

Follow-up Bible Studies

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Day One: Genesis 50:15-21

- Upon their father's death, what did Joseph's brothers fear (15)? How did they attempt to protect themselves (16-17)? What factors do you think contributed to their limited and stingy view of Joseph? To their surprise, how did Joseph respond to their message (17)? If your siblings sold you into slavery after throwing you into a well, how would you respond to their plea for forgiveness? What made it possible for Joseph to be so big-hearted?
- Describe the brothers' behavior before Joseph (18)? What reassurance did Joseph offer (19-21)? Ponder his rhetorical question and expansive proclamation. Joseph didn't let this opportunity to reframe the hurt pass him by. What hurts is God inviting you to reframe? The Lord can take even the most negative things and turn them into talents. Sit in silence for a few minutes and allow him to begin this work in you now.

Day Two: 1 Samuel 17

- Set the scene (1-3). Describe Goliath and the way he provoked the Israelites (6-10, 16). How did they respond (11)? Describe David and his family (12-15). How do you think it must have felt to be the youngest of eight sons? What did Jesse tell David to do (17-19)? Describe the next morning (20-25). What conversations did David then have with the men and his oldest brother (26-30)? Why do you think Eliab was so angry?
- Summarize David's encounter with Saul (31-38). Describe his unconventional weapons (40). Why did he choose them (39)? Recount his victory over Goliath (41-54). Which of David's words to the Philistine impact you the most? Why? Who was observing all of this, and what did he want to know about David (55-58)?
- Today, what are some ways the Lord empowers those lacking in talent and resources? If an experience of your own fits the bill, take a moment to express gratitude to God.

Day Three: Isaiah 65:17-25

- Upon the arrival of the "new heavens and a new earth," what will we forget (17)? How will we feel (18)? Why (18-19)? Imagine a complete lack of sadness. What freedom will this bring? How does God describe eternal life (20)? Meditate on the phrase "never again" and ask the Lord to speak a personal word to you about it.

May his words be a heavenly salve, one that brings some healing to any grief you've suffered.

- Describe the restoration of justice (21-23). This defeat of evil means no more losses and that labor will always be fruitful. As you can see, God intends for his people to help develop the new creation, and we can begin doing so now. Today, what meaningful contributions can you make to improve the world around you?
- Describe the connection to God we will one day enjoy (24). What about the peace among all creation (25)? Pray you would always view God in this light: peaceful and eager to respond.

Day Four: Mark 6:30-44

- Set the scene of this text (30-33). Although things seem very chaotic and not going as planned, how did Jesus respond to the large crowd (34)? How do you think you would've responded?
- What did the disciples think should happen, and why (35-36)? What did Jesus want them to do instead (37)? Jesus, our perfect teacher, is telling us there's *a/ways* a contribution we can make, no matter how small or seemingly absurd. Take a moment to respond to the Lord. What is he asking you to do?
- How did the disciples respond to Jesus' plan (37)? What happened next (38)? Summarize the story's climax (39-44). It's one thing to *hear* Jesus tell us to do something, but quite another to *see* what happens when we obey. Instead of holding onto or disregarding all that feels scarce or unremarkable in your life, turn it into a contribution toward God's kingdom. Think of these things as talents. In doing so, what do you think will happen?

Day Five: Luke 21:1-4

- Where was Jesus, and what was he watching people do (1-2)? On the surface, how do the offerings of the rich compare with the poor widow's offering? How do you think each party – both the rich and the widow – felt as they were making their offering?
- What was Jesus' assessment of the offerings (3-4)? What do you think of his assertion? When something is easy, as it was for the rich to give, what sort of spiritual impact do you find it makes on you? What about when it feels difficult – as though you are gleaning from a place of insecurity and scarcity. Invite the Lord into this reflection; what do you sense him speaking?
- Make a list of your resources, both tangible and intangible – even those that seem small. What inspires you to sacrificially give of these resources? What inspires you to improve your talents? Ask God to speak into this inspiration. May he guide you into some surprising ways to use your resources and talents for his mission.

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