

Title: The Hidden hand of God

1. To quickly trace through the life of Joseph from Genesis chapters 37 through 50, use the summary headings for each section. (Note: These headings are not part of the original text but are included by the translators as an aid to following the thread of the narrative.)

Read the summary heading, then have someone who is familiar with the story give a one-sentence summary of the section.

So, 37.1 "Joseph's Dreams", plus 1 sentence summary.
Then 37.12 "Joseph Sold by his Brothers", plus summary. Etc.

2. What factors do you think led to Joseph being the '*hated brother*'? (See Gen 37.3 – 11)
3. In his efforts to save Joseph, do you think brother Reuben could have done anything more or different? (See Gen 37.21-35)
4. Gen 39.3-6: What motivated the Egyptian official Potiphar to put the foreigner Joseph in charge of his entire household? From verse 3, what do you think Potiphar actually saw in Joseph? Then, from Gen 39.8-9, how did Joseph view this trust placed in him?

Discuss: How often is faithfulness and integrity rewarded with defamation and punishment?

5. **Dreams:** When the teenage Joseph had a dream (Gen 37.5-11), it is doubtful he understood the message of his dream. What do you think?

In prison in Egypt (Gen 40.8-13), Joseph was able to interpret the dreams of the Baker and Cupbearer. (8b) How did this come about? How does "*knowledge of God*" grow? Is this what Potiphar saw in 39.3?

Gen 40.14-15. When Joseph asked the Cupbearer to put in a good word for him, was it self-seeking, shrewd planning or something else?

The same question applies to Gen 41.28 and 33-36 when Joseph suggested Pharaoh needed a smart young administrator. Was it self-seeking, shrewd planning or something else?

6. "*It took a good dose of suffering and deprivation to turn Joseph from an arrogant, self-opinionated young upstart into a wise and gracious leader.*" (one commentator) Does it always work this way?
7. **Reunion:** Gen 42.6 – 44.34 What do you think was the purpose of the '*extended game*' Joseph played with his brothers? What effect do you think it had on them all?
8. Gen 50.15 – 21 Joseph probably knew his brothers lied again, fearing for their own lives. Nevertheless, his response to them was pure grace. How do verses 19 to 21 relate to and mirror the Gospel of Jesus, Son of God?
9. Note: Gen 48.1 – 50.14 covers the transfer of family blessings as Old Jacob (aka Israel) dies and is buried. And along with Gen 50.22-26, serves to tidy up the family history of these descendants of Abraham, and the continuity of the covenant promise of God to his people.

For your Prayers: *Lord, help us to grow in our knowledge of you, and in wisdom and grace, that others may see the hand of God leading and shaping us.*