

# **The Complexity of Forgiveness**

## *The Moral of Joseph's Story (June 14<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 reflect on the past week, pray that we would continue to endure and learn to reconcile with others in the power the Holy Spirit! Finally, pray that the good news of Jesus would reach those who are suffering by sending us to represent your love!

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

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

This Sunday, Annie Wilson brought us into the fifth and final week of the series titled *The Complexity of Forgiveness*. Annie highlights the key verse of the Joseph story found in Genesis 50:20 in order to summarize the moral of the entire Joseph narrative. She points out three basic truths that we can take away from this series: (1) God's presence is always with us, (2) God is faithful to His promises, and (3) God is able to use any and all things for the good of His people.

**"Take Courage – you might feel like you are trudging through mud right now, but God is not finished with your story" – Annie Wilson (Elementary Ministry Director)**

## Suggested Questions

**Check-In:** *Icebreaker* – What is your favorite childhood memory and how might this experience continue to affect your life today?

**Study Tip:** Genesis 50:20 is a key passage that not only summarizes the entire Joseph narrative, but arguably the entire book of Genesis. The story begins when humanity rebels against God and His good plan that originally allowed for Adam and Eve to dwell in the glorious presence of God. What results is a series of fallen human beings defining what is good on their own and progressively making a name for themselves. Prior to this downward spiral, we are introduced to one of God's promises of hope: *the seed of the woman who would come and crush the serpent!* Then, at the literal peak of human rebellion (think tower of babel), God makes another promise to a faithful man named Abram. This includes God's blessing of offspring, land, and a nation of people who would become a conduit of God's blessing to others as well. In other words, *God's kingdom* was going to come through the line of Abram. Much like God's first act of creation, Genesis portrays a God who can orchestrate *order* out of the *chaos* of mankind's evil intentions including Israel. Even though Abraham's family was sinful, God continued to move His promises forward... thus we end up with Genesis 50:20. This verse sets the stage for the rest of the Old Testament as we continue to follow His promises throughout the narrative of sinful Israel. As you reflect on this study guide, look back on how God has worked through some of your darkest times and look forward in hope recognizing that God is in the business of working out good for His people.

### **Objective #1: Reflect on how God's Presence will never leave you.**

*Primary Texts:* Genesis 39:1-5, 21-23; 41:38 – Annie begins by reminding us that in our moments of betrayal, darkness, and feelings of brokenness, God is still with us. Just like God never left Joseph through His ups and downs, God's presence will never leave you if you are one of His children. After enduring all the emotional ups and downs of this series, are you able to recognize God's presence in your betrayal moment? If so, what has changed? If not, ask a group member for an outside perspective?

*Supporting Texts:* (God's Presence in Genesis) 2:5-9, 15-23; 6:8, 17-18; 17:1-8; 26:2-3; 28:15-17; 46:1-4

### **Objective #2: Meditate on God's Promises over your life.**

*Primary Texts:* Genesis 50:20 – Next, Annie talks about how God will always fulfill His promises! She talks about how the key text in Genesis acts as proof that God wove together Joseph's story to fulfill his promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. What is the promise that you think God may be calling you to have faith in after reflecting on your situation this series? How can we as a group help remind you of this promise extending beyond this series?

*Supporting Texts:* (God's Promises in Genesis) 8:20-9:17; 12:1-3, 7; 15:1-19; 26:1-5; 28:10-17; 35:9-12; 49:8-12

### **Objective #3: Pray that God's Will would be done in your life as it is in heaven!**

*Primary Texts:* Genesis 50:24-25; Romans 8:28-29 – Finally, Annie concludes by pointing out that if God can use the ugliness of Joseph's life to orchestrate something that fulfills His divine purpose, then He is able to use all things for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purposes. What are some of the struggles or emotions that you feel called to surrender to the Lord before we move onto the next series? What has been your biggest takeaway reflecting on the complexity of forgiveness?

*Supporting Texts:* (God's Will in Genesis) 1:26-28; 3:14-15; 22:1-19; 32:22-39; 47:27-48:4; Exodus 1:1-7

## **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 pain and emotions! Ask that the Holy Spirit would give us the ability to trust you with our relationships while we continue to try and find the good out of our situation in this crucial moment in your story. Pray that we continue to shift our minds on what you may be doing in our community so that we can see how you are intimately working out good in heartbreaking moments! Finally, pray that the Holy Spirit would continue to transform us into becoming more like Jesus so we can display his forgiveness during this tumultuous season.

## **THROUGHOUT THE WEEK**

**-Further Reading and Exploration:** *Read Romans 7:7 – 8:39* As you conclude the story of Genesis, you will have noticed that Romans 8:28 continued to pop up throughout the series. This week, spend some time with that text by zooming out on Paul's argument and reflecting on the context of this popular passage. As you read, reflect on how the context of the passage might in fact affect the meaning of the passage and write down what you find.

**-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)

**- Find out how to pray for two people in your group this week!** Pray that the members of your group would trust in the Lord's presence, promises, and will this week!