



JOSEPH

SESSION 5

- **Main Passage:** Genesis 50:15-21; Romans 8:28
 - **Purpose:** To understand that God allows things to happen to us through which He works together to accomplish His ultimate plan.
 - **Session Snapshot:** Spiritual maturity is displayed in how we respond to events in our lives. As we've seen in the last few weeks, Joseph is a prime example of how to respond to adversity. Time after time, Joseph responds with a level of spiritual maturity that we all can strive to attain. In this session, Rick raises the question, "Can you get to the point where, like Joseph, you can celebrate difficulty, closed doors, and setbacks knowing that God is ultimately working out His plan in your life?"
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GETTING STARTED

Kick-off your time together with a quick connection time or reviewing what you did in the last session.

FIRST, remind your group that this is week 5 of their video series on Joseph and that it's part of a larger study looking at the real men of the Bible.

THEN, if you want to start with asking men for prayer requests, checking in on how their weeks have gone, or any other housekeeping tasks, do so.

FINALLY, if there are no questions or other input, transition into the *Digging In* section of your leader's guide.

DIGGING IN

Jump into the session by watching this week's video.

FIRST, play the video. You can access the video by logging into your Iron Hill Press account.

THEN, when the video is over, lead men in a short discussion based on what Rick covered. Feel free to come up with your own questions, or consider asking some similar to those below:

- **How do you think Joseph was able to respond to his brothers with grace? Some of this will flow out of our conversation from the last session.**
- **Think about what we know of Joseph's life. In what ways did God prepare Joseph's heart for this final test of being faced with his brothers?**
- **Why was it important that Joseph not only forgave his brothers but promised to provide for them as well? What does this teach us about the nature of forgiveness and reconciliation?**

- **It's been said that without a test, there is no testimony. What does that phrase mean to you?**
- **One of the things about Joseph's life is how many tough times he faced. Our lives are often not much different. How can we get to the point where we view hardships as being part of God's plan?**

FINALLY, transition into the *Opening the Word* portion of your time together by saying something like the following:

- **As we explore what it means to respond to adversity in a Christ-like manner, let's spend a few minutes dissecting this passage so we can more fully understand what is required of us.**

OPENING THE WORD

Spend time going deeper into a specific concept Rick introduced in the video.

FIRST, explain that instead of going into Joseph's story, you're going to take a more in-depth look into Romans 8:28. As Rick explained in the video, there are some guardrails to reading this verse. Everything that happens in this world is not always good. However, Paul gives us a look into the events that happen to "those who love God" and how we should view them.

We must make sure your people have a good understanding of the context of the passage you'll be studying. Provide the context for the passage using the following bullet points:

- **Author:** Paul is the author of Romans.
- **Time frame:** Romans was probably written from Corinth in the winter of 56-57 AD.
- **Purpose:** Since the church in Rome had not received comprehensive theological teaching on salvation and other implications of following Christ, Paul wrote Romans to ensure a good understanding of such things. Besides, since many Jewish Christians rejected some of the new Gentile converts, a level playing field needed to be given to all Believers. This is what Paul was advocating for in Romans.

THEN, read or have a volunteer read Romans 8:28. When the volunteer has finished, ask something like:

- **For whom is God working all things together for good?**
 - *Answer:* For those who love God.
- **This passage does not say that everything that happens to those who love God will be good. But that God works all things together for good. How are these two viewpoints different?**
 - *Answer:* Everything that happens to believers will not be good. Bad things happen to people who love God all the time. Rick gives the example of his son dying. But the point is that God is in control and can even work good out of bad circumstances in the lives of those who love him.
- **Why is it important that we see the difference between a life where only good things happen and a life where God works all things together for the good of those who love him?**
 - Answers may vary. Discuss the importance of God's sovereignty and how the hardships in our lives can be worked together for our good and His greater plan.
- **What are the dangers of thinking that those who love God will never have hardships?**
 - Answers will vary. Be sure to point people to the story of Joseph. Point out the dangers of a health and wealth gospel where there are promises of prosperity once you follow Jesus.
- **Have someone read John 16:33. Then, ask how do we reconcile this verse in John with the verse in Romans?**
 - Answers should be similar to the following: Jesus tells His disciples plainly that they will have tribulation in this world. But He encourages them to take heart because He has overcome the

world. Jesus does not promise a world where we are free of hardships, but He promises a world where He is ultimately in control.

- **When hardships come into your life, how can you react with the same grace and understanding that Joseph did in front of his brothers?**
 - Answers may vary but be sure to steer them to answers that include reflecting on the events of their life. How has God brought them through hardships in the past? And how will He continue to sustain them for the future?
- **People walking through this world without God have no hope. However, we who love God sometimes live like we are hopeless as well. How should we live then if God is working all things together for good?**
 - Discuss the importance of the phrase "for those who love God" and the hope that God promises not only for heaven but for the here and now. And how our actions should reflect this hope we have.

Ask if there are any questions, and if there are none, transition into *Accepting the Challenge*.

ACCEPTING THE CHALLENGE

Focus your group's attention on the takeaways from your time together.

FIRST, explain that you want to challenge the group to focus on the takeaways from this session. Consider starting this portion of your session by asking your group what they think are the main application points from your session. Allow discussion to go until there are no more suggestions.

THEN, if necessary, supplement your discussion with the following application points. Say something like:

- **Write down three difficult times in your life where God has brought you through.**
 - Now, write down how God was/is working even in these hardships as a bigger part of His plan for good.
- **Sometimes it's hard to see how God is working things out for good, but we trust that God is good.**
 - Write down three times in your life where you've seen the goodness of God displayed.
- **Commit to praying that although you will go through or are going through hardships, you will trust that God is working these events together for good.**
 - Pray that he will strengthen your faith in the process.

FINALLY, encourage men to continue to marinate on these points in the week to come. Challenge them to listen to what God is trying to tell them and to respond accordingly. If there are no more questions or input, close your time together in prayer.