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INTRODUCTION

Pressure can encourage self-reliance as an attempt to manage or ensure the outcome of the situation. Joseph's story begins with a focus on his own goals and talents. The end goal that God has for Joseph, however, is much greater.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Read Acts 7:6-17

1. The retelling of Joseph's story places heavy emphasis on God's faithfulness to his people. Beyond telling the story of Joseph's rise to ruler, what greater purpose does Joseph's dreams serve in Genesis 37?
2. How many of Jacob's family traveled down to Egypt? How many would eventually leave Egypt some 400 years later? (Genesis 46:26 and Exodus 37-42)
3. Does the survival of the family of Jacob (aka Israel) communicate anything about God's character? Their survival has a greater purpose, what was the promise given to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 and 15:12-21?
4. In Genesis 45:7-8, Joseph has a new understanding of his role. Instead of pursuing a place of prominence and favoritism, he has become God's servant in order to preserve the family of Jacob. Does this reason offset the trials he encountered?

5. The tribe of Jacob (aka Israel) grows into a large community, survives the pressures of slavery and later enters into the promised land of Canaan where they become a nation. How does being a community increase the impact they can have in God's plan? (Isaiah 49:6; cf. Exodus 19:5-6)

Read Exodus 6:2-8

6. After 400 years in Egypt a new Pharaoh comes to power that does not know Joseph. Israel goes from favored to a position of slavery. Why does God choose to deliver Israel? Why does he continually pursue Israel and how should they respond (cf. Deuteronomy 7:6-11)?

7. Do the passages of Exodus 6:2-8 and Deuteronomy 7:6-11 alter or reinforce your understanding of God in the Old Testament? What main themes are developed in these two passages?

8. God used Joseph to rescue the community of Israel, whom God refers to as "his people". Based on this Sunday's message and the passages discussed, how important is your involvement in Christian community? How do you find your place and partner with God's plan within that community?

MOVING FORWARD

Participating in a community group is a great step. This study will hopefully challenge you to think beyond your individual circumstances and what God can do for you to how you can partner with God to impact your community. Similar to Joseph's story, the greatest fulfillment comes not when self-interest is priority but when you join God in the greater goal.