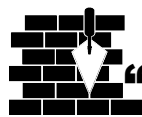


JOSEPH - “The Antidote To A ‘Victim’ Mentality”



“Building Blocks”

1. **(Q1)** It was likely Joseph’s *robe* that allowed his brothers to see him “from afar” (cf. 37:18,23). Joseph’s feelings here must have ricocheted from one extreme to another. Anger over what must have first appeared to be a cruel “older brother prank,” to astonishment and sheer panic as money exchanged hands and he was taken captive. Not known as one to keep silent, it is likely that he screamed, begged, and wept all the way out of sight.
2. **(Q1-Gen 39)** It is obvious, by his comment to the cupbearer, that Joseph has not simply “moved on” past his previous two betrayals (cf. 39:15). This is *not* to demean Joseph or minimize his deep faith in Yahweh, but I believe we need to realistically see him *moving through* all this rather than glibly “moving on with his life,” or “putting it behind him,” as Christians are so prone to push other believers to do.
3. **(Q7)** Our struggle in times like Joseph is *always* to cling to the truth that Yahweh is both God *and* good (cf. Ps 100:3-5). Feeling like we are a “victim” is the result of losing track of one of them. If God is not God, then we are a “victim” of our circumstances. If God is not good, we are a “victim” of God Himself.



“Stumbling Stones”

1. **(Background)** Without removing the clear guilt of Joseph’s brothers for their malicious disposal of their half-brother, we must also keep in mind that Jacob had openly favored Joseph both as the “son of his old age” *and* the firstfruits of only two sons by his barren, and now deceased, favorite wife, Rachel. Jacob’s unfeigned favoritism infuriated his other ten sons. On top of that, Joseph was a “tattle tale” (37:2), and demonstrated either incredible naiveté or pride (37:5-11).
Joseph’s home life was anything but ideal. It was a strange mixture of one father and four birth mothers, two of whom were wives to their father, and two who were servants of their mothers.
2. **(Q1-Gen 39)** We have to keep in mind that Joseph’s incarceration was not only unjust because the charges leveled against him were false, but this entire situation he found himself in was the result of Joseph seeking to be faithful to Yahweh *and* his master. He did the right thing, and look where it landed him! We are unwise to believe that godly character and obedient choices always yields a “Disney” result.
3. **(Q3)** We need to exercise caution here. This maturity on the part of Joseph was the *result* of what he had endured, *not* the reason he was *able* to endure it. Go’d seems to have granted him the insight *now*, that his presence not only in Egypt, but in the *palace*, was the necessary prerequisite for Jacob’s family surviving.
And, Joseph really had *no clue* how significant this was! We do because we have an additional 3,800 years of redemptive history to inform us of what was really going on in his life. We are the direct beneficiaries of his pain.
4. **(Q4-5)** One could argue that “*God could have gotten Joseph into a position of great influence without all the pain. Look at Esther! Why didn’t He?*” The best and only answer to this excellent and reasonable question is: we have no idea. There are likely a hundred excellent *possible* answers (e.g. “It molded

Joseph into a man of grace and merciful compassion.”) But, the truth is...we don’t know why God did it this way.

5. **(Q7)** Our difficulty is *always* one of time. Given sufficient time, God’s intentions almost always emerge or at least surface enough for us to get an idea and draw some comfort. The difficulty is when time “runs out,” either in truth (someone dies), or in theory (i.e. my *own* timetable).



“Going Deeper”

1. **(Q1)** What similarities do you see between these three incidents that launched Joseph into a new, difficult season of his life? (HINT: betrayal, isolation, helplessness, etc.).
2. **(Q2)** Have a few group members share their answers to this question.
3. **(Q9)** Have a few group members share their answers to this question.