

The Complexity of Forgiveness

The Aftermath of Betrayal (May 31st, 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 Danny brought us into our third week of the series titled *The Complexity of Forgiveness*. Pastor Danny highlights Genesis 39 – 41 which describes the various rises and falls that Joseph experiences in the aftermath of his betrayal moment. By pointing us in the direction of Joseph's ups and downs, Pastor Danny challenges us to identify the various aftermath effects we may be experiencing as a result of our own betrayal moment. Even though we may be overwhelmed with the pain and tempted to give up, the story of Joseph encourages us to persevere, keep an eye on faithfulness as an indicator of success, and begin to look through the narrative lens of "what is God planning next!"

"No matter how often the world tries to push you down, God is always there to lift you back up again...if you understand this truth, it will equip you to stop looking at your life through the 'look what was done to me' narrative and start looking through the 'what is God planning' narrative." – Pastor Danny Strange

Suggested Questions

Check-In: *Icebreaker* –What are some of the ways that God has moved unexpectedly in your life?

Study Tip: Have you noticed all the dreams in Joseph’s story? While there are speculations about why God communicates this way to the patriarchs of Israel and whether communication through dreams continues today (Acts 2:17), the repetition of dreams does illuminate a specific pattern. Pharaoh, after receiving a dream about thin cows devouring plump cows, receives a second dream about seven thin ears of grain swallowing up the plump stalk of grain. When Joseph is called upon to interpret these two dreams, he foreshadows the 7 years of plenty, the 7 years of famine, and proclaims that, “*the doubling of Pharaoh’s dream means that the thing is fixed by God, and God will shortly bring it about* (41:32)!” 2 years earlier, Joseph had interpreted another pair of dreams from the cupbearer and the chief baker that came true just after 3 days (40:20-21). From an outside perspective, we can see that God might be making a point about Joseph’s pair of dreams (37:5-11)! However, Joseph struggles to grasp this perspective for himself. He names his new *pair* of sons Manasseh (God has made me **forget** all my hardship and my father’s house) and Ephraim (God has made me **fruitful** in the land of my affliction)! As you study this week, pay attention to the war of perspectives in your life and recognize that your community (someone from the outside looking in) may be able to see something you can’t!

Objective #1: Reflect on the lasting *shrapnel* from the aftermath of your betrayal moment.

Primary Texts: Genesis 39 – 41 – Pastor Danny begins his sermon by pointing out the rises and falls following Joseph’s betrayal. He compares them to the aftermath of a bomb that emits shockwaves and shrapnel that affect Joseph well after the main explosion occurs. As an example, Pastor Danny refers to the long term mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual wounds that you may have experienced as a result of a betrayal. As you have thought through your own betrayal moment in this series, can you point to any aftermath affects that have sent painful shrapnel into your life? How might the aftermath of your betrayal moment be affecting your life today?

Objective #2: Recognize God’s work from an outside perspective in order to strengthen your faith.

Primary Texts: Genesis 39:2-6, 9b, 21-23; 40:8b; 41:16, 38-41 – Pastor Danny makes the point that as we read the story of Joseph, we rarely notice his resilient faith and how he is able to continually make the most out of every situation. These realities about Joseph are overshadowed by the countless times he is thrown to the bottom. Think about someone in your life who has remained faithful to God and has made the best of their difficult situations: In what ways were you able to see a shift in their perspective from “*look what was done to me*” to “*what is God planning next?*” What else can you learn from observing their life in order to adopt a “*what is God planning*” perspective for your own trials?

Objective #3: Pray to cling to the “*what is God planning*” perspective.

Primary Texts: Romans 8:28-29 – Pastor Danny concludes by pointing out that in the end, we find ourselves eager to see how God will show up next after Joseph experiences a pitfall. What are the various obstacles that prevent you from trusting that, “God causes all things to work for the good of those who love him?” What do you need prayer for this week so that you may be able to cling to this truth?

Supporting Texts: (Hope) Ezk. 37:11-14; Prov. 3:1-8; Rom. 5:1-5; Tit. 2:11-14; 1 Pet. 1:3-7

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 shift our minds on what you may be doing in our lives so that we can learn that God is intimately working out good 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!