

Facilitator:

1. Open with Prayer
2. Welcome any newcomers
3. Try to keep your discussion to an hour and a half at the most.

**Facilitator:** Encourage your members to **BRING THEIR BIBLES** and use them during Connect Group.

## **CONNECT Group study questions for April 23, 2017**

### **Title: When Your Life is in the Pits— Genesis 39:21-40:23**

#### **Children:**

Who do you turn to when you are struggling in life? Do you lean on God in the hard times? Do you think he wants us to turn to him first and foremost?

Pastor Peppy talked about how God is right there with us. What does that mean to you?

Have you ever looked back on a situation and realized God was with you, even when you didn't think he was? Give an example.

Isaiah 40:31 says “Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.” Sometimes waiting on things can be difficult but God has a plan in his own time. Has there been a situation in your life where God has come through for you at just the right time?

**Read:** Genesis 39:21-40:23

*But **the LORD was with Joseph** and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners who were in the prison. Whatever was done there, he was the one who did it. The keeper of the prison paid no attention to anything that was in Joseph's charge, because **the LORD was with him**. And whatever he did, the LORD made it succeed.*

*Some time after this, the cupbearer of the king of Egypt and his baker committed an offense against their lord the king of Egypt. And Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, **the chief cupbearer and the chief baker**, and he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the*

prison where Joseph was confined. The captain of the guard appointed Joseph to be with them, and he attended them.

They continued for some time in custody.

And one night they both dreamed—the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were confined in the prison—each his own dream, and each dream with its own interpretation. When Joseph came to them in the morning, he saw that they were troubled. So he asked Pharaoh's officers who were with him in custody in his master's house, **“Why are your faces downcast today?”** They said to him, “We have had dreams, and there is no one to interpret them.” And Joseph said to them, “Do not interpretations belong to God? Please tell them to me.”

So the chief cupbearer told his dream to Joseph and said to him, “In my dream there was a vine before me, and on the vine there were three branches. As soon as it budded, its blossoms shot forth, and the clusters ripened into grapes.

Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand.” Then Joseph said to him, “This is its interpretation: the three branches are three days. In three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your office, and you shall place Pharaoh's cup in his hand as formerly, when you were his cupbearer. **Only remember me, when it is well with you, and please do me the kindness to mention me to Pharaoh,** and so get me out of this house. For I was indeed stolen out of the land of the Hebrews, and here also I have done nothing that they should put me into the pit.”

When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was favorable, he said to Joseph, “I also had a dream: there were three cake baskets on my head, and in the uppermost basket there were all sorts of baked food for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating it out of the basket on my head.” And Joseph answered and said, “This is its interpretation: the three baskets are three days. In three days Pharaoh will lift up your head—from you!—and hang you on a tree. And the birds will eat the flesh from you.”

On the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, he made a feast for all his servants and lifted up the head of the chief cupbearer and the head of the chief baker among his servants. He restored the chief cupbearer to his position, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand. But he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them. Yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

**Question:** Was there ever a time you felt forsaken and alone? Maybe the time is right now. Take note of Joseph's situation, and share your experience with the group. Were they similar in any way?

**Question:** When you were at your lowest, where was God? Did you sense his presence in the midst of your despair, or was it some time later that you recognized the hand of God had directed you?

**Read:** Hebrews 13:5, Psalm 22:1, and Matthew 27:45-46, Isaiah 53.

**Question:** In the Hebrews 13:5 passage, God promises to never leave us nor forsake us, but in Matthew 27: 45-46 Jesus quotes Psalm 22:1 and asks God why he has forsaken him.

How does God's abandonment of Jesus relate to his promise that he will never forsake us? How does believing God's promise affect the outcome of a desperate situation? **Facilitator:** Take a look at Romans 8:28.

**Read:** Isaiah 40:31

*Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.*

**Question:** This is an encouraging passage, uplifting and full of hope for the future, but what exactly does it mean to "wait?"

What do you imagine your posture would be if you waited for the Lord? Would you be: Sitting (doing nothing until the Lord shows up)? Standing (eagerly anticipating God's next command? Or busy (doing the work God has placed in front of you even if it's not what you expect)?