



Descending Up

Genesis 39:1-20

OPEN

What have been the events or contexts that have most shaped or influenced your life (whether in good ways or not)?

DISCUSS

Read Genesis 39:1-20.

- What do you notice about Joseph's influence? What was key to his "success"?
- Joseph had just come through a VERY hard time with his brothers and family—being hated and sold into slavery so they could profit from his life. As you read 39:2-6, how do you think Joseph is feeling now?
- In his display of character and faithfulness, a lie destroys all that he has.
 - Does that kind of vengeance or personal attack from Potiphar's wife stir anything within you?
 - How would you react if you had finally "made it" and then someone took it all away with a lie and deceit?

Reality: God uses our trials and adversity to grow us (shape us according to his will) and for the blessing of others (Gen 50:20). In order to realize this growth and transformation, we must learn to journey THROUGH trials, adversity, and suffering.

Keys to Journey Well

- **Maintain Perspective: Expect trials, cultivate an eternal perspective to life (and trials), and continue to live in faithfulness in everything you do.**
 - Read James 1:2-8
 - What can you expect in this life? How much stress, time, and money do you spend to create a comfortable, stable, worry-free life?
 - How can one find joy in trials? Think of your past trials...do you find joy there?
 - How are we to pray for wisdom in our trials?
 - Read Col 3:17. Do you think Joseph lived this kind of life? How does this verse challenge/inspire you to live?

- **Remember: Attitude is Everything**
 - Do you think God cares WHY you do what you do as much (maybe more) as what you actually do? Why or why not?
 - According to Eph 3:22-24 and Rom 12:2, what must happen before (or continue) in order to live a new life and discern God's will?
 - How does your attitude align to the Attitude Checklist below? Are any questions particularly challenging to you?

Attitude Checklist

- Am I willing to let go of MY ambitions and dreams if God's will leads me elsewhere?
- Am I defensive when accused, criticized, or misunderstood?
- Am I forgiving when offended, with or without an apology?
- Is my first instinct to think of myself or think of others?
- Am I daily saying, "God, whatever it takes, I am willing to submit to your leadership"?
- Am I finding joy in the difficulties that can serve to refine me?
- Am I taking risks out of obedience to Christ instead of giving into fear, comfort, pride, or denial?¹

¹ Alan Nelson, *Embracing Brokenness*, p. 99-100.

- **Descending Up: Surrender is the pathway of journeying well through trials.**
 - Do you believe adversity introduces you to yourself?
 - Why is surrender and learning to let God carry and direct your thoughts and actions in the midst of trials so hard? Why is it so good?
 - Can you think of examples of surrender in your life?

What kind of fruit do you think one can expect who has learned to journey well through trials?

NEXT STEPS

- Read the whole story of Joseph (Genesis 37-50) each week during this series.
- Reflect on past trials in your life. How well did you journey through them (perspective, attitude, descending up)?
- Do you feel the Spirit nudging you to respond in some way from this study and group discussion?