

5-Day Devotional: What You Meant for Evil

Day 1: The Pit of Betrayal

Read Genesis 37:12-28

Joseph's brothers threw him in a pit, sat down, and ate while he cried for help. The cruelty is staggering. Yet this wasn't random tragedy—it was the beginning of God's plan.

We all face "pit moments"—betrayal by people we trusted, circumstances that feel like death. In those moments, it feels like God has forgotten us. But notice: the brothers thought they were ending Joseph's dreams. They were actually starting God's plan.

Your pit isn't the end of your story. It might be the painful beginning of what God will use to save many.

Reflect:

- What "pit" are you in right now?
- Can you trust that God hasn't forgotten you, even if you can't see His plan yet?

Pray: *Lord, when I'm in the pit and can't see the way out, help me remember You haven't abandoned me. Give me faith to believe You're working even when I can't see it.*

Day 2: God Was With Joseph

Read Genesis 39:1-6, 19-23

Five times in Genesis 39, Scripture says "God was with Joseph." In Potiphar's house—God was with him. Falsely accused and thrown in prison—God was with him. The circumstances didn't change immediately, but God's presence never left.

We want God to change our circumstances instantly. God often chooses to walk *through* them with us instead. Joseph experienced 22 years between the pit and the palace. Twenty-two years of serving in places he didn't choose. But "God was with Joseph."

God's presence isn't dependent on your comfort. He's with you in the palace and the prison.

Reflect:

- Where do you most need to experience God's presence right now?

- How would your perspective change if you truly believed "God is with me" in this?

Pray: *Father, I confess I sometimes measure Your presence by my comfort. Help me know You're with me—in the palace or the prison, in blessing or trial.*

Day 3: Faithful Right Where You Are

Read Genesis 39:7-12

Joseph could have become bitter. Instead, he served faithfully—whether in Potiphar's house or Pharaoh's prison. When Potiphar's wife pursued him daily, he fled rather than compromise. He didn't use his hardship as an excuse to sin.

We often think, "When my circumstances change, *then* I'll serve God fully." Joseph shows us different: serve faithfully *right where you are*, even if it's not where you want to be.

Your integrity in the prison prepares you for influence in the palace. Don't waste your waiting.

Reflect:

- Where are you waiting for circumstances to change before you'll fully serve God?
- What does "serving well right where you are" look like today?

Pray: *Lord, help me serve You faithfully in this season—not the season I wish I had. Give me integrity when no one's watching and endurance when the wait feels long.*

Day 4: You Meant Evil, But God...

Read Genesis 50:15-21

After Jacob died, Joseph's brothers feared revenge. Joseph's response is remarkable: "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive."

Joseph didn't minimize the evil—his brothers *did* mean it for evil. But he saw a bigger story. God wasn't surprised by their betrayal; He was sovereign over it, weaving even human evil into His redemptive plan.

This doesn't make the evil okay. But it does mean evil doesn't get the final word. God does.

Reflect:

- What evil have you experienced that you can't yet see God's purpose in?
- Can you trust that God is writing a bigger story than your pain?

Pray: *God, I don't understand why You've allowed certain things in my life. Help me trust that You can bring good from what was meant for evil, even if I never fully understand it.*

Day 5: Joseph Points to Jesus

Read Matthew 26:14-16, 59-61; Philippians 2:5-11

Joseph wasn't just a good man who endured hardship well. His entire story points forward to Jesus:

- The beloved son, sent by the father to his brothers
- Rejected and betrayed for silver
- Falsely accused but innocent
- Exalted to the right hand of power
- Positioned to save many lives

Jesus wasn't surprised by Judas's betrayal or the cross. Like Joseph said of his brothers, we could say of ourselves: we meant it for evil, but God meant it for good—to save many.

The cross proves God can take the worst evil and turn it into the greatest good. If He did that there, He can do it in your life too.

Reflect:

- How does seeing Jesus in Joseph's story change how you read the Old Testament?
- How does the cross give you hope for your current trial?

Pray: *Jesus, thank You for enduring betrayal, false accusation, and death to save me. When I face trials, help me remember You've already won the greatest victory. Give me faith to trust Your plan is always good.*

Blog: When God's Plan Looks Like a Pit

The first time Joseph lost his coat, his brothers ripped it off him and threw him in a pit. The second time, Potiphar's wife tore it from him as he fled, and he landed in prison. If I were Joseph, I'd probably stop wearing coats altogether.

But Joseph's story isn't really about coats or pits or even perseverance. It's about the stunning reality that **God's best plan for your life might look like your worst nightmare.**

The 22-Year Wait

Joseph was 17 when his brothers sold him into slavery. He was 39 when he stood before them as second-in-command of Egypt. Do the math—that's 22 years of serving in places he didn't choose, falsely accused, forgotten in prison, wondering if God had abandoned His promises.

Twenty-two years is longer than some of our careers. Longer than most of our marriages at the point we're reading this. It's long enough to grow bitter, to give up, to decide God isn't faithful.

But five times in Genesis 39, Scripture repeats a phrase: **"God was with Joseph."**

In Potiphar's house—God was with him.

Falsely accused and imprisoned—God was with him.

Forgotten by the cupbearer for two more years—God was with him.

The Presence We Overlook

Here's what we miss: we want God to *change* our circumstances. God often chooses to *walk through* them with us instead.

We treat God's presence like a participation trophy—nice, but what we really want is the outcome. We want the palace, not the process. The promotion, not the prison. The miracle, not the mundane faithfulness of another hard day.

But Joseph teaches us that **God's presence is the miracle.** Everything Joseph touched turned to gold—not because he was lucky, but because God was with him. And that same presence is available to you, whether you're in the palace or the pit.

Serving in the Wrong Place

One of the most convicting parts of Joseph's story is this: he served faithfully *right where he was*, even though it wasn't where he wanted to be.

He could have sabotaged Potiphar's house. "You want me to be a slave? Fine, I'll be a terrible one."

He could have grown bitter in prison. "God gave me dreams and this is what I get?"

Instead, he served with such integrity and excellence that he was put in charge—of a household where he was enslaved, of a prison where he was falsely imprisoned. He didn't wait for his circumstances to change to honor God. **He honored God in the circumstances he had.**

How many of us are wasting our waiting? "When I get that job, *then* I'll really serve God." "When my marriage improves, *then* I'll lead my family spiritually." "When this trial ends, *then* I'll get serious about my faith."

Joseph shows us different: be faithful in the prison, because that's what prepares you for the palace.

The Plot Twist

The most stunning moment in Joseph's story comes at the end. His brothers—the ones who betrayed him, who sat and ate sandwiches while he screamed from the pit—stand before him terrified. They're certain he'll take revenge.

And Joseph says this: **"You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive."** (Genesis 50:20)

Read that again slowly. Joseph didn't say, "It's okay, boys, no harm done." He acknowledged the evil—they *did* mean it for evil. But he saw a bigger story.

The brothers thought they were getting rid of the dreamer. They were actually positioning him to save their lives.

God wasn't surprised by their betrayal. He was *sovereign* over it, weaving even human evil into His redemptive plan to preserve a nation—the nation through which Jesus would eventually come.

This doesn't make the evil okay. Joseph still spent years suffering for sins he didn't commit. But it does mean **evil doesn't get the final word. God does.**

The Greater Joseph

Here's where the story gets even better: Joseph isn't the hero. He's a signpost pointing to Jesus.

Think about it:

- **The beloved son** of his father, sent to his brothers
- **Rejected and betrayed** by those who should have loved him

- **Sold for silver**—Joseph for 20 pieces, Jesus for 30
- **Falsely accused** but completely innocent
- **Stripped of his robe** and thrown into a pit (Joseph) and a tomb (Jesus)
- **Exalted to the right hand of power**—Joseph to Pharaoh's right hand, Jesus to the Father's
- **Positioned to save many lives** from famine and death

The whole Old Testament is whispering Jesus' name, and Joseph's story shouts it.

When Jesus hung on the cross, betrayed by Judas, denied by Peter, abandoned by the disciples, accused by false witnesses—it looked like evil had won. The Romans meant it for evil. The religious leaders meant it for evil. Satan certainly meant it for evil.

But God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people would be saved.

The cross is proof that God can take the worst evil and turn it into the greatest good. And if He did it there, He can do it in your life too.

What This Means for Your Pit

So what do we do with this when we're in the pit and can't see the palace?

First, practice patience. Our culture has trained us to expect instant results. Thirty seconds without an answer and we assume God isn't listening. But God's timeline is not Amazon Prime. Joseph waited 22 years. Abraham waited 25 years for Isaac. The Israelites waited 400 years in Egypt. Sometimes God's best work happens in the waiting, not after it.

Second, cling to God's presence. You may not understand the purpose yet, but you can trust the Person. "God was with Joseph" in every chapter—and if you're in Christ, God is with you too. "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). His presence is not contingent on your comfort.

Third, serve faithfully right where you are. Don't waste your waiting. Don't use your hardship as an excuse for compromise. Joseph maintained his integrity in Potiphar's house and his faith in prison. Your character in the dark prepares you for influence in the light.

Fourth, trust God's purpose. You may never fully understand why you went through what you went through. But you can trust that the God who works all things together for good (Romans 8:28) hasn't wasted a moment of your pain. He's writing a bigger story than you can see from inside the pit.

The Invitation

Maybe you're in the pit right now. Betrayed by people you trusted. Falsely accused. Suffering for sins you didn't commit. Wondering where God is and why He's allowed this.

Hear this: **God hasn't forgotten you.** He's not surprised by your circumstances. And He hasn't wasted your pain.

The same God who was with Joseph in the pit, in Potiphar's house, and in prison is with you. The same God who exalted Joseph in His timing will fulfill His purposes for you. The same God who turned a cross—the ultimate evil—into salvation for the world can redeem your story too.

You may not be able to say it yet, but one day you might look back and whisper what Joseph declared: "You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good."

And until that day comes, cling to this: **God is with you.**

That's not just a nice sentiment. In a world of pits and prisons and false accusations, it's everything.

The story of Joseph reminds us that our hardest chapters may be the ones God uses most. While we wait for the palace, let's be faithful in the prison—because the God who was with Joseph is the same God who promises to never leave us nor forsake us.