

The Complexity of Forgiveness

The Betrayal Moment (May 24th, 2020)

PREPARATION

- Familiarize yourself with this Study Guide.
- If you missed it, watch the sermon online [HERE](#).
- Spend some time in prayer before your group gathers.
- You **always** have the option to use some or all the questions and/or prepare your own questions.
- Review the learning objective to focus the conversation, read the primary scriptures as a group, summarize the main points, ask the questions, and use supporting texts to enhance the concepts.

DISCUSSION

Opening Prayer: (1-2 minutes)

In light of what God is saying through this week's message, here's a suggestion of how your group can invite God into your time together.

Thank the Lord for His sovereignty over all things! Praise the Son for his ability to compassionately sympathize with our suffering in this world! Praise Jesus for resurrecting from the grave so that we can have a relationship with Him through the Holy Spirit! As we shelter in place, pray that we would continue to endure and deepen our roots as we learn to forgive others in the power the Holy Spirit! Finally, pray that the good news of Jesus would reach those who are suffering from the Coronavirus by sending us to represent your love!

Discussion: (45-60 minutes)

What's Going on This Week

This Sunday, Pastor Larry brought us into our second week of our new series titled *The Complexity of Forgiveness*. Pastor Larry points us to the moment where Joseph is betrayed by his brothers in Genesis 37 in order to walk us through why God would orchestrate something so painful as a betrayal in a close relationship. Pastor Larry challenges us to *pivot* our thinking in God's direction so that we can be reminded that God is never surprised by betrayal, God promises to work out all things for our good to make us more like His son, and that God is always with us when betrayal leaves us feeling hopeless!

“Let's not forget that scripture gives us anchoring points in our lives to save us from future destruction on the basis of past betrayals no matter what we have gone through. Without qualification, the Bible tells us that we can trust that God is working out something for our good.”
– Pastor Larry Vold

Suggested Questions

Check-In: Icebreaker –What is one blessing of God in your life that has been particularly highlighted by this COVID-19 season that you may have taken for granted before the Shelter-in-place?

Study Tip: Have you ever seen a movie that waits until the very end of the film to reveal a groundbreaking truth? This one fact forces you to go back and rethink how you interpret the entire movie! In the same way, when Jesus enters into the story of the Bible, his disciples are challenged to go back through the stories of the Old Testament and reconsider what they might mean in light of the groundbreaking reality of Jesus (Lk. 24:44-49)! For example, the gospel of John rethinks the origin story of Genesis. No longer could John start with “In the beginning, God created...” In light of the eternal Son, John recasts the origin narrative of Genesis as, “In the beginning was the Word,” who was with God from the beginning and would become flesh to dwell among us (Jn. 1:1-14)! What does all of this have to do with the story of Joseph? Let’s rethink the story in light of Jesus! Joseph’s life points us to a figure who was robed with his Father’s favor, betrayed by his own people, and cast into the pit for dead. This figure remained faithful and rose from the pit to a royal position in order to bring restoration to Israel! **Sound familiar?** As you continue in this study, realize that God is not only working out His plan on behalf of your life, but He is most prominently orchestrating your life so that others might see Jesus!

Objective #1: Explore different reactions when God tells us to expect betrayal.

Primary Texts: Genesis 37:18-24– Pastor Larry uses Joseph’s moment of betrayal to point out how oftentimes these heartbreaking moments can come out of nowhere. However, Pastor Larry challenges us to *pivot* our thinking by recognizing that these moments of betrayal do not surprise God. What was your reaction to the scriptures pointed out in the sermon (listed below) that say we should learn to expect betrayal moments as followers of Jesus? Is this an easy or difficult truth for you to grasp? Why?

Supporting texts: (Hardships) 2 Cor. 4:8-9; Jn. 16:33; Matt. 6:34; Job 2:10; Ecc. 7:14; Acts 14:22 (Jesus) Lk. 22:47-62

- **Objective #2: Reflect on how your life fits into God’s good plan to make you more like Jesus.**

Primary Texts: Genesis 37:25-28; Romans 8:28-29 – Pastor Larry points to the resulting consequences of Joseph’s betrayal moment (Ishmaelite caravan, Potiphar’s house, prison) as an example of how betrayal is often the beginning of even more difficult things to come. However, Pastor Larry challenges us to *pivot* our thinking by recalling God’s promise to work all things out for good. If you think back on betrayal moments in your life, how has God used these moments to write your story? How do you believe (or hope) that story will continue through your current situations and hardships?

Supporting Texts: (God’s Promises) Jer. 29:11; Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 3:19; Heb. 8:6-13 (Joseph) Gen. 50:24-25; Heb. 11:22; (Jesus) 1 Cor. 1:18; Heb. 12:1-2

- **Objective #3: Pray over situations of hopelessness.**

Primary Texts: Genesis 39:20-21– Finally, Pastor Larry points out that betrayal moments often result in feelings of hopelessness. However, Pastor Larry challenges us to *pivot* our thinking to remember that even though life may seem hopeless in these situations, the Lord is still always with us! What situations are you facing today that may be contributing to feelings of hopelessness? How can we as a group pray for them and remind you that God is with you throughout the week?

Supporting Texts: (God with us) Josh 1:9; Is. 43:2-3, 5; Matt. 28:19-20; Jn. 14:15-21; Rom. 8:38-39

Closing Prayer: (5-10 minutes)

In light of what God is saying through this week’s message, here’s some suggestions of what your group could talk about with God in prayer.

Thank Jesus for becoming human and being a God who can empathize with betrayal! Ask that the Holy Spirit would give us the ability to trust you with our relationships while we continue to grow deeper roots in our relationship with you. Pray that we continue to pivot our minds on the Lord so that we can learn that God is intimately present in heartbreaking moments! Finally, pray that the Holy Spirit would continue to transform us into becoming more like Jesus so we can display his forgiveness during this COVID-19 season.

THROUGHOUT THE WEEK

-Further Reading and Exploration: *Read Genesis 37-50* For the next couple of weeks, we will be camped out in the story of Joseph. As you read the entire story, write down some of the major themes you notice and begin to ask yourself why the author decided to end the book of Genesis by presenting the story of Joseph!

-Stay up to date with Coronavirus Ministry Opportunities: Help us out by pointing the people in your Community Group to 3Crosses.org/coronavirus. If you or anyone in your group is looking to serve food in our pantry, access spiritual care, or seek financial assistance, you can find all you need at 3Crosses.org/neighborhood

-Participate in a Rooted Group! Over the Summer, our community group ministry will be featuring the 3Crosses Grow Discipleship Experience. This will include daily devotional, weekly pastor-led teaching, and 3 workshops to share how the experience is going! You can register to lead a new group by filling out our [Community Group Registration Form](#) or let us know you want to switch by filling out the [my3Crosses Edits Form](#)!

- Find out how to pray for two people in your group this week! Pray that the members of your group would trust that the Lord is moving even though they may not be able to see it!