

Series: Joseph

Scripture and Background Information for October 23-29.

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 39:6-15:

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 (Remember, Genesis was written by Moses shortly after the exodus). Joseph's story reminds us of the ups and downs the Lord can take a person on and ultimately the redemption that can be secured both for them and those around them. Here in Genesis 39, we see Joseph's integrity tested. Here, Joseph has been a slave and yet found favor before Potiphar and put in charge of his household (think of it as a family corporation). Joseph excels and not only catches Potiphar's eye, but Potiphar's wife's eye as well. The text tells us that her attempts to tempt him were regular and yet Joseph would not give in. Joseph serves as an incredible example of integrity despite overwhelming adversity in his life. We see him do so by understanding the gravity of the situation, placing guardrails in his life to avoid the temptation, and focusing on gratitude despite the hardships he had faced. His example reminds us that the path to our dreams will not be free from temptation and tests of our integrity, but when our eyes are fixed on God's goodness, our mind is set on limits to protect us, and our hearts understand the weight of the situation then the Lord will provide a way of escape (1 Cor. 10:13).

Insights and questions to engage with the text:

1. It's easy to see this as just an example against sexual sin, but how does Joseph's story relate to other types of temptation that we regularly encounter? As you see Joseph's example, what can we take away about the way to handle ongoing temptation?
2. What can we conclude about Joseph's perspective of God and his circumstances based on his words in v.8-9? How might we have naturally thought someone would view their circumstances who was in Joseph's situation?
3. It's easy to see Joseph's integrity and be amazed. It's important to remember that his relationship to God, like ours was not based on what he had done, or how he responded to adversity, but instead was based on grace. That should give us peace in those moments when we reflect and remember times we failed the integrity test that His mercies are still new each morning (Lam. 3:22-23).
4. Thinking about dreams you have had, how has integrity been tested along the way?