



Dgroup Discussion Guide for April 24, 2016

A Story of F.A.I.T.H

Scripture: *Genesis 37*

Having faith means **Forsaking All, I Trust Him**. Hebrews 11:1 says, ***Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*** We are able to exercise faith in realizing the triangle of God's blessings: it begins with God's promises in His Word, which we believe by faith, and is expressed through obedience.

Being a "good" Christian does not guarantee that only good things or blessings will come your way. There will be times when God allows us to fall into a figurative deep, dark pit where we have no other choice but to *look up* for a solution to our problem. We look at the early life of Joseph, who found himself in that very situation, only literally.

Joseph is introduced in Genesis 37 as a boy who, despite his youth, is already working by pasturing the flock with his 11 brothers. As the firstborn of Rachel—the wife whom Israel loved—he was favored by his father above his brothers. This favoritism naturally leads to friction between the brothers; it gets to the point where they hated Joseph and could not even be civil with him. This hatred escalates after Joseph tells his brothers of two dreams that he has: in the first dream, his sheaf stands erect while his brothers' sheaves gather around it to bow down to it; and in the second dream, the sun, moon and eleven stars—theoretically representative of his parents and brothers—bow down to Joseph. Even his own father expresses doubt when he hears about the second dream.





One day, Israel sends Joseph out to check on his brothers, who are pasturing their flock. On the way, Joseph gets lost, but ends up encountering a man who knows exactly where his brothers are. This man proves to be an extension of God's grace, as Joseph is able to find his brothers despite his wandering. When his brothers see him from a distance, they begin plotting to kill him. They first plan to murder him and throw his body into a pit, but the eldest brother tells them not to go to such extremes with Joseph. In Genesis 37:22, Reuben says, ***Shed no blood. Throw him into this pit that is in the wilderness, but do not lay hands on him—that he might rescue him out of their hands, to restore him to his father.*** Out of all the brothers, Reuben stands to gain the most from Joseph's demise, so we would have expected him to agree to the plot; however, again through the grace of God, he ends up being the one to prevent it from taking place.

The brothers, upon Judah's suggestion, then reach a consensus to sell Joseph to a caravan of travelers that were passing through to Egypt. Then, they hatch a plan to deceive their father by making it seem like Joseph was attacked and killed by an animal. While Israel mourned greatly for the apparent death of his favorite son, Joseph was sold in Egypt to the captain of Pharaoh's bodyguard.

When we find ourselves, like Joseph, stuck in a deep, dark pit, how do we pray? Do we ask God to get us out of the pit, or do we ask Him what He is trying to teach us by allowing us into such a situation? We sometimes have the tendency to judge God based on our present circumstances, when we should instead judge our circumstances based on who God is. C.S. Lewis said, "When you enter heaven, you will discover that your life on earth was just chapter 1."

APPLICATION:

Patently listen as God reveals where you can apply the passage's lesson in your life. Write down specific action points to what He has revealed to you.

	Personal: Look back on your life and recall seemingly bad things that have happened to you. How did God turn those events around for your good? How has those situations helped you grow into Christlikeness?
	Family: Talk about Joseph. What situations are you facing today that seem hopeless and helpless? How are you responding to this – are you growing in trust in God or are you starting to despair? How have you as a family responded to trials that have fallen your way? What specific things can you do in order to strengthen your faith in God?
	Discipleship: Discuss with your discipleship group what “walking by faith” means to you. How is this reflected in your life? Are there things that stand in the way of your “walking in faith”?
	Church/ Ministry: In the light of all that is happening in the world today, how am I actively and intentionally sharing the gospel to those who are around me?

PRAYERS:

Lift all the things that you learned back to God. Share your thoughts to Him. If He is impressing a sin in your life, confess it to Him. He is always ready to forgive.