

## Series: Joseph

### Scripture and Background Information for November 13-19.

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 41:50-52:**

In Genesis 41, prior to Joseph's encounter with his brothers we find Joseph has risen to a place of prominence, given authority, power, and influence. As an aside, Joseph takes a wife, likely a woman of high stature as her father was a priest. Joseph has two sons and names them Manasseh, meaning, *God has made me forget all my troubles and my Father's house* and Ephraim meaning, *God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction*. Names throughout Scripture make a powerful statement about one's circumstances and where they are looking or to Whom one is looking in the midst of them. For Joseph, we see in both names that the Lord is his focus. Joseph attributes the Lord as the One able to help him overcome his adversity and bless him in the midst of it. These names would have given Joseph incredible opportunities to remind himself, his children, and others that in the midst of the darkness he had experienced there was a God at work for his preservation and blessing (Consider each time he called for them or introduced them it would be another reminder of that truth about the Lord). For a younger generation, that is a powerful imprint that they need to see lived out of one's faith and hope squarely upon the Lord despite the adversity one might face.

#### Insights and questions to engage with the text:

1. For Joseph here, it was naming his children that would have given him tangible ways to talk to the next generation about his trust in the Lord. What could that look like for you? What are some realistic, tangible ways to share those reminders with the next generation?
2. Joseph clings to two things about the Lord's work. First, the Lord allowing him to forget what had taken place. Second, the Lord had blessed him in Egypt. Based on what we know happens next to Joseph (he reconciles with his brothers), he hadn't actually forgotten what took place. What might Joseph had meant by that idea that the Lord has made me forget my trouble? How might that align in some ways with what Paul says in Philippians 3:12-14?
3. As you look back at seasons of brokenness or despair in your own story are there examples of blessing that you are able to identify? Share some of those experiences as a group. Who are other people in your life who might need to hear about the Lord's work in seasons of adversity in your life?