

# **The Complexity of Forgiveness**

## *The Backstory of Betrayal (May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020)*

### **PREPARATION**

- Familiarize yourself with this Study Guide.
- If you missed it, watch the sermon online [HERE](#).
- Spend some time in prayer before your group gathers.
- You **always** have the option to use some or all the questions and/or prepare your own questions.
- Review the learning objective to focus the conversation, read the primary scriptures as a group, summarize the main points, ask the questions, and use supporting texts to enhance the concepts.

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **Opening Prayer:** (1-2 minutes)

*In light of what God is saying through this week's message, here's a suggestion of how your group can invite God into your time together.*

Thank the Lord for His sovereignty over all things! Praise the Son for his ability to compassionately sympathize with our suffering in this world! Praise Jesus for resurrecting from the grave so that we can have a relationship with Him through the Holy Spirit! As we shelter in place, pray that we would continue to endure and deepen our roots as we learn to forgive others in the power the Holy Spirit! Finally, pray that the good news of Jesus would reach those who are suffering from the Coronavirus by sending us to represent your love!

#### **Discussion:** (45-60 minutes)

##### **What's Going on This Week**

This Sunday, Pastor Danny brought us into our first week of our new series titled *The Complexity of Forgiveness*. Pastor Danny points us to the beginning stages in the story of Joseph in Genesis 37 in order to explore the backstory involved in situations of betrayal or when relationships fall apart. Pastor Danny introduces the story of Joseph to challenge the church to hold onto the hope and the promise that God continues to orchestrate all events in our lives for the good even though we may not be able to see it!

**“When the world is turning against you, God is working for you. God’s plan for your life is much bigger than one season of betrayal.” Pastor Danny Strange**

## Suggested Questions

**Check-In:** *Icebreaker* – Over the next couple of weeks, we will be camped out in the story of Joseph found in the book of Genesis. What is your favorite story in the book of Genesis and why?

**Study Tip:** Tradition tells us that the book of Genesis was written by Moses as the opening book of the Pentateuch (the first 5 books). Genesis (meaning *origins*) opens up with an origin story about the *one* God who created the universe. 3,000 years ago, this claim would have shocked the neighboring Near Eastern regions who were raised to worship a multitude of gods and goddesses. Moses then documents the downward spiral of humanity under the curse of sin, but also signals that one day the “seed of the woman” would come and crush the serpent (Gen. 3:14-15). At the pinnacle of human rebellion, this God steps into His creation to make a covenant of blessing with Abraham by promising him descendants that would become a great nation, a specific plot of land, and the ability to be a conduit of God’s blessing to all other nations (Gen. 12:1-3, 15:4-21, 17:3-8). God intentionally holds Himself accountable to this covenant because He already knows humans could not do it (Gen. 6:5). Therefore, in the story of Joseph we see the God of creation moving His covenant people closer to fulfilling His promises even though they continue to rebel (Gen. 50:20)! As you walk through the study guide, consider how God may be moving you closer to His blessings even in the midst of your own sin or in the brokenness around you!

- **Objective #1: Explore elements that lead to betrayal (without necessarily going into specifics)**

*Primary Texts: Genesis 29:13 – 30:24; 35:10-12, 22b-26* – Pastor Danny begins the sermon by pointing out that Joseph’s story of betrayal includes a messy family history and an escalating backstory. Have you ever experienced betrayal in your life (you do not have to talk about the specific experience)? What are some of the most important lessons that God has taught you by looking back on these moments and the backstory leading up to it? Why do you believe these moments of betrayal are such a sensitive topic?

- **Objective #2: Measure the balance between your own actions vs. reliance on God’s will.**

*Primary Texts: Genesis 37:1-11* – Next, Pastor Danny points out that the story goes out of its way to paint Joseph as an innocent teenager who was attempting to honor God with his life. He mentions that in some instances, relationships that fall apart may not be your fault but are allowed by God. On a scale of 1-10 – a score of 1 says that you see all relationships entirely as your responsibility whereas a score of 10 says that you place relationships entirely in the hands of God’s will – where would you measure in your own life and why? What does your answer tell you about yourself and your relationship with God?

*Supporting Texts: (Joseph’s Innocence) Gen. 39:1-23; 41:14-16*

- **Objective #3: Commit to putting love into *Action* this week!**

*Primary Texts: Genesis 37:11; 41:37-57* – Finally, Pastor Danny briefly alludes to a glimmer of hope amidst the betrayal when he points out that Jacob held on to the dreams of Joseph. This simple phrase reminds the reader of what God has in store for Joseph’s life in order to prove that God continues to work even in the midst of betrayal. What truths can you hold onto this week in order to trust that God is working even when your relationships may be falling apart? Have you ever seen this work out in your life or the lives of others around you?

*Supporting Texts: (God’s Plan) Gen. 50:20; Phil. 1:3-6; Jer. 29:11-14; Rom. 8:28-29; (Jesus Betrayed) Jn. 1:14; Mk. 14:43-52; Lk. 4:14-30; 22:1-6; 23:1-20; Heb. 4:14-16, 12:1-3; (Seek Forgiveness) Psalm 130; Eph. 4:1-6*

**Closing Prayer:** (5-10 minutes)

*In light of what God is saying through this week's message, here's some suggestions of what your group could talk about with God in prayer.*

Thank Jesus for becoming human and being a God who can sympathize with our experiences! Ask that the Holy Spirit would give us the ability to trust you with our relationships and to grow deeper roots in our relationship with Him so that we can love God and love others like Jesus did! Finally, pray that the Holy Spirit would continue to display the love of Jesus through forgiveness this COVID-19 season.

### **THROUGHOUT THE WEEK**

**-Further Reading and Exploration:** *Read Genesis 37-50* For the next couple of weeks, we will be camped out in the story of Joseph. As you read the entire story, write down some of the major themes you notice and begin to ask yourself why the author decided to end the book of Genesis by presenting the story of Joseph!

**-Stay up to date with Coronavirus Ministry Opportunities:** Help us out by pointing the people in your Community Group to [3Crosses.org/coronavirus](https://3crosses.org/coronavirus). If you or anyone in your group is looking to serve food in our pantry, access spiritual care, or seek financial assistance, you can find all you need at [3Crosses.org/neighborhood](https://3crosses.org/neighborhood)

**-Participate in a 3Crosses Grow Group!** Over the Summer, our community group ministry will be featuring the 3Crosses Grow Discipleship Experience. This will include daily devotional, weekly pastor-led teaching, and 3 workshops to share how the experience is going! You can register to lead a new group by filling out our [Community Group Registration Form](#) or let us know you want to switch by filling out the [my3Crosses Edits Form](#)!

**- Find out how to pray for two people in your group this week!** Pray that the members of your group would trust that the Lord is moving even though they may not be able to see it!