

LESSON 1: JOSEPH

“And we know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.” (Romans 8:28, NLT)

Genesis 37

The same question gets asked in a variety of forms: Where is God when it **hurts**? Why do bad things happen to good people? How can a good and **loving** God allow suffering?

Joseph could have asked these same questions; maybe he did. Mistreated and abused by his **brothers**, and eventually sold into slavery by them, **Joseph** could have easily chosen to believe that this was all **evidence** that God didn't love him or wasn't “on his side.” Isn't that the same place our minds are often **tempted** to go when we face **difficulties** or troubles? “God must not care about me. If He did, these things wouldn't be happening to me.” This seems to be especially true if our troubles come about because of other people's meanness or sin, while we were simply trying to live our lives **following** God.

Joseph was **living** a life of obedience even as a young boy. He wasn't perfect, as evidenced by his somewhat boastful **interactions** with his brothers, where he relayed his dreams of ruling over them. But he **definitely** didn't deserve to be thrown in a pit and then sold as a slave by his own family members! Can you **imagine** how he must have felt when his brothers ripped off his **colorful** robe? This robe represented the special **bond** he had with his father and his brothers, in their jealousy, destroyed it.

Have you ever seen something you **treasured** be ripped apart before your eyes? Maybe it was a **tangible** object like Joseph's robe, or maybe it was a long-treasured dream that you saw **crumble**. In those moments, it's easy to ask, “Where are you, God? Don't you see me?”

One thing we can learn from Joseph's life is that God never leaves us. Even when we can't see Him or **feel** Him, He is there and He is working on our **behalf**. Joseph must have **wondered** what God was up to as he was being led off to Egypt as a slave, but he didn't waiver in his trust and **obedience** to God.

Questions to think about:

1. How does it feel to be mistreated when you have done nothing wrong?
2. What do you learn from Joseph's life that can help you respond to people who mistreat you or are jealous of you?
3. Do you ever struggle with envy like Joseph's brothers did? If so, what are some healthy ways you can deal with it?