



GENESIS 39 | 5 DAY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Genesis 39 is a welcome oasis of obedience in what has been a desert of disobedience in the past five chapters of Genesis. There is something clearly different about Joseph, and our author, Moses, doesn't leave us guessing as to why. This story is bookended by Joseph being in two terrible circumstances: slavery and prison. And yet, in the midst of these places, Moses says four times, "God was with Joseph," and we see Joseph thriving. This week we will dive into what Joseph's story teaches the Christian about thriving in the midst of hardship.

Monday | God in Us

Moses was very clear in wanting us to see that God was with Joseph and that was the reason that he was thriving. But when Jesus came into the world, there was something even better than what Joseph had. In the Old Testament, God appeared to individuals and his presence was in the tabernacle where the high priests would go, but when Jesus came, God was walking about among people.

1. Read John 1:14. This word "dwelt" carries the Hebrew implication that in Jesus, God "tabernacle-d among us." What would change about your life if Jesus was walking with you like he was when he was on earth?
2. Read John 16:7. Do you really believe it is better that you have the Holy Spirit living inside of you than it would have been to have Jesus walking with you?
3. Where do you struggle with the concept of the Holy Spirit living inside of you?

John says that Jesus "tabernacle-d among them", but in 1 Corinthians 6:19, Paul basically says that in the Holy Spirit, God is tabernacle-ing within us. As hard as it is to accept, we must take Jesus at his word that it is better that we have the Holy Spirit living within us than if we had Jesus himself walking with us.

4. Read 1 Corinthians 6:19–20. Pretend that you had never heard that God lives inside of you and you read this. How would it change your daily perspective at work, school, or your home?
5. Sometimes we can grow numb to these realities when we are disappointed in God about aspects of our life. Fill in the blank here: "If God really lived inside of me then _____ would be different."
6. 2 Corinthians 5:7 says, "for we walk by faith and not by sight." Spend a moment in prayer telling God what you filled in the blank with. Ask him to help you believe the promise of his presence by faith.
7. Name one area of this week that you want to trust God's presence with you in. Now, what might it look like to remind yourself of that truth daily this week in this area?

Tuesday | God-Empowered Resisting

This passage is most well-known for Joseph fleeing temptation from Potiphar's wife. It's easy to use this passage as a motivational speech to help us flee temptation in our own lives once and for all. But the reality is that we need far more than motivation. The two things we overlook is that temptation for Joseph was not one-time but persistent, and he didn't overcome by motivation but by the presence of God with him.

1. What are the 3 main temptations that occur over and over for you?
2. What is your normal approach to resisting these temptations in your life?

3. Read 1 Corinthians 10:13. What's remarkable about this promise is the presence of God with us in the moment of temptation. What would change about the way you fight sin if you knew God to be present both protecting you and providing a way of escape for you?
4. Based on the truth that God is with us even in the moment of temptation, what might you do differently next time you are faced with the three temptations from question 1?

It's easy to believe that once we successfully overcome temptation, we should be through with it forever. But that's not how it worked for Joseph and it's not how it works for us. Joseph had to continually resist Potiphar's wife and rather than dying down, the temptations got harder and harder.

5. Read 1 Corinthians 10:12. What does this verse teach us about having confidence in ourselves in the midst of temptation?
6. What does the persistence of temptation change about the way you think about battling your 3 main temptations?
7. Spend a moment and ask God to reveal areas of false confidence in your heart where you think you are strong enough to stand up against sin on your own. Ask his help in the midst of these areas.

Wednesday | Against Who?

The first time Potiphar's wife tries to tempt Joseph into lying with her, we get to hear his reason for resisting her and fleeing. Moses no doubt included this to teach the Israelites the true nature of sin. The majority of Joseph's reason has to do with the responsibility and trust that Potiphar has placed on him and the foolishness of throwing that away. Then, at the very end, he asks a question that seems completely unrelated to sinning against Potiphar at all.

1. Read Genesis 39:7–9. How does Joseph's question, "How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" relate to the first half of his response about Potiphar?
2. When you are faced with temptation, do you usually think about the consequences of your sin towards other people or towards God?

When we sin, we sin both towards other people and towards God, but often it's hard for us to think of our sin as against God because it doesn't feel as real to us. Yet, sinning against God seems to be the main concern of Joseph's and the main motivation for him to flee temptation. In Psalm 51, David had a similar perspective when he was repenting for committing both adultery and murder.

3. Read Psalm 51:3–4. Though David's sin against Bathsheba and Uriah was grievous, he still views the worse sin was against. How does this verse challenge the way you tend to view sin?

We read 1 Corinthians 6:20 on Monday, which says, "you were bought at a price, so honor God with your body." You see, the Gospel is the primary motivator for both our obedience and our repentance. We were bought at a price. Not just any price, but at the price of hell. The Christian is owned twice over. We, along with all creation, were created by God to glorify him. But we turned from him, spit in his face, and incurred God's just wrath for our rebellion. Yet, in a dramatic act of mercy, he took hell for everyone who trusts in him, buying us back.

4. Based on that, what might daily reminding yourself of the Gospel do in your fight against sin?
5. Spend a moment asking God to help you see your sin in light of God's glory and the Gospel rather than earthly consequences.

Thursday | Tested

If God was with Joseph, then why do all of these terrible things keep happening to him? Why does he meet with trial after trial? We ask that of Joseph in this story, but many of us also ask that about situations in our lives. Why? Why does God allow these hard things to happen to me? If he's sovereign, why doesn't he stop them? There is so much to that answer, but we find one of God's reasons for Joseph's trials in Psalm 105:16–19. God was testing him to see if he would hold fast to the promises God spoke over him.

1. Read Psalm 105:16–19. How does the concept of God testing Joseph through the trials of Genesis 39 challenge the way you view God?
2. If through a hard trial in your life, you knew that God was testing your faith in him, would it comfort or frustrate you? How so?

The Bible is filled with stories of God testing his people to see if they will trust in his promises. From Adam and the tree, to Abraham offering Isaac, to Jesus and the Syrophenician woman, God tests the faith of his people. This can feel wrong and as if God is against us, but Hebrews 12:7–11 tells a different story.

3. Read Hebrews 12:7–11. Write down what this passage says is God’s reason for testing us and taking us through periods of discipline.
4. If trials and hardships and temptations and sufferings are God-given opportunities for holiness and joy, how might this change your perspective when you are in the middle of these things?

With every trial and temptation comes both the invitation of God into deeper joy and holiness, and the enticement of Satan to deny God’s goodness. In Psalm 42:3, the Psalmist is going through a period of intense trial and the question keeps coming up, “where is your God?” This is the question Satan throws at us in the midst of hardship, and this is the moment for faith in the promises and presence of God.

5. Read Psalm 42:3. What opportunities for faith do you see in trials or temptations you are currently facing?
6. Spend a moment asking God for faith to see that he is working for our good and joy through the trials and temptations in your life.

Friday | The Call of God

One of the things that allowed Joseph to be so single-minded in his pursuit of God and so unequivocal in resisting temptation was that he knew the call of God on his life. He had two prophetic dreams that told of a future when he would be exalted to a high position and others would bow before him. He also had the promises of Abraham, Isaac, and his father Jacob that through his family, the nations would be blessed.

1. Think of a time when you had a goal and where you gave up other things that you really wanted in order to reach that goal.
2. Read Isaiah 43:7, 21. What do these passages say is the ultimate goal and purpose of every person?

This is the ultimate purpose for which we were made, but God gives us more specific calls as to what it looks like to glorify and praise God with our lives. Look at a few of these calls from Jesus: Matthew 28:18–20, John 13:34–35, John 15:8.

3. Read the passages above and pick one of them to answer this question. What would be different if you were to specifically make this the aim of your life next week?
4. How would this call give purpose and direction to your relationships, work, and free time?

God has created us and called us on purpose and for a purpose. We are not random accidents, but rather people who are intentionally created and placed where we are for God’s glory.

5. Spend a moment asking God to give you this perspective on your life.
6. Write down one of the verses above and try to memorize it over the next week, letting it direct your day to day decisions.