

SESSION 6

OVERCOME AN EARTHLY MINDSET



What did your parents do for you that you did not appreciate until you were older?

QUESTION #1

#BSFLmindset

THE POINT

We can trust God is at work on our behalf.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

I live in Oklahoma. Tornado Alley. I'm no stranger to storms that drop down out of nowhere and cause total devastation. I've seen entire communities leveled and I've helped families sift through the rubble searching for any remnant of their homes. It's heart-wrenching.

No one is immune from crisis. We may not have lost a home or encountered a tornado, but we've all felt the devastating winds of hard times. We've all found ourselves rocked by a storm of life and left picking up the pieces.

Here's one thing we can be sure of: even though we may be caught off guard or surprised by a crisis, God certainly is not. In fact, He's never surprised by any problem we have.

As we conclude our look at the life of Joseph, we can see how God prepared and led him in both the good times and the hard times. God is always working, and He has a plan to see us through any crisis. While our problems may seem huge, God is bigger than anything that may happen to us. We can trust His plan to help us overcome.

WHAT DOES **THE BIBLE** SAY?

Genesis 50:15-21 (HCSB)

15 When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said to one another, "If Joseph is holding a grudge against us, he will certainly repay us for all the suffering we caused him."

16 So they sent this message to Joseph, "Before he died your father gave a command:

17 'Say this to Joseph: Please forgive your brothers' transgression and their sin—the suffering they caused you.' Therefore, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when their message came to him.

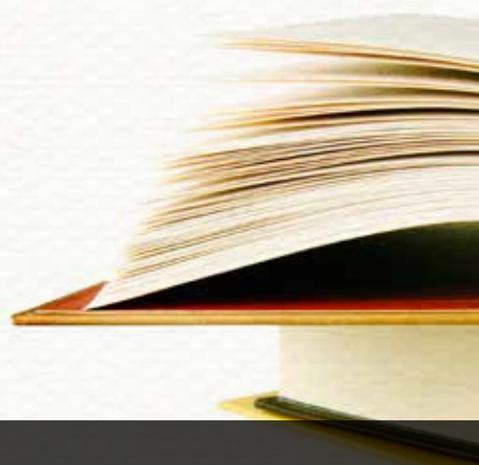
18 Then his brothers also came to him, bowed down before him, and said, "We are your slaves!"

19 But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God?"

20 You planned evil against me; God planned it for good to bring about the present result—the survival of many people. **21** Therefore don't be afraid. I will take care of you and your little ones." And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

Key Words

Transgression (v. 17)—This translation of one of three main Hebrew words for sin denotes a defiant violation of God's law, a brazen revolt, rebellion.



Genesis 50:15-17

For 17 years, Jacob lived in Egypt with all his sons and their families (see Gen. 47:28). He'd formerly considered his life hard and difficult (v. 9), but his closing years were spent in security with his sons. After Jacob died, his 12 sons took his body back home and buried him with his wife and ancestors.

They could not bury the past, however. The brothers once again felt shame and fear because of how they treated Joseph in their youth. After the loss of their father, they became afraid that Joseph would finally seek his revenge.

For his part, Joseph had cared for his family for 17 years, continually ensuring their safety and provision. Every indication is that the family—and everyone in it—greatly prospered under Joseph's watchful care. Even so, the whirlwind of fear and the storm of disgrace threatened the fabric of healing that had covered them for so many years.

Afraid at first to come in person, the brothers sent a somewhat deceitful message to Joseph to again seek his forgiveness for their terrible sin. This was potentially dangerous, given their history. The Bible tells us that Satan roams about like a roaring lion seeking those he can devour (see 1 Pet. 5:8). He looks for any crack—any way he can enter, steal our peace, and cause alarm. The brothers had lost their peace.

To be fair, they could have chosen to plot against Joseph again, but they didn't. Apparently, they finally learned their lesson. Instead, they sought forgiveness—again—for what they had done. And as they did, they acknowledged their actions as sin.

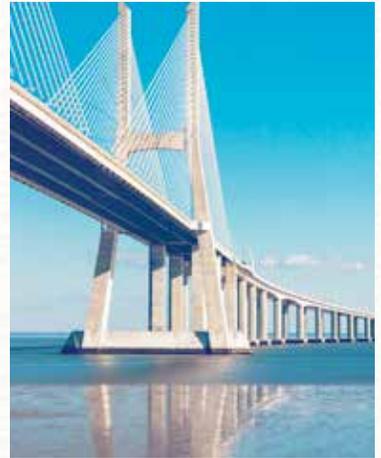
Joseph was tremendously affected by the confession of his brothers. After all these years, they still had such fear of him and thought he had not truly forgiven them. Joseph discovered that reassurance was still needed.

When have you found forgiveness hard to accept or believe?

QUESTION #2

Past issues often have a way of coming back around again—especially if we haven't completely dealt with them. The key to surviving a return attack of the enemy is to deal with it head on. Take determined action not to allow past hurts and issues to regain traction or grow within you again.

WHAT IS TRUST?



Which of the above images best illustrates your understanding of what it means to trust God? Explain.

Which image best illustrates your understanding of what it means to trust other people? Explain.

What can it cost us to leave justice in God's hands?

QUESTION #3

Genesis 50:18-19

Joseph had once dreamed that his brothers would bow before him (see Gen. 37:5-9). That dream was fulfilled when his brothers first stood before him seeking grain (see Gen. 42:9). At that time, they bowed before him out of respect for his office; but now years later, they bowed before him in fear. They entered Joseph's presence and offered themselves as his slaves.

In other words, they recognized that they belonged to Joseph. They'd been captured by their own actions and lies years earlier, and holding onto our fears always makes us slaves to those fears.

Joseph also could have allowed himself to become enslaved, as well. His brothers were enslaved to fear, and he could have joined them by being enslaved to bitterness or a desire for payback. But Joseph refused to be shackled again.

Instead, Joseph humbled himself before God, recognizing that it was not his place to punish his brothers. He refused to turn his back on what God had shown him so many years before—that God was in control and had brought him to Egypt to save his family.

To trust is to commit one's care or keeping to another. The life of Joseph demonstrates over and over again that God can be trusted. We can commit our care and keeping to Him. In legal terms, a trust is a relationship between parties in which one person (the trustee) has the power to manage, and the other person (the beneficiary) has the privilege of receiving the benefits.

Joseph decided early in his life to make God his Trustee and to live as His beneficiary. By allowing God to control the consequences of his brothers' actions, Joseph freed himself from the constraint of revenge. **It was better to trust God to be God and let Him do what needed to be done.**

A photograph of a man and a woman embracing in a field. The man is wearing a blue shirt and has his arms around the woman's shoulders. The woman has long brown hair and is wearing a white top. They are both looking down and smiling. The background is a soft-focus green field under a bright sky.

Genesis 50:20-21

Notice that Joseph didn't dismiss what his brothers had done all those years ago. He described their plan as evil. But he also recognized that God had His own plan. God worked in spite of the brothers' hatred, transforming the mistreatment of Joseph into deliverance for a nation, rescue for a family, and salvation for all people.

Indeed, God intended good to come from their actions—the salvation of many people.

Joseph could now see the big picture. God had worked for good in his life, and Joseph intended to do the same. "Therefore don't be afraid. I will take care of you and your little ones." Joseph didn't roll his eyes at his brothers' long-standing fear. Instead, "he comforted them and spoke kindly to them." His words and actions spoke reassurance. Joseph brought them strength and encouragement.

When I read the story of Joseph, I'm reminded of Jesus—the beloved Son of our Heavenly Father. Jesus stood before the nation of Israel and offered them life. When the religious leaders saw the love the people had for Jesus, they became jealous and conceived a plan to murder Him. But God had a different plan. He took the hate of the people and used it to extend grace to a lost and dying world.

As Jesus' earthly ministry was nearing its end, He sat down for a meal with His disciples. At that last meal, He laid the future out for them. He told them, "Your heart must not be troubled or fearful" (John 14:27). Jesus also called them to "Be courageous" (John 16:33). Jesus knew the big picture and desired for His followers—including us—to trust Him.

For us, what are the implications of the statement "Don't be afraid"?

QUESTION #4

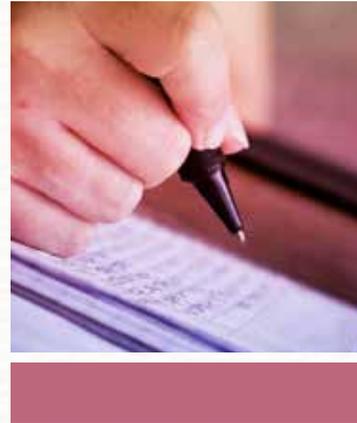
How can we encourage one another to consider our lives from God's perspective?

QUESTION #5

LIVE IT OUT

What does it look like to actively trust God in your everyday life? Consider the following suggestions:

- ▶ **Trust Jesus.** Submit your life to Jesus and receive forgiveness for your sins.
- ▶ **Be courageous.** Identify an area of life in which fear has held you back. Ask God to help you let go of that fear and move forward with confidence according to His plan.
- ▶ **Spread the word.** Record the story of a time you benefitted from trusting God. Share that story with someone else.



God is real, and He is really in control during the hard times of our lives—and in the good times, as well. Even when we can't see the big picture, He can see it. He knows the storms we will face, and He is worthy of our trust.

Meeting God at the Intersection of Expectation and Disappointment



A little more than a month after his son's tragic death by suicide, Pastor Rick Warren made what some might consider to be a disturbing admission. He confessed that he had prayed regularly and sincerely for a different outcome to his son's life. "For 27 years, I prayed every day of my life for God to heal my son's mental illness," Warren declared. "It was the number one prayer of my life."



To continue reading "Meeting God at the Intersection of Expectation and Disappointment" from *Mature Living* magazine, visit BibleStudiesforLife.com/articles.



