

BIBLE STUDY: FACING LIFE'S ISSUES WITH A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE – GOD'S STRATEGY WITH OUR "ISSUES" IN LIFE (JOSEPH)

LESSON 3

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews assures us that our God is “able to sympathize with our weaknesses.” That’s because “we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are” (Hebrews 4:15). That’s both instructive and comforting. But Scripture reveals that God does much more than just sympathize with us. He has a strategy. He takes positive action on our behalf, just as He did repeatedly with His saints of old. In Lessons 3-5 we want to recall incidents from the lives of saints of God who faced serious issues in their lives, just as we do. From the experiences in the lives of God’s saints of old, we want to learn something about ourselves when we face similar difficulties, but more importantly, we want to discover what’s in the heart of God when life’s problems put a strain on our faith – leaving us with feelings of fear, shame and guilt.

Joseph

The story of Joseph provides one of many examples by which God reveals his strategy for reaching out to help his own when they face major issues in life. Follow the steps from the beginning of Joseph’s “problem” to its ultimate resolution.

The origin of Joseph’s problem: Genesis 37

Who made the first mistake? (verse 3)

What effect does “favored son” treatment usually have in a family? (verse 4)

What were the consequences for Jacob?

What were the consequences for Joseph?

What do you suppose the emotional impact was for Joseph?

Where did Joseph end up? (verse 36)

Joseph's problem compounded: Genesis 39

How did Joseph fare originally in Egypt? (verse 2)

What were the consequences of Joseph's refusal to let Potiphar's wife seduce him?

In what ways was Joseph's problem further compounded?

How did God show Joseph that he had not abandoned him during his years of imprisonment?

Joseph's problem resolved (Joseph reveals his true identity to his brothers):

Genesis 45:7ff: *Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! ... do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. ...So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God."*

Genesis 50:19-21: *But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children."*

"Man proposes, but God disposes."

What was Jacob's contribution to his family's problem?

What was Joseph's contribution?

What was His brothers' contribution?

What were the emotional consequences of the family's problem on all of them?

How did God bring Joseph to the realization that “God intended it for good”?

What perspective on life did Joseph learn that he also wants his brothers to understand and appreciate?

What does this reveal about the heart of God?

What does Joseph’s experience teach us about God’s strategy for dealing with the issues we face in life?

Hebrews 12:6:

*My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline,
and do not lose heart when he rebukes you,
because the Lord disciplines those he loves.*

Hebrews 13:5-6:

*God has said,
“Never will I leave you;
never will I forsake you.”
So we say with confidence,
“The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.
What can man do to me?”*

NEXT LESSON: God’s Strategy with Our “Issues” in Life - David

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