

STUDY GUIDE: WEEK THREE

In the Beginning: Exploring the Origin Stories of Genesis

Fall 2024 ~ Pastor Grangaard

Overview: *In Place of God, Joseph's Story*

God is known as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But it's Joseph, son of Jacob, who gets a surprising amount of real estate in the book of Genesis. Joseph's story spans one quarter of the book of Genesis and is found in chapters 37, 39-50. His is one of the most relatable stories. No, most of us weren't sold into slavery by our brothers (Genesis 37), taken to a foreign land (Genesis 39), or used our God-given gifts to rise to serve the ruler of the land (Genesis 41). Even so, Joseph's story sheds light on the all too familiar family relationships, conflict, and the healing power of forgiveness. Even (or especially) in the Bible, families are systems that: keep favorites (37:3), hold grudges (37:4-5), harm (37:17-27, 42:21), manipulate (42-44 and 50:15-17); grieve (37:29-30, 34-35), love (45), forgive (50:19-20), and more. Joseph's story shows us that God is with us in incredibly hard places (39:1-2, 20-21) to help and change us. Joseph faces real hardship and deep loss. And God was with him through it all. God helps Joseph let go of his dreams to rule like a king in order to become kin to his brothers (50:21).

Joseph's story shows us that God will work his purpose through us and also in spite of us. What we do matters. And, what we do cannot thwart God, who is making all things new.

Key Scripture: [Genesis 50:15-21](#) (specifically 50:19-20)

Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, 'What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?' So they approached Joseph, saying, 'Your father gave this instruction before he died, "Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you." Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father.' Joseph wept when they spoke to him. Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, 'We are here as your slaves.' But Joseph said to them, 'Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones.' In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.



Questions

What did you notice about the story?

Where do you see God at work in Joseph's story?

What difference did God make in Joseph's life?

Think about a time that you offered or received forgiveness. How did it change things?

Prayer: *God, you were with Joseph in impossible places and you brought him up. So, bring us up and lead us into your ways of love, mercy, and forgiveness. Amen.*