



# DISCUSSION GUIDE

THIS WEEK: *The Forgotten Stage of Faith [Genesis 40:1-23]*

## GETTING STARTED

What is one thing you are thankful for this week and what is one thing we can pray for you this week?

Remind each other of our simple expectations for meeting together.

## OPEN

Henri Nouwen wrote, *"To be grateful for the good things that happen in our lives is easy, but to be grateful for all of our lives—the good as well as the bad, the moments of joy as well as the moments of sorrow, the successes as well as the failures, the rewards as well as the rejections—that requires hard spiritual work. Let's not be afraid to look at everything that has brought us to where we are now and trust that we will soon see in it the guiding hand of a loving God."*

In what way has this been easier said than done in your life? Why?

How have you felt overlooked, forgotten, rejected or abandoned? How did you deal with those emotions?

## QUICK REACTIONS

- How would you summarize/paraphrase the message in your own words?
- What point/idea resonated most with you? Why?
- Did you disagree with something said, or what do you think should have been added or expanded on?

## QUESTIONS FROM THE MESSAGE

Dave made the point that Joseph's experience of being forgotten forces us to consider another perspective about God's unfolding plans in our lives. That being forgotten can be a gift (a severe mercy) guiding us away from spiritual dead ends. God is guiding Joseph away from the dead end that defines security and influence only in terms of status, fame, privilege, or position. God is guiding Joseph away from the dead end of pride that imagines how others will bow down to him, and instead God is leading him towards self-lessness that will save the lives of many.

1. How do you react to the idea that hardships (like being forgotten) can be a severe mercy?
2. Looking back at your life. What can you pinpoint as something that was a severe mercy? Severe because it was real, it was painful, it hurt, and you would never want to endure anything like that again. But it is merciful in that God used it to form in you something important and enduring?
3. As a group consider some things we wrongly assume will bring us life, peace, fulfillment and prosperity, but are spiritual dead ends. How can we encourage and pray for each other, our children, friends etc... from taking those paths?

## EXPLORE THE PASSAGE [Genesis 40:1-23]

Why were the cupbearer and chief baker imprisoned? (40:1)

What did Joseph ask Pharaoh's officials, and what was their answer? (40:7-8)

What did Joseph say about dreams? (40:8)

What did the chief cupbearer dream, and what did Joseph say about it? (40:9-15)

What did the chief baker dream, and what did Joseph say about it? (40:16-19)

What happened at Pharaoh's birthday party? (40:20-22)

What did the chief cupbearer do? (40:23)

## QUESTIONS THAT HELP US UNDERSTAND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TEXT

1. Joseph helps interpret the dreams of these new inmates when he had already been falsely imprisoned for years. What does this tell us about the kind of person Joseph was?

*The reason, a cupbearer, whose only job is to pour and serve drinks in the royal court is so important is because kings lived in constant fear of plots to kill them (such as poisoning). Therefore, a cupbearer or baker must be the kind of person that the King had complete confidence in.*

2. Considering the cupbearers role, in what way can you see how God is preparing to elevate Joseph to essentially the senior advisor to the Pharaoh, even though he is unaware of it?

In Genesis 40, the Hebrew word for dream comes from the word chalom. It is different than dreams we have in our sleep, or a dream that we may have that leads to accomplishing a goal. In this case it has a prophetic meaning and was considered the lowest class of prophecy (foretelling).

3. How ought we look at the significance of dreams? What is distinct here with these dreams and the fact that Joseph accurately interprets the dreams? Was there any "risk" to Joseph interpreting the dreams? How ought this inform us in taking a risk with others?

4. What may be the significance of the cupbearer forgetting Joseph? Was this intentional, unintentional, does it matter?

## APPLY THE PASSAGE

1. What attitudes may God be working on in us, preparing in us, when we face being forgotten, overlooked, rejected or abandoned? How may we redefine what God is doing in us when we feel forgotten?

2. What do we learn about God and about ourselves in this passage?

3. What may God be asking you to change, do differently, repent of, pray about, as a result of engaging with this passage?

4. How can we pray for each other?