

Home Group Notes

SHARE IT

What painful thing has happened in your life that now feels purposeful?

NOTES TO LEADERS: *Yep, this is very personal! This may take up much of the evening. As you are building trust, be sure that people don't try to fix each other or that any one person dominates.*

STUDY THE WORD

The following questions span Genesis 42-50. Notice the theme of God sovereignly working.

How did God use this time interval (13 years) in Joseph's brothers? (42:21-24)

NOTES TO LEADERS: *You can tell from the Scriptures (above reference) that they were now feeling the guilt and shame and were expecting a "reckoning" for their actions of evil against their brother. Who knows how the father (Jacob) has mourned and what it has done to their conscience and hearts. We even see signs of coming repentance followed by reconciliation of the family.*

What were some of the things Joseph might have felt in his encounter with brothers? (42:7-24; 45:4-15)

NOTES TO LEADERS: *He was obviously moved in his emotions. He could have experienced anger, bitterness, revenge and loss. In addition, he could have felt relief, joy at seeing family, and a great sense of God's goodness.*

It what ways was God sovereignly working throughout their lives? (42:18, 28; 43:1-30; 45:1-10; 45:16-18; 46:1-4; 50:19-24)

NOTES TO LEADERS: *Joseph regularly refers to God as his source of wisdom and power, and God working out his "good" through the circumstances. The family has been drifting from God for years. Now, they are faced with need (famine) and then discover that God has been preserving both their brother and their family.*

How did Joseph's and his family's perspective change throughout this story?

NOTES TO LEADERS: *After 13 years of pain and suffering and unexpected favor with authorities, Joseph has seen God's providential hand. Because of this, he had a boldness when he went before Pharaoh, going beyond the interpretation of the dream to suggesting solutions.*

The brothers, after years of facing the pain of the selfish and cruel decision, were now were ready to stand up for a brother, cared about the pain of their father, and were even expecting to the God-given consequences for their actions. The grace shown to them now overwhelmed them.

How did God use all this in His plan for Israel (the Jews)? (45:5-8)

NOTES TO LEADERS: *God's guidance preserved the family, allowed it to multiply into a nation, and even granted them great wealth enough to start the nation in Canaan.*

DISCUSS TOGETHER

What are some ways that God teaches us His perspective on life? How does this help us process evils done toward us?

NOTES TO LEADERS: *Consider these: (1) God's kindness in spite of our own mistakes and sins can lead us to repentance and trust, (2) wise and caring friends, (3) the Word of God, (4) connecting with and praying for friends and seeing answered prayer, (5) be forgiven by God and others teaches us to be forgiving, etc.*

How and why does knowing and understanding the character of God enable us to trust Him in all things?

NOTES TO LEADERS: *Every circumstance is under God's sovereign control. God will never act outside of His character. Since God is love, good, sovereign, just, etc., then every circumstance can be used by or intended by God to bring about His good and perfect will.*

What are ways that God redeems our painful experiences? How can we even be thankful?

NOTES TO LEADERS: *This will be different for each person. Allow time for people to reflect back (cf. the SHARE IT question).*

How can God use painful experiences to be an influence for Jesus in our world?

NOTES TO LEADERS: *A painful, challenging, or broken experience often leads to sympathy and empathy with others. Our Lord Jesus knew the pain of life, temptation, and was great in compassion and clarity of purpose.*

I thank God for your partnership in shepherding God's people.

Steve