

Series: Joseph

Scripture and Background Information for October 16-22.

To prepare for your group discussion each week, group members should use the **Community Group Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD'S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scripture below.

The vast majority of our stories get lived in the gap between our dreams and our destiny. Whichever direction we believe our story is trending, very few of us ever feel like we're "living the dream" for very long. If God has a dream for our life, why does so little of our life feel like we're living inside it? What do we do when our dreams are deferred, or detoured, or... dead? During this series we'll look at a man whose extraordinary story begins with a dream and ends with a destiny that looks exactly like the dream... and nothing like it at all. We'll discover what to expect from our God-sized dreams, specific ways to keep them on track, and how to live when our dreams feel more like a nightmare. Ultimately we'll discover that with every twist, turn, and test of the dream, there is a Dream Weaver we can trust. Even (maybe especially) when He is most difficult to see.

Background for Genesis 37:1-11:

The story of Joseph is the longest of the sections in the book of Genesis. It bridges the gaps between the creation and patriarchs to the present day struggle of Israel as slaves in Egypt. More than a history lesson, the story of Joseph gives us a drawn out picture of God's providence at work in the lives of His people. We see the ups and downs and ultimately the deliverance of His people through His work in and through Joseph. Here in Genesis 37 we see the beginnings of that story as Joseph, a naïve teenage son receives dreams that foretell of His family bowing before him. This, along with his father's favoritism cause his brothers to hate him all the more. This initial look at where Joseph begins is a wonderful reminder that much of the work God will do through us can't be accomplished until He does a work in us, to mold and transform us into His instruments.

Insights and questions to engage with the text:

1. Often when we read the story Joseph's brothers get a bad rap (for good reason!) but consider Joseph's actions here. How would you have likely responded if you were in their shoes?
2. What can we deduce about Joseph, his maturity and character from his actions in this portion of the story?
3. Sometimes when we study Scripture we can assume it's prescriptive but this passage is a good reminder that instead it often is just descriptive. Jacob and his parenting create all types of jealousy and division among his sons. As a result, the passage can serve as both a warning for how not to parent, but also a reminder of God's grace and ability to work through broken people.
4. As you think about the dreams you may have for your life, what are they? How has the Lord's vision or calling in life given you direction and been realized? How are you still waiting on it to happen and what have you learned about Him in the process?