

Big Idea

One of the legends of the Christian faith is Joseph. Joseph's father showed favor towards him over his brothers, which created jealousy and turmoil. God gave Joseph a prophetic dream, which he mistakenly shared with his brothers. They became enraged and plotted to kill him. (Genesis 37:5-7, 19-20) Joseph could have easily given up on the dream that God had given him. He faced many disappointments, was sold into slavery by his brothers, falsely accused of a crime, and even thrown into prison for years. Today's message is dedicated to those who feel like giving up – on your job, marriage, family, or even physically. For those who have been through so much, and just feel done. Joseph would say, "Don't give up on your dreams." All of us have times where we feel like throwing in the towel. You are not alone.

Joseph teaches us not to give up...

- **Even if you didn't start out well.** Don't be plagued by your past. The devil is trying to derail your purpose by using your past against you.
- **Even if those closest to you don't support you.** Joseph's own brothers hated him and sold him to slavery.
- **Even if your journey is full of surprises.** You will have twice as many 'give-up' moments than you will 'go-on' moments. (Romans 8:28)
- **Even if it takes a long time to realize it.** Take it slowly, steadily. God is more interested in your character than He is in your comfort. Joseph had a dream at 17 yrs old, it was not fulfilled until 23 years later. God took Joseph from the prison to the palace in one day.
- **Before God does something great through you, He wants to do something great in you.** Ask God to show you what He wants you to learn through hardship. Stop looking at what's happening TO you and start looking at what's happening IN you.
- **Your response to offense determines your future.** Your potential has been derailed because you keep holding on to offense and bitterness. Travel light because resentment will destroy your dreams
- **Every dream has tough times, but remember God is always with you.** (Isaiah 43:2-3) (Jeremiah 1:19)

"These things I plan won't happen right away. Slowly, steadily, surely, the time approaches when the vision will be fulfilled. If it seems slow, do not despair, for these things will surely come to pass. Just be patient! They will not be overdue a single day!" Habakkuk 2:3 (LB).

Discussion Questions

1. What spoke to you from Joseph's story?
2. Are there areas in your life that you feel like giving up? Have someone in the group talk about a time when they felt like giving up; on a job, marriage, financially, or in life. What helped you get through that hard season?
3. Are the areas in your life where you need to shift your focus to *what God is doing IN you*, rather than what's happening TO you?
4. Have you experienced something similar to Joseph? If so, will you share what that looked like and what God did?

Next Steps

- How can we pray for you this week? Write down each person's prayer requests and make it a point to pray for them and text them with an encouraging word at some point during the week.
- Remember prayer isn't about God moving towards us, prayer is about us moving towards God.

Prayer Focus

- Pray for endurance to continue the race God has marked for us.
- Pray for God to show us where we need to shift our focus on what He's doing IN us.
- Pray for heart change in the people of this world & for us to love like Jesus loves.

- Pray for God to stop the spread of the coronavirus.