

UNEARTHED

Digging beneath the surface and bringing our whole selves before God.

Week 3: When Life's Unfair

Day 1:

The story of Joseph in the Bible is a powerful testament to God's presence in our lives. Even when we face difficult circumstances and feel alone, God is always with us. Joseph's life was marked by hardship and unfair treatment, but he remained steadfast in his faith and trust in God. Through it all, he never lost sight of God's presence and plan for his life.

Take a few minutes to pick one of the passages below to meditate on.

- Genesis 37:1-36
- Genesis 39:1-23
- Genesis 40:1-41:57

Each of these depicts a scene in Joseph's life. After picking a passage, reflect on the following questions:

- What happens to Joseph in the passage you chose? Write out a paraphrase of his experience.
- Where do you see God's presence in his life despite what happens to him?
- What hope does the story of Joseph bring to you?

Now review the end of Joseph's story, when he faces his brothers. You can find this story in Genesis 42:1-45:28.

- Where do you see redemption in the life of Joseph?
- Where do you see forgiveness?
- Read Genesis 50:15-21. How does God work in the life of Joseph to bring about His wonderful purposes?

Day 2:

Like the story of Joseph reveals to us, life can be tough at times. We face trials, disappointments, and unfairness. But as Christians, we have a firm foundation to stand on—the Lord our God. Even when life seems unfair, we can trust in Him and His plan for our lives.

Let's take some time to reflect on the following Scriptures and see how they can help us trust in God more deeply.

Read the following Scriptures and then reflect on the questions below:

Psalm 46:1-3

2 Corinthians 4:8-9

Isaiah 43:2

Romans 8:28

Isaiah 41:10

Philippians 4:6-7

What does it mean to you that God is your refuge and strength in times of trouble?

How can the promise that God will be with you through the trials of life give you comfort and hope?

In what ways can you trust in God more deeply in the midst of difficulties?

Take some time to reflect on these questions and the Scriptures provided. Allow them to strengthen your faith and trust in God, even when life seems unfair. Remember that He is always with you and that His promises are true.

Day 3:

As we've stated, Joseph encountered a lot of hardship in his life—betrayed by his brothers, cast into a pit, sold into slavery, wrongfully accused, left in prison. But ultimately, God was with him. God was forming him. God had a plan for him. Today we will spend some time looking at our own story to see how God was present to us even in some of our hardest moments.

Take a few minutes to review the story and life of Joseph as well as the Scriptures you read on Day 2. When finished your review, reflect on the questions below:

- Have you ever faced a situation in life that felt unfair or unjust like Joseph? How were other people involved in that situation (either for good or for bad)? How did you respond emotionally, mentally, and spiritually?
- Looking back on that experience, how do you see (or not see) God's presence or provision in your life during that time?
- How has that experience shaped your relationship with God and your understanding of His character? In what ways have you grown in faith or trust in God because of that difficult experience?

Day 4:

The story of Joseph in the book of Genesis is a powerful example of how forgiveness can transform lives and bring healing to broken relationships. Joseph was betrayed and sold into slavery by his own brothers, but through God's grace and mercy, he was able to forgive them and restore their relationship. In this devotional practice, we will explore how forgiveness, though not always easy to extend or receive, is an essential aspect of our Christian faith.

Take some time this day to work through the forgiveness practice located in the Unearthed devotional book on page 31.

Day 5:

God worked through the unfairness and hardship of Joseph's life to fulfill His plans for Israel. As Joseph in Genesis 50:20 says to his brothers, "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive."

We too can make it through the unfair and dismal seasons of our lives knowing that we have a God who is closer to us than the air we breathe, who is working all things together for the good of those who love Him, and who can use even the worst of circumstances to make us more like Jesus. And, ultimately, we know through Christ, God will rid the world of all pain and hurt, all hardship and inequity.

Look back over your notes from this week. What do you notice? What new thing did God reveal to you? How has God spoken to you through Scripture or the discoveries you've made? What's God inviting you to as a result?

As you go this week, consider these application points:

1. Trust in God's providence: Just as Joseph experienced many unfair circumstances throughout his life, we too will face challenges and difficulties. However, we can trust that God is present and working all things together for our good, just as He did for Joseph.
2. Extend forgiveness: Joseph's story teaches us the power of forgiveness in healing broken relationships. When we choose to forgive those who have wronged us, we not only bring healing to ourselves but also to those around us. Like Joseph, we can choose to extend forgiveness and allow God to bring restoration to our relationships.
3. See beyond the present circumstances: Joseph's story reminds us that our present circumstances are not always an accurate reflection of our future. Despite the unfairness he faced, Joseph was able to see beyond his present situation and trust in God's plan for his life. In the same way, we can choose to look beyond our present difficulties and trust that God has a greater purpose for our lives.