

It's Not Fair

Genesis 39:21-40:23

Week of June 30, 2024

BELONG

Ask this Ice Breaker Question: Dreams can come in a variety of genres. If you are willing and able, briefly (~1 min) share a funny or vivid dream from your past.

BELIEVE

Have someone in your group read aloud: Genesis 39:21-40:23

Leader Context (not to be read aloud):

Prisons are important in Scripture. Joseph is in and out of prison twice in Genesis. Samson became a grain grinder in a Philistine prison (Judges 16:21). Micaiah the prophet was thrown in prison by Ahab until events vindicated him (1 Kings 22:27). Jeremiah and Paul were imprisoned, as was Peter. And, of course, the Lord Jesus Himself was imprisoned while going through a series of sham trials. In all these cases, righteous people were placed in prison, typically for doing what was right. This world is an inhospitable place for God's representatives; yet prison was necessary for Joseph so that he could come to the attention of pharaoh and in the process save many lives. When oppressed for doing right, the believer needs to remember that he is in good company: "Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator" (1 Peter 4:19).

Ask these questions to prompt group discussion:

- 1. In chapter 39 we see no less than four times that "the Lord was with" Joseph (39:2, 3, 21, 23). With so much repetition, what do you think God is trying to emphasize?**

Leader Context (Not to be read aloud):

Repetition in Scripture is God's way of turning up the volume so to speak. Here we see repeated affirmation of God's continual blessing on Joseph and His people (Genesis 12:1-3). While Joseph is to be commended for his faithfulness, it is God alone who gets the ultimate credit for success. Also...recall last week when Potiphar's wife tried to get Joseph to go "with" her (thus against God). Satan will employ many clever tactics to take us with him and destroy our testimony.

- 2. God had plans to rescue Joseph by weaving his life with the lives of two other prisoners. Do we typically know in advance who will be important in our own lives? If not, how should we view new acquaintances?**

Leader Context (Not to be read aloud):

When Joseph learns of their situation, he offers to place the matter before God in the hopes of gaining an interpretation for the two men. It is worth noting that it is his personal interest in these two men—asking about their sorrow—that opens the doors into the throne room for him. At the point at which he asked about their sadness, he had no reason to think that he had anything personal to gain from showing a personal concern for them. Joseph behaved this way just because he was a caring individual. Unlike his father, he was not constantly looking for an angle by which he could take advantage of someone else.



3. How do you think Joseph knew the proper interpretation of the dreams?

Leader Context (Not to be read aloud):

Scripture is understood according to well-known interpretive principles, but dreams are a different matter. It is to be understood that Joseph submitted these matters to God and received insight into them directly from Him. God is preparing Joseph for even greater dreams in the future. When Pharaoh has two dreams, the fate of millions of people will hang in the balance. Joseph will not then, and does not in this case, entrust the fate of people to his own cleverness. Dreams belong to God, and so do the understanding of such matters. We are on safe ground here to see Joseph conforming to the pattern that Daniel and his friends would later use: "So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time, that he might tell the king the interpretation. Then Daniel went to his house, and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven" (Daniel 2:16-19).

BECOME

Ask this question:

4. Read Philippians 4:11-12 together. How did Joseph model this mindset, and how can you model this in your present circumstances?

Leader Context (Not to be read aloud):

Contentment and patience are powerful testimonies and weapons against the enemy as they model putting our trust in God. With Joseph, the pattern of exaltation, debasement, and exaltation that the reader sees in his life will be repeated in years to come in the life of his people Israel. Joseph's high position will bring them into Egypt as honored guests, but because of his passing and the cruelty of others they will be brought low. In the end, however, God will deliver Israel as He delivered Joseph. In the interim, Joseph will again lean on God; this time, two years will pass while he waits to be exalted.

Close by praying together.

