THE PRISON



THIS WEEK'S **focus**

Have you ever been around a kid who wanted you to stay with her as she did something difficult? Maybe it was a younger sibling or a cousin who had to walk into a dark room. Before she did, she turned around, and as her eyes became wide, she asked, “Will you go with me?” Though we grow out of our fear of the dark, new troubles and fears grow in its place. What we don’t outgrow is the desire to be comforted during hard or frightening experiences. In today’s lesson, we’ll see how Joseph experienced suffering and temptation. Though Joseph walked in obedience to God, it came with a cost. Still the Lord’s presence was with him and would be his source of power amid the pain. God’s presence empowers us to live in a way that honors Him.



CENTRAL **truth**

God’s presence empowers us to live in a way that honors Him.



EXPLORE

scripture

GENESIS 39:2-4,7-9,13-21

GENESIS 39:2-4

2 The LORD was with Joseph, and he became a successful man, serving in the household of his Egyptian master. **3** When his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD made everything he did

successful, **4** Joseph found favor with his master and became his personal attendant. Potiphar also put him in charge of his household and placed all that he owned under his authority.

GENESIS 39:7-9

7 After some time his master's wife looked longingly at Joseph and said, "Sleep with me." **8** But he refused. "Look," he said to his master's wife, "with me here my master does not concern himself with anything in his house, and he has put all that he

owns under my authority. **9** No one in this house is greater than I am. He has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. So how could I do this immense evil, and how could I sin against God?"

GENESIS 39:13-21

13 When she saw that he had left his garment with her and had run outside, **14** she called her household servants. "Look," she said to them, "my husband brought a Hebrew man to make fools of us. He came to me so he could sleep with me, and I screamed as loud as I could. **15** When he heard me screaming for help, he left his garment beside me and ran outside." **16** She put Joseph's garment beside her until his master came home. **17** Then she told him the same story: "The

Hebrew slave you brought to us came to make a fool of me, **18** but when I screamed for help, he left his garment beside me and ran outside." **19** When his master heard the story his wife told him — "These are the things your slave did to me" — he was furious **20** and had him thrown into prison, where the king's prisoners were confined. So Joseph was there in prison. **21** But the LORD was with Joseph and extended kindness to him. He granted him favor with the prison warden.

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GENESIS 39:2-4,7-9,13-21

CONVERSATION

questions

▶ READ GENESIS 39:2-4.

.01 During challenging times, how are we sometimes tempted to think about God?

.02 Observe Joseph's response to his situation. What can people learn from our response to suffering?

.03 How can we honor God in our work (including school, sports, clubs, jobs, and so on)?



CULTURE

Even though Joseph's scenario was less than ideal, he worked with excellence and was a blessing to Potiphar and his household, because the Lord was with him. There is much to learn here. Many of us approach following Jesus as something solely spiritual—a part of our lives that doesn't touch other compartments. Joseph's example should serve as a reminder that every area of our lives is an opportunity to display God's character. We ought to approach our work with the mindset that we are not merely carrying out a task for our teacher, coach, music instructor, or boss. Rather, our work is another opportunity to point our friends and leaders to Jesus (see Col. 3:17,23-24).

▶ READ GENESIS 39:7-9.

.04 What does it look like to seek the Lord's strength when temptation arises?

.05 How did Joseph view temptation? What can we learn from his example?

▶ READ GENESIS 39:13-21.

.06 How can Joseph's experience challenge the way we understand God's kindness?

.07 Joseph's obedience was costly. What might it cost us to walk in obedience?

.08 How can verse 21 comfort us when we experience difficult things for following the Lord?



THEOLOGY

God's presence helped Joseph reject the temptation to sin with Potiphar's wife. But as Christ followers who have God's presence residing in us through the Holy Spirit, there are still moments when we give into temptation. If we're honest, it can be frustrating. Through Jesus's death and resurrection, we are freed from the penalty of sin. We are forgiven, adopted into God's family, and given power to walk in obedience (see Eph. 5:1). However, until Jesus returns and His kingdom is fully realized, we are not yet free from the presence of sin in our world. We all still possess patterns and habits of pursuing things we need or want that don't honor the Lord. Even the apostle Paul wrote about his experience with this struggle, saying "the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh . . . a slave to sin" (see Rom. 7:18-25). When we are faced with sin, we must embrace our new identities (see Col. 3:12), confess sin quickly (see 1 John 1:9), and seek help from our church communities (see Gal. 6:2).

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GENESIS 39:2-4,7-9,13-21

NOW what?



CENTRAL truth

God's presence empowers us to live in a way that honors Him.

.09 How can we remind ourselves and each other of God's presence during difficult times?

.10 As a group, how can we fight against temptation together?

.11 In what areas of life are we sometimes hesitant to obey because it would be costly?

.12 How is it an encouragement to know God gives us the strength to honor Him?

DAILY devotions

MEMORIZE GENESIS 39:21

7 ARROWS FOR BIBLE READING



What does this passage say?



What does this passage tell us about God?



What did this passage mean to its original audience?



How does this passage change the way I relate to people?



What does this passage tell us about humans?



How does this passage prompt me to pray?



What does this passage demand of me?

day 1

GENESIS 39:2-4

DWELL

God's presence was with Joseph. Despite the betrayal he experienced, the Lord's hand of provision and protection were on him as he worked in Potiphar's house. God's favor was so evident in Joseph's life and work that Potiphar elevated him to a role that made him overseer of the entire household. When difficulty arises, we are tempted to believe that the Lord is absent or indifferent to what we are going through. Nevertheless, just as God was with Joseph, He journeys with us through the hard things we experience.



How is the Lord's presence central to Joseph's success in these verses?



How can you honor God when you go through difficult or painful situations?

MEMORIZE

Write Genesis 39:21 on an index card or sticky note and attach it to your bathroom mirror. Say the verse aloud each day, emphasizing a few different words each time.

PRAY

God, You are not absent or indifferent to my pain. Through the power of Your Spirit, You are present with me and will never abandon me.

day 2

GENESIS 39:7-9

DWELL

Just as things started looking up for Joseph, temptation slithered its way onto the scene. Potiphar's wife attempted to lure him into her bed, but Joseph refused. Out of honor for his Egyptian master—and even more so for his heavenly Master—Joseph did not allow sin to entrap him. God's presence not only enabled Joseph to work with excellence but to walk in obedience in this moment as well. Temptation lingers around the corner for each of us. In fact, when you read the word “temptation,” there may have been something that came to mind for you. Bring it before the Lord and allow Him to give you the grace necessary to obey.

↓ When we are faced with temptation, what lies might we tell ourselves about God?

↻ What does it look like for us to invite God into the moments we are tempted?

MEMORIZE

Save Genesis 39:21 as a wallpaper or screensaver on your phone or computer. Read it aloud each time you see it.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, You don't just require obedience; You also grant the grace necessary to obey. In moments when I am tempted, remind me of who You are and what You have done for me.

day 3

PSALM 51:1-10

DWELL

King David is one of the most notable figures in Scripture. His story, however, was not free of sin or shortcomings. This psalm written by David was a sorrow-filled response to the events of 2 Samuel 11–12. Those chapters document his most significant downfall. Like Joseph's interaction with Potiphar's wife, David embraced sin for what it truly was: rebellion against the Lord. David didn't stop there though. He invited God to grant him a clean heart and renew him so that he could walk in obedience and enjoy intimacy with Him.

↻ Note David's response to his sin. When was the last time your sin grieved you?

↔ Is there someone you have sinned against with whom God is asking you to reconcile? Who is it?

MEMORIZE

Say the book, chapter, and verse number for Genesis 39:21 out loud several times. Then read aloud just the first few words of the verse. Do this a few times a day and see if you can memorize more each time.

PRAY

Lord Jesus, You took on my sin and shame on the cross so that I could live as a forgiven child in Your kingdom. Help me to see sin as rebellion against a gracious and loving King.

day 4

GENESIS 39:13-21

DWELL

Joseph went from a pit, to enslavement in Egypt, to a prison cell. After rejecting Potiphar's wife's seductive advances, Joseph was wrongly accused and imprisoned. His obedience was costly. At times, our obedience to the Lord may cost us as well. Whether it's our reputation, opportunities, or relationships, there is often a risk to honoring God—and risk is scary. But just as God was with Joseph in Potiphar's house and continued to be with him in the prison cell, God will be with us. Though it may not seem like it, God was using Joseph's pain within His plan of redemption. Obedience may be risky, but it is always worth it.

↓ Has obedience to God or others ever cost you anything? Reflect on that experience.

↑ How have you experienced the Lord's kindness in times of suffering?

MEMORIZE

Write out Genesis 39:21 on a piece of paper. Circle three to five key words in the verse and consider their importance. Focus on those words and see how much of the verse you can speak from memory.

PRAY

Lord Jesus, You understand that obedience can be costly. Through Your example and the Spirit's guidance, help me to see that obedience is always worth it because You are with me.

day 5

1 PETER 4:12-16

DWELL

← How did Peter choose to encourage the recipients of this letter?

↔ How can your attitude during difficult times uplift those around you?

In his letter to a group of suffering Christians, the apostle Peter pointed them to the example of Jesus. Just as He had experienced suffering, they, too, experienced suffering for being His followers. But Peter encouraged his weary audience to rejoice. Yes, rejoice! Suffering as a result of our own poor choices isn't worth celebrating. But God honors those who experience hardship for being His followers—it's evidence that we are reflecting Him well. Have you embraced hardship for being a follower of Jesus? God sees you and is with you. Just as we share in Jesus's suffering, we will also share in the future promise of God restoring all that's been broken by sin.

MEMORIZE

Read Genesis 39:21 several times. Then start by trying to memorize the first two or three words. Once you have those words memorized, add a few more words at a time until you can say the whole verse.

PRAY

Gracious God, thank You for carrying me through hard times. In Jesus's life, death, and resurrection, I can find both my example and hope for rejoicing in difficult times.