

THE BIG PICTURE

Elementary
Week 4

Read: Genesis 37-50

Joseph was the youngest of Jacob's 12 sons, and he was his father's favorite (Genesis 37:3). Because of Jacob's favoritism, Joseph's brothers hated him. It didn't help that Joseph was a tattler, and he milked the favor of his father for all it was worth, flaunting his colorful coat and declaring in front of his brothers his dreams of dominance over them.

Fed up, they sold him as a slave in Egypt, and after being wrongly accused of seducing Potiphar's wife, Joseph ended up in prison. Things were not looking good for Joseph. But the Bible tells us that even there, the Lord was with him and gave him favor (Genesis 39:20-21). While still a prisoner, Joseph successfully explained Pharaoh's troubling dream, which foreshadowed seven years of plenty and seven years of famine for Egypt. In one day, Joseph went from prisoner to prince. When the famine hit, Joseph's brothers traveled to Egypt in search of food. After holding out on revealing his identity, Joseph finally broke down and said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to **preserve life**," Genesis 45:5-7. Despite 13 years of pain and darkness Joseph's brothers' actions caused him, he could look them in the eyes and say, "As for you, you meant evil against me, but **God meant it for good**, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today," Genesis 50:19-20.

Joseph's life was far from the fairytale dream he had as a boy, where his whole family was bowing down to him. While that dream did come to life, Joseph had no idea as a prideful teenager the nightmares that would come first. But God was there, working his thread of redemption through every fabric of Joseph's story. In the favoritism and jealousy, betrayal and pain, God was making a way to save not only Joseph and his family, but an entire nation. In the pit, in the prison, and ultimately in the palace, God was working to save and redeem. Joseph's story points to a God who remains faithful, good, and redemptive, even in the pits and palaces of our own lives. His life teaches us that we, too can confidently say: **what was meant for evil, God used for good.**

Think of some of the pits and palaces of your own life. Can you see where God was working to redeem, even if you couldn't see it then?

Memorize Romans 8:28 this week. “And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love him and are called according to his purpose.”