
Choosing Your Response

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What if you really believed God was *with you*—in every situation?

You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. Genesis 50:20

- We have the powerful ability to respond rather than react to circumstances.

What happens when your life isn't moving in the direction of your plan?

...they saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him. Genesis 37:18

- Joseph understood that the overall purpose of his life was to fit into a small part of God's larger plan.

God is with you *in it and through it* all.

The Lord was with Joseph so that he prospered... Genesis 39:2

- Joseph responded as if God was with him even when it looked as if God had abandoned him.

How would someone in your circumstances respond if they were confident that God was with them?

- Joseph was faithful as a slave. (Genesis 39:3-9)
- Joseph was faithful as a prisoner. (Genesis 39:20-21; 40:8)
- Joseph was faithful as a servant to Pharaoh. (Genesis 41:1, 15-16, 39-41)
- Joseph was faithful as a wounded brother. (Genesis 45:4-8, 50:18-20)

Never underestimate the power of a God-honoring response.

His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. "We are your slaves," they said. ¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? ²⁰ You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." Genesis 50:18-20

- God's plans will always prevail even when yours don't.

Let's Talk About It

One of the hardest times to trust that God is at work and be faithful in relationship with Him, is when your plans don't seem to be working out. When our life isn't moving in the direction of our dreams, we have an ability with incredible power: the ability to respond rather than react to our circumstances. Joseph chose to live and respond as if God was with him, even when it looked as if God had abandoned him. He was faithful as a slave, as a prisoner, as a servant, and as a wounded brother because he was confident God was with him *in it and through it* all. Never underestimate the power of a God-honoring response.

Genesis 37:3-5, 18; 39:2-9, 20-21; 40:8, 23; 41:1, 15-16, 39-41; 45:5-8; 50:18-20

Discussion questions:

- Which part of the message impacted or challenged you?
- What's your first reaction when you find yourself in a situation that fell short of your expectations and you're disappointed by God?
- Read Genesis 37:3-5, 18 & 39:2-9, 20-21. Discuss with your group the difference between responding and reacting to your circumstances. What can we learn from Joseph's life that will help us have confidence that God is with us in every situation and choose to respond in a way that honors God?
- Joseph was 17 when God gave him his dream and was 40 years old when it was fulfilled. Joseph remained faithful to God during the 23 years he waited. How do you stay encouraged when you are waiting on God?
- Read Genesis 50:18-20. Are you in a situation where things are not working out as you planned, hoped or expected? Talk about it with your group. How can you trust that God is with you and working to fulfill His greater purpose, even when it appears that God is absent or inactive? How would someone in your circumstances respond if they were confident that God was with them?

Take a Step

Your response to offense determines your future. Is there someone in your life that you need to forgive? Who is that person? This week, spend some time in prayer and ask the Lord for the grace to forgive.

Here's My Prayer

Father, thank You for all that You've done for me. Thank You for sending Your Son to take the punishment that I deserve because of Your great love for me. Help me to remember this in seasons when I'm unsure as to what You're doing. Build my faith to live with confidence that You're with me in every situation, trusting that You have a plan for my life that fits into Your greater plan. In Jesus' name, amen.