

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 30, 2017

Title: Outhouse to Penthouse— Genesis 41:1-41

Announcement:

Next week's sermon and Connect Group study questions for May 7 will be the last of this semester.

Children:

—Think back to Sunday's lesson about Jesus' meeting with Nicodemus.

What is the greatest gift or blessing that God has given us? (John 3:16-His Son, eternal life with Him for all who put their trust in Jesus for salvation)

—How can remembering this blessing (#1) help us when we are having a really hard day or bad things happen in our lives?

—God made each of us with special skills, traits, or gifts that we can use to glorify God, share the gospel, and serve others. Instead of using your gifts to draw attention to yourself, how can you use them to help others celebrate God? (encourage kids to share specific examples, such as using a talent for singing to go sing hymns for the elderly in a nursing home)

Read: Genesis 41:1-41

Now it happened at the end of two full years that Pharaoh had a dream, and behold, he was standing by the Nile. And lo, from the Nile there came up seven cows, sleek and fat; and they grazed in the marsh grass. Then behold, seven other cows came up after them from the Nile, ugly and gaunt, and they stood by the other cows on the bank of the Nile. The ugly and gaunt cows ate up the seven sleek and fat cows. Then Pharaoh awoke. He fell asleep and dreamed a second time; and behold, seven ears of grain came up on a single stalk, plump and good. Then behold, seven ears, thin and scorched by the east wind, sprouted up after them. The thin

ears swallowed up the seven plump and full ears. Then Pharaoh awoke, and behold, it was a dream. Now in the morning his spirit was troubled, so he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all its wise men. And Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was no one who could interpret them to Pharaoh.

Then the chief cupbearer spoke to Pharaoh, saying, "I would make mention today of my own offenses. Pharaoh was furious with his servants, and he put me in confinement in the house of the captain of the bodyguard, both me and the chief baker. We had a dream on the same night, he and I; each of us dreamed according to the interpretation of his own dream. Now a Hebrew youth was with us there, a servant of the captain of the bodyguard, and we related them to him, and he interpreted our dreams for us. To each one he interpreted according to his own dream. And just as he interpreted for us, so it happened; he restored me in my office, but he hanged him."

Then Pharaoh sent and called for Joseph, and they hurriedly brought him out of the dungeon; and when he had shaved himself and changed his clothes, he came to Pharaoh. Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, but no one can interpret it; and I have heard it said about you, that when you hear a dream you can interpret it." Joseph then answered Pharaoh, saying, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer." So Pharaoh spoke to Joseph, "In my dream, behold, I was standing on the bank of the Nile; and behold, seven cows, fat and sleek came up out of the Nile, and they grazed in the marsh grass. Lo, seven other cows came up after them, poor and very ugly and gaunt, such as I had never seen for ugliness in all the land of Egypt; and the lean and ugly cows ate up the first seven fat cows. Yet when they had devoured them, it could not be detected that they had devoured them, for they were just as ugly as before. Then I awoke. I saw also in my dream, and behold, seven ears, full and good, came up on a single stalk; and lo, seven ears, withered, thin, and scorched by the east wind, sprouted up after them; and the thin ears swallowed the seven good ears. Then I told it to the magicians, but there was no one who could explain it to me."

Now Joseph said to Pharaoh, "Pharaoh's dreams are one and the same; God has told to Pharaoh what He is about to do. The seven good cows are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years; the dreams are one and the same. The seven lean and ugly cows that came up after them are seven years, and the seven thin ears scorched by the east

wind will be seven years of famine. It is as I have spoken to Pharaoh: God has shown to Pharaoh what He is about to do. Behold, seven years of great abundance are coming in all the land of Egypt; and after them seven years of famine will come, and all the abundance will be forgotten in the land of Egypt, and the famine will ravage the land. So the abundance will be unknown in the land because of that subsequent famine; for it will be very severe. Now as for the repeating of the dream to Pharaoh twice, it means that the matter is determined by God, and God will quickly bring it about. Now let Pharaoh look for a man discerning and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh take action to appoint overseers in charge of the land, and let him exact a fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt in the seven years of abundance. Then let them gather all the food of these good years that are coming, and store up the grain for food in the cities under Pharaoh's authority, and let them guard it. Let the food become as a reserve for the land for the seven years of famine which will occur in the land of Egypt, so that the land will not perish during the famine."

Now the proposal seemed good to Pharaoh and to all his servants.

Then Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find a man like this, in whom is a divine spirit?" So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has informed you of all this, there is no one so discerning and wise as you are. You shall be over my house, and according to your command all my people shall do homage; only in the throne I will be greater than you." Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt."

Read: James 1:2-8

Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

Read: Romans 8:28

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

Question: It shouldn't be difficult, considering what we know of Joseph's story, to see how God caused things to "work together."

In light of the principles we find in James 1:2-8 and Romans 8:28, what do you suppose was going on between God and Joseph leading up to the day he was placed second in command to pharaoh? **Facilitator:** We can speculate that Joseph's faith was tested producing endurance, and that Joseph was made perfect and complete lacking nothing for God's purpose. We can imagine Joseph crying out for wisdom and God giving it generously. Take your group members through each step in these two passages and apply them to Joseph's story.

Question: You've probably heard someone say: Everything happens for a reason. How is this different from God's conditional promise in Romans 8:28? To make this God's promise to us, what conditions do we have to meet? **Facilitator:** Focus the group on the words "love God" and "called." Ask them to explain what they mean and what they involve in day-by-day living.

Question: Pastor Peppy offered three observations from Joseph's story: Joseph remained humble and gave God the credit; he didn't try to manipulate a situation for his benefit; and he didn't waste the gift God gave him when he saw a need to use it.

Can you honestly say that Joseph is your hero? What situations do you encounter where you are—or could be—Joseph and imitate his character, attitude, and responses?

Question: By application, Pastor Peppy said we should never judge people by their current circumstances. Why not? **Facilitator:** Could it be that God isn't finished with them yet? That life in the pit is God's way of preparing them for the blessing of knowing him?