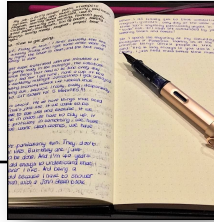


Genesis & The Story of Your Life (Part 4) Joseph & His Brothers



"This is the account of Jacob's family line..." Genesis 37:2 NLT

Genesis tells us the stories of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Lot, Rebekah, Jacob, Esau, and Joseph. Each had a "life message." Their stories teach us important lessons. Our lives are also a story and have a message. What message do you want to come from your life?

The Central Lesson:
Our lives have a "life message." What do you want your message to be?

1. Joseph - God often works **BEHIND** the scenes to bring good out of our bad experiences.

Tornados, hurricanes, tsunamis, earthquakes, sickness, disease, crime, school shootings, terrorism, etc. People often ask, "Where is God when bad things happen?" The answer is often difficult to accept, but there is an answer.

Since the Fall in Genesis 3, when **humanity chose to sin, God has allowed sin to run its course.** The curse of sin includes all the bad things we have witnessed in the world. The good news is that God has a **time limit.** He will end this age of evil with the Second Coming of Christ. He will one day judge all evil and end all sickness and sorrow. *"He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever."* Revelation 21:4 NLT.

The Story of Joseph

The story of Joseph in **Genesis 37-50** is a **good illustration of how God works through bad things to accomplish good.** Joseph suffered unjustly. It would be natural to ask, "God, where are You? Why are you allowing this to happen to me?" The story of Joseph shows us how to respond when we are puzzled by pain and suffering. It shows that **God's silence does not indicate** inactivity or not caring but that He is active behind the scenes working for our good.

His older ten brothers betray Joseph. They considered killing him but ended up selling him into slavery. As a result, Joseph experienced many years of hardship, including being falsely accused of attacking his Egyptian master's wife (39:7-23) and being left in jail for over two years (Gen. 40). God eventually worked through circumstances to make him the second highest authority in Egypt.

At the time, Joseph, nor anyone else, knew what God was doing. However, **God had a purpose** for allowing him to suffer. Joseph eventually discovered and explained it to his brothers in **Genesis 45:1-8; 50:19-20.** The key verse is **Genesis 50:20** NLT *"**You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people.**"*

Romans 8:28 NLT *"**And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.**"*

The bottom line, **the twelve tribes of Israel survived the seven years of famine and continued through history to eventually give the world the Messiah - because of Joseph's hardship.** God is all-wise, all-knowing, all-powerful and often works behind the scenes to bring good out of our bad experiences.

2. Joseph's Brothers - Only **CONFESSING** our sins can clear a guilty conscience.

Everyone is born with a conscience. It is a gift from God. The dictionary defines *conscience* as: "An inner feeling or voice viewed as acting as a guide to the rightness or wrongness of one's behavior." The Bible shows that God's law is written on people's hearts, and *"...their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right."* Romans 2:14-16 NLT

Greg Laurie writes: "There are a lot of people today who have a guilty conscience. That is what Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, author of the Sherlock Holmes stories, discovered. One day he decided to play a joke on 12 of his friends. He sent them all a message that said, 'Flee at once. All is discovered.' And within 24 hours, all 12 of his friends had left the country. I think that is having a guilty conscience. It was just a joke. Nothing was discovered. But these people felt so guilty about something that they got out as quickly as they could." Devotional, August 23, 2005.

*"**16 So they sent this message to Joseph: 'Before your father died, he instructed us **17** to say to you: 'Please **forgive** your brothers for the great wrong they did to you—for their sin in treating you so cruelly.' So we, the servants of the God of your father, beg you to **forgive our sin.**' When Joseph received the message, he broke down and wept. **18** Then his brothers came and threw themselves down before Joseph. 'Look, we are your slaves!' they said.**"*

***19** But Joseph replied, 'Don't be afraid of me. Am I God, that I can punish you? **20** You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people. **21** No, don't be afraid. I will continue to take care of you and your children.' So he reassured them by speaking kindly to them."*

Hebrews 9:14 *"Just think how much more the blood of Christ will **purify our consciences** from sinful deeds so that we can worship the living God...."*

Joseph's brothers eventually confessed their wrong behavior. Joseph forgave them, and their relationship was restored.

The Central Lesson
Our lives have a "life message." What do you want your message to be?

- ▶ Accept Christ as your Savior. ▶ As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ. ▶ Invite someone to next Sunday's study. ▶ Attend a small group. ▶ Read the Bible this week ▶ Pray for friends that need Jesus.