

Review: *From your experience at the Cornerstone meeting last week, share something that helped build your faith.*

NOTE: In the first part of chapter 41, not included in our lesson, two years passed while Joseph remained in prison. Then Pharaoh had dreams that his magicians and wise men could not interpret. At last, the cupbearer remembered that Joseph correctly interpreted his dream and the dream of the royal baker when they were imprisoned together ([Genesis 40:12-19](#)). Pharaoh sent for Joseph who discerned that the dreams meant that seven years of plenty were coming followed by seven years of famine. Joseph proposed that during the seven good years, grain be collected and stored so that the Egyptians would not perish. Pharaoh recognized Joseph as, "one in whom is the spirit of God" ([Genesis 41:39](#)) making him second-in-command over all the land of Egypt to oversee his plan and gave him costly gifts and Asenath, daughter of Potiphara, priest of On, as his wife.

DAY ONE

Read [Genesis 41:46-57](#)

1. Today we read in verse 46 that Joseph was thirty years old when he became second-in-command in Egypt. He was seventeen when his brothers sold him into slavery. What skills and character traits do you think Joseph acquired during the thirteen years he spent as a slave and prisoner that enabled him to hold this important position?
2. There was one significant and ongoing change that took place in Joseph during his years in Egypt. He no longer was the foolish boy who bragged to his brothers about the meaning of his dreams. Refer to [Genesis 41](#), verses 16 or 28, and record the words that reflect this change.
3. In your own words, describe what Joseph did as commander throughout the land of Egypt during the seven years before the famine from verses 47-49.
- 4a. In verses 50-52, Joseph's personal life before the famine was described. With his Egyptian wife, he had two sons. What names did Joseph give the boys and what did the names mean?

b. What do the names Joseph chose for his sons indicate to you about the state of Joseph's heart at this time?

NOTE: Joseph's sons were given Hebrew names – names belonging to the Israelite tribes which later occupied central Palestine. Joseph's descendants were linked to the Promised Land from the very start, even though they were born outside it. However, because they were the children of a pagan woman, they would not be in the direct line of the Messiah.

5. Just as Joseph predicted, the seven years of plenty ended and seven years of famine began. Describe the situation in Egypt during the famine (verses 53-57).

6. CONNECTION: During the years Joseph spent in Egypt, he grew from a teenage shepherd sold into slavery by his own brothers to become a respected advisor to the Pharaoh. During all this time, God did not abandon Joseph but was preparing him for his role to help his people. Joseph's experience is a lesson for all believers. We are called to place our trust in God each day as we seek to know and fulfill his plan for us. Just as Joseph grew in wisdom and grace, we are also equipped by God to live the life to which we are called. What are some ways you have been uniquely prepared by God to serve him in your life? Has hardship played a role in your training as it did for Joseph?

Read and record 2 Corinthians 9:8. Pray today with confidence that if God has called you to a task, he will give you the grace and tools you need to carry it out.

DAY TWO

Read Genesis 42:1-8

7. Chapter 42 begins in Canaan with Jacob, Joseph's father, and his family who were also suffering from the famine. When Jacob learned there was grain in Egypt, he told his sons to go there to buy grain. At the mention of Egypt, the brothers kept "looking at one another" (verses 1-2). What does this comment suggest to you about the brothers' thoughts and feelings?

NOTE: Jacob and his sons enter the scene after an absence of twenty-two years (Joseph was seventeen in 37:2 and he entered Pharaoh's service at thirty in 41:46; the seven years of plenty were at an end [41:53], and the famine had already lasted two years, there being five years still to run [45:11]). *Scullion*

8. Ten of Joseph's brothers went to Egypt to buy grain but Jacob would not send Benjamin out of fear that he might be harmed (verses 3-4). Review the story of Jacob and suggest a reason why he might have felt this way.

9. Joseph's brothers, the sons of Israel (Jacob), were among those who came to buy grain because the famine had reached Canaan (verse 5). Complete verse 6 below in which the author described the encounter between Joseph and his brothers.

Now Joseph was

it was he who sold

And Joseph's brothers came

10. Summarize what happened when Joseph saw his brothers and how he treated them from verses 7-8.

11. What are some reasons why they might not have recognized their brother? Refer to Genesis 41:41-43 and note some changes that occurred to his appearance since they last saw Joseph. (Or refer to the quote from St. John Chrysostom in the Commentary, page 71.)

12. CONNECTION: Joseph's brothers did not recognize him, nor did they suspect that this great person could be the brother they sold into slavery. They prejudged him in his youth and failed to realize that he was capable of change. Our hasty judgments of others do not allow for their growth, maturity or repentance. Think about how becoming less judgmental of others, including the young, can improve our relationships as well as our own spiritual and emotional well-being. What are some ways to break the habit of judging others and be more accepting and loving towards them?

Read and record James 4:12. Today pray that you will learn to see others through God's merciful and loving eyes.

DAY THREE

Read Genesis 42:9-17

13. Although Joseph recognized his brothers when they came before him, they did not recognize him. According to the beginning of verse 9, what did he remember and why do you think that was (see Genesis 37:7-9)?

14. After Joseph remembered his dreams about his brothers, he accused them of being spies (end of verse 9). Why do you think he did not disclose his identity to them when he knew who they were?

15. The brothers denied Joseph's accusation by describing their lives in Canaan in verses 10-13. How do you think Joseph felt to hear his brothers refer to him as the "one who is no more"?

NOTE: The phrase, "the nakedness of the land" is translated in other bibles as "weak points" or military "weaknesses of the land."

16a. Once again Joseph accused his brothers of being spies and proposed that they be tested (verse 14). Describe the test in your own words (verses 15-16).

b. In verse 17 we learn that Joseph put the brothers in prison for three days. The word *spies* was used four times in this passage. Do you think Joseph was really concerned about espionage or was he acting with some other motive? Briefly explain.

17. Being thrown into an Egyptian prison must have seemed like the worst possible end for the brothers, yet it may have offered them an opportunity to reflect on their lives and relationships with the LORD. Refer to one of the following verses and note briefly how it speaks to this thought.

Psalm 119:71

Ephesians 4:22-24

1 Peter 5:6 -7

18. CONNECTION: Today we read that Joseph put his brothers into prison to see if there was any “truth” in them. God could simply have washed his hands of these brothers after their cruel and vicious treatment of Joseph. But instead, we read in this story how they are being tested and given time to consider their past actions. It is the same in our lives; God loves us too much to give up on us. He is a God of infinite mercy and compassion who is always ready to offer us a second chance at new life. Reflect on a time when you were given a second chance. How did you feel or respond? If you know someone who could use a second chance, how can you help them start over?

Read Lamentations 3:21-23 and record a verse to begin your prayer today for those in your life who have lost their way, that they might find a second chance through the grace and mercy of God.

DAY FOUR

Read Genesis 42:18-25

19a. As we begin today, Joseph had put his brothers in prison. On the third day, Joseph spoke to them in a more conciliatory manner and offered a new proposal (verse 18). Paraphrase what Joseph told them in verse 19-20.

b. The brothers finally agreed to Joseph's requests (under penalty of death). Why do you think Joseph was so interested in bringing the youngest brother, Benjamin, to Egypt?

20. From verse 21, complete the conclusions the brothers drew concerning what was happening to them.

Alas, we are paying the penalty

we saw his anguish

but we would not listen

21. Reuben, the eldest, then reminded his brothers that he had cautioned them to not harm Joseph saying, "So now there comes a reckoning for his blood" (verse 22). Look up the word *reckoning* and comment on what you think Reuben was referring to in this passage.

NOTE: God made the idea of a reckoning clear to his people in the covenant he made with Noah after the great flood (see Genesis 9:5,6).

22. Joseph understood what his brothers were saying to one another, but they did not know this because he spoke with them through an interpreter. What thoughts or memories might have caused Joseph to turn away and weep as he heard his brothers speak among themselves (verses 23-24)?

23. When Joseph recovered his composure, he spoke to his brothers and had Simeon bound before their eyes (verse 24). In spite of the evil committed by his brothers when they sold him into slavery, how did Joseph return good for evil (verse 25)?

24. CONNECTION: Today we read how Joseph's brothers began to face the implications of their actions when they sent one of the most vulnerable among them into exile and possibly death. They failed to recall the faith of their ancestors or how God cares for those in need who trust in his ways. How do you fulfill your Christian duty to care for the most vulnerable or those at risk in your life? What is your faith community doing to live out God's commitment to those in need?

Read 1 John 3:17-18 and record verse 18. Pray today to the Holy Spirit to protect and bring healing to the weakest members of your family and community.

DAY FIVE

Read Genesis 42:26-31

25. Joseph's brothers left Simeon in Egypt, loaded their donkeys with grain and began the journey home. When they reached their lodging place, one of them opened his sack and saw his money there (verses 26-27). Why do you think Joseph gave him back his money in this secretive manner?

26. The brothers' reaction was dramatic. Record what they said and how they felt from the end of verse 28.

27. The brothers were perhaps feeling guilty or remorseful about their past actions. What is one way we can listen for God's voice and guidance when we struggle with these emotions?

28. When they returned to the land of Canaan, the men told their father, Jacob, all that had happened to them in Egypt (verses 29-31). How did their words make clear that they still had no suspicion of Joseph's true identity?

29. The brothers related to their father that they told Joseph, "We are honest men" (verse 31). How do you think they felt after what they had done to Joseph and their father?

30. CONNECTION: When Joseph's brothers found that their money had been returned, their first response was "What is this God has done to us?" The story of Joseph reminds us that God does not cause harm or evil to befall his people, but gives us the strength, courage and help we need to get through difficult times. How can we develop a resilient faith like Joseph to prepare ourselves to meet the challenges that we will face in the future?

Read and record Romans 15:13. Pray today to be strengthened with God's presence as you face the challenges of the day ahead.

DAY SIX

Read Genesis 42:32-38

31. As today's lesson begins, the brothers continued the account of their meeting with Joseph (verses 32-34). They hid from Jacob the fact that Joseph threatened them with death if they did not return with Benjamin (Genesis 42:18-19). Why do you think they did not disclose this fact?

32. Jacob and his sons were dismayed when they discovered bags of money in each one's sack (verse 35). Jacob's reaction was immediate and vehement. Of what things did he accuse his sons in verse 36?

33. At the end of verse 36, Jacob laments, "All this has happened to me!" It was true that Jacob suffered in his life, but some of it was the result of his own actions. Think back over Jacob's life and briefly comment on one example of this.

34. Once again Reuben stepped forward to offer a remedy (verse 37). Record Jacob's adamant response to Reuben's offer in verse 38.

NOTE: "You may kill my two sons if I do not bring him back to you." Reuben's offer was an archaic expression meant as an absolute guarantee for Benjamin's safety. It meant that, just as it was impossible for Jacob to kill Reuben's children, it was impossible for Reuben not to return Benjamin to his father.

35. In verse 38 Jacob once again referred to Sheol (see Genesis 37:35). Look up one of the following Old Testament passages and record the words or phrases that describe Sheol.

Numbers 16:30

Isaiah 14:9-11

Ecclesiastes 9:10

36. CONNECTION: Consider Jacob's words from today, "All this has happened to me!" While adversity drew Joseph closer to God, it seemed to challenge Jacob's faith. Joseph faced far worse circumstances but he never took the attitude that all things were against him. He was able to change and, with the help of God's grace and protection, to adapt and was blessed in exile. God calls us to change, to become the best person that we can be following the example of Jesus. Change, however is not easy. What are some ways to discern what changes are needed in our lives and how to make them? How does our faith help us in this effort?

Read and record Ephesians 4:15. Write a prayer today asking the Holy Spirit for strength and guidance to make needed changes in your life.

Read pages 70-71 in *The Book of Genesis* by Lawrence DiPaolo, Jr., Ph.D. The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study acknowledges that scripture quotations in this study are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, Catholic Edition. Copyright © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

©Copyright 2021. The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study

thecornerstonescripturestudy.org