

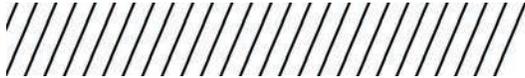


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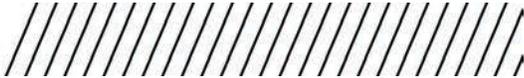
Overcoming Adversity In Our Lives



Member Guide



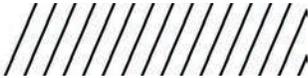
WARM UP



Can you think of a story of significant betrayal that sticks out in your mind? What were the circumstances? What makes the betrayal worse than other stories?



THE TEXT: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ME?



1. In verse 19 Joseph makes the point that it is not his place to decide who receives grace and forgiveness.
 - a. For group members that have experienced betrayal, how difficult do you believe it was for Joseph to say this to his brothers?
2. Joseph had the power to seek complete retribution for the acts his brothers committed against him, yet he chose to have a different response. How do you view Joseph's perspective? Too pious? Too grace-filled? Just right? Why?
3. In verse 20 Joseph says to his brothers "God meant it (*their evil acts towards him*) for good to bring about the present result-the survival of many people". However at this point in the story Joseph had the benefit of knowing that his trials in Egypt would save many people since God told him personally of the coming famine. Yet often times our circumstances, while they are not any easier, are not as straightforward.
 - a. In your own circumstances how do you navigate the struggle of perspective since many times seeing God at work is difficult until months or years later?
 - b. What are some perspectives you have employed to help you navigate your way through the storm? What perspective did you have?
4. A surprising aspect to Joseph's response to his brothers, more so than his declaration to not condemn them, is found in verse 21b "So he comforted them and spoke kindly to them."
 - a. Does verse 21b surprise you at all? Which part? What about it surprises you?
 - b. In light of the New Testament's teaching on forgiveness what do you believe God is communicating to us regarding how Joseph responded to his brothers?

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5. Recall past storms in your life and your response to those storms. Knowing how God desires for us as Christ-followers to respond, can you identify some storms where your response didn't honor God? What happened? If you could have a do-over how specifically might you change your response?

 6. Theologians have argued for many years over why exactly storms in life overtake us, however the fact is despite all of the debating people still are betrayed, catastrophe still strikes, and grief is all too real.
 - a. If you had the opportunity, how would you communicate to a person in the midst of a storm a way to navigate safely through their storm? What Scripture(s) would you recommend? Why those? What promises of God would you share? What stories of your own could you pass along?

//////////////////// DIGGING DEEPER //////////////////////

It is easier to forgive an enemy than to forgive a friend. – William Blake

1. Do you believe this to be true? Why?
2. How does this cultural axiom fit in the life of a Christ-follower?
3. Why would it be easier to forgive an enemy than a friend?

//////////////////// CLOSING THOUGHT //////////////////////

Betrayal is the only truth that sticks. – Arthur Miller
Agree or Disagree?