

# The Life Challenge

*"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." John 10:10*

**Series:** Live by Faith...Dream for More

**Title:** Hope in the Suffering

**Text:** Genesis 37; Hebrews 13:5b

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## WARM-UP

When thinking of the stories we are collecting as a church, stories of how God is working in lives and the dreams you have for more, if you wrote on a ball, what did you put? If you could do another one, what would you write?

## DISCUSSION

Let's take a look at the main character in this series:

- What do you think Joseph might have thought and felt on his journey to Egypt after being betrayed by his brothers?
- This story is real; Joseph isn't some sort of super hero and didn't feel anger or question why any of this was happening. When thinking of your own life and the fears, hurts and anger you have, how do these experiences shape your faith journey?
- In what ways can we relate to Joseph and his experiences? We all go through adversity. If you are willing, share about a painful experience you have had, and how you may have seen Jesus in the midst of your suffering.

### Read Genesis 37:3-9, 18-28

Just as Jacob's mother (Rebekah) and father (Isaac) played favorites with him and Esau, Jacob also played favorites with his children. Joseph was the first born son of his favorite wife, Rachel. While Joseph surely enjoyed the benefits of being the favorite, including the famous "robe of many colors" (Genesis 37:3), his brothers hated him and didn't treat him well (Genesis 37:4). Joseph certainly didn't help the situation by sharing with his brothers the dream he had about reigning over his brothers. In fact, the Bible says Joseph's brothers "hated him even more" (Genesis 37:8) when he told them about this dream. Joseph's brothers eventually came to the conclusion that Joseph had to go. They wanted him dead, but eventually decided that wouldn't benefit them much, so they decided to sell him into slavery instead.

God's promise to Abraham is carried on through Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob's sons. However, in today's passages, we see how favoritism led the patriarchal family into sin. Let's keep in mind that just because it happens in the family of the promise does not mean that God approves of their actions.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Have you ever been someone's favorite? How does it feel to be a favorite? How does it feel to be not a favorite?
- When thinking of Joseph and his brothers, how have you seen favoritism harm you or others at home, work, or some other setting? How can we guard against this in our lives and our families in the future?
- Are there areas you have demonstrated favoritism or seen elsewhere?

- Have you ever felt betrayed by anyone? If so, was there any fallout? And how is the relationship currently? Is God asking you to take any steps towards reconciliation?
- How has God turned around difficult situations in your family (immediate or extended) for His glory and our good?
- Talk about a time of suffering when you have experienced the presence of God.
- Why is it sometimes difficult for ourselves, our families, or our groups to take a stand against sins like favoritism and jealousy in our culture?
- What is your hope built on? When you think about the pain and suffering you may be going through, how quick are you able to say, "Jesus I need you"? Why did you answer this way?
- How often do you feel you would say you really know and understand that Jesus is saying, "never, no never," will I leave, abandon, forget, or base your salvation on performance, but that Jesus sees you for the potential He has placed in your life?

### ACTIVITY

As a group, play a game of **This or That**. Present a series of questions that help your group make simple choices: Pop music or country music? Marvel or DC Comics? Dogs or cats? Italian food or Mexican food? Flip-flops or sandals? Netflix or Disney+? Instagram or YouTube? Apple or Android? Cake or cookies?

Use this game to talk about how we each have favorites. However, when it comes to the people in our lives, showing favoritism can be dangerous and can lead to jealousy between the ones we love.

### Wrap Up

Perhaps you realize that jealousy and bitterness have marked your own heart. As a group spend some time praying for God to renew your hearts and minds through the power He offers and by the blood of His son Jesus Christ.

### Prayer

Spend time praying for one another, that each of the members of your group would indeed begin to live deeper in faith and dream for more.

*(Life Group Leaders: We would love to have feedback in regards to any questions your group has from this, or any future Life Group discussion. While we may not be able to engage in every question, we are looking to create a forum by which to carry on the conversation and engage with feedback and questions as we are able. Please use the form at <https://www.southabbotsford.com/Messages> to interact in this way.)*

### Here's what our families are discussing together this week:

*We ask God to give you complete knowledge of his will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding. Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce every kind of good fruit. All the while, you will grow as you learn to know God better and better. **Colossians 1:9b-10***

**Warm Up:** What does envy mean? How about jealousy? Describe a time when you have felt this way.

**We KNOW:** Jesus has a plan for all of our lives. He wants us to live for Him in every situation. Have your family read over the memory verse three or four times, giving them time to think it through. If you were there on Sunday, see if you can do the actions as well.

**We LIVE:** Talk about ways that you can live and please the Lord. If you have a family, think up some tangible things you can put into practice this week. Do you want to "Dream for More" as we ask the Holy Spirit to prompt us to live for Him every day? What are the dreams you have as you ask the Holy Spirit to give you power to live for Him? What kind of good fruit do you want the Spirit to produce in your life?

**We PRAY:** Lord God, thank You for Your Word. Thank You for stories like Joseph's so we can know You better. You are working in our lives even when we do not realize it. Help us to trust You for everything. Help us to be bold for you and to say 'yes' to you when you prompt us even if we are afraid or it is out of our comfort zone.

**Application Activity: Alone or with your family:** Plan a time each day to pray together and check in on how we are listening to God's promptings in our everyday lives. Write a journal together about things you are praying and answers to prayer. Do we start each day asking God to use us to accomplish His plan through us? Let's encourage each other to live for Him in every moment!