Lesson 2

Trials in Joseph's Life

Objectives

1. To understand how we need to fear God and rely on Him, just as Joseph did.
2. To learn that God puts us through trials and tribulations to test our faith.
3. To learn to trust in God when we are going through different types of trials.

Memory Verse

"The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; therefore my heart greatly rejoices, and with my song I will praise Him."

(Psalm 28:7)

Prayer

1. We thank God for gathering us here today so that we can worship Him and learn more about His word.
2. Lord, please help us stand firm when we face peer pressure.
3. Today, we will learn about how God protected Joseph. Please also protect us every day.
4. God, please also help us to trust in You when we are lonely or scared.
5. May God help us focus on this lesson and apply its teachings to our lives.

Overview

1. Joseph and His Brothers
2. Joseph and Potiphar
3. Joseph Interprets Dreams
- What can we learn from Joseph's trials

4. Linking to the Ten Basic Beliefs—One True God
5. Life Application
- Trials Are Tests of Our Faith
- Trials! Trials! Trials!

6. Activity—Calendar

Background Knowledge for Teachers

Joseph's Story
The story of Joseph could initially be regarded as a typical rags to riches story; however, the story speaks of a far greater marvel. God's initial promise to Abraham had to survive the divisions that existed among his descendants. Joseph's brothers were not the first ones to display violent jealousy towards a family member; a rift also existed between Jacob and Esau, and even between Isaac and Rebekah, who each favored a different son. How could one nation form from a family so plagued by jealousy and hatred? Even Jacob's wives, Rachel and Leah, upheld a fierce rivalry between each other. Yet, God proved His power in making the covenant possible. He also proved His determination to keep the covenant that He made with Abraham so many years ago. Joseph and his brothers were the beginning of a nation that would eventually prove just how much we can trust in God's promises.

Mourning
Hebrews have some specific outward expressions to indicate one's state of emotion. They sing and dance to show joy, and they do many things to show sorrow, as well. When mourning for the dead, tearing or rending of the garments was a common sign used to demonstrate grief and distress (Gen 37:29; 44:13; 2 Sam 3:31; 2 Chr 34:27; Job 1:20). Sackcloth was also used as a mourning garment. It is made from a black, coarse material, similar to a grain sack. Also, any kind of jewelry was removed, and the mourner generally went barefoot. During the period of mourning, one usually cried aloud or beat his breast. The mourner may have lay or sat in silence (Judg 20:26; 2 Sam 12:16; Job 2:13), bowed his head (Lam 2:10), or fasted for a period of time (2 Sam 3:35).

Reaching Out to Your Students

Students at this age have probably already experienced hardships of various sorts, ranging from being unable to have their favorite toy or having to deal with a particularly annoying sibling, to being unable to fit in at a new school. While children have various methods of dealing with these hardships (e.g., arguing, making physical contact, or bottling up their emotions), they may not think that communicating their troubles to God is a particularly effective solution to their problems. Nor may they think that having faith will ease their hardships. During this lesson, take the opportunity to remind them that, just as God was watching over Joseph during all his trials, He is also watching over each of them, teaching them through their trials and guiding them through their tribulations to a greater goal. Encourage them to communicate their problems to God, and encourage them to trust that everything is under His control.

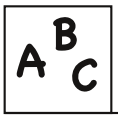
Opener

5 Minutes

Take five minutes and try to remember all the times you felt lonely or scared. What did you do when you felt that way? Did you ask anyone for help? Who was the first person you asked?

All of us will feel lonely or scared at times in our lives. It's not unusual to feel these emotions, and even though other people can feel the same way, sometimes they just don't understand or know how to help.

As God's children, however, we have a very special privilege. God is the one who can always comfort us when we are lonely and help us when we are scared. Because He manifested as Jesus in this world, He truly understands our troubles. And since He is an all-powerful God, He can help us in whatever situation we might be. We just need to learn to turn to Him whenever we are in trouble.



Vocabulary

graze: to feed on grass, or to put livestock out to graze
sheaves: a bundle of cut stalks of grain or similar plants bound with straw or twine
cistern: an underground reservoir or hole for holding water collected from rainfall or from a nearby spring; it is usually pear-shaped with a small opening at the mouth

Bible Discovery & Spiritual Teaching

30-35 Minutes

Joseph experienced many hardships in his life, and throughout most of them, he probably felt lonely and scared. But even though he suffered hatred, slavery, and imprisonment, he remained faithful to God, and trusted in God when he was in trouble. In turn, God was always with Joseph. Today, we're going to study the many trials that Joseph went through, and the ways that God protected and cared for him.

> **For Teachers**
>
> Have the students fill out Part 1 and 2 of the Bible Discovery worksheet as you teach this section.

Joseph's father Jacob really loved Rachel, so he often favored her sons over Leah's. He especially loved Joseph, and one day gave him a multi-colored coat, something that was very expensive and difficult to make back then. This naturally made Joseph's other brothers very jealous, and they ended up disliking Joseph. Unfortunately, something happened that made Joseph's brothers hate him even more. Let's read Genesis 37:5-10.

What was Joseph's first dream? The sheaves of Joseph's brothers all bowed down to his.
And what was his second dream? The sun, moon, and eleven stars all bowed down to Joseph.

Although Joseph did not mean any ill will towards his brothers in telling them his dreams, all they felt was anger

and envy. This led them to make some very bad decisions later. Let's read Genesis 37:19-28 to see what happened. Together, the brothers made up a huge lie that would make their father incredibly upset. In the end, although they did not kill Joseph, they still sold him into slavery, expecting to never see him again.

Do you know how old Joseph was when all of this happened? He was only seventeen! If you were sold into slavery, you'd probably be very lonely and scared, and may even question if God is really with you or protecting you. But throughout all of this, Joseph never lost his faith in God. Let's read on and see how.

The Second Trial: Joseph and Potiphar

After being sold, Joseph was brought to Egypt by the slavers, and sold again to an important official named Potiphar. Joseph experienced betrayal by his family, endured the hardships of slavery, and was now living alone with no family or friends in a strange country. Let's read Genesis 39:1-5 to see how Joseph acted in this situation. Please fill in the worksheet as we read on.

"Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there. The LORD was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD made all he did to prosper in his hand. So Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority. So it was, from the time that he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had in the house and in the field."

Despite his situation, Joseph never acted willfully against his master nor tried to escape, even though it was not his plan to go to Egypt. Do you think you would have acted the same way in this situation? Joseph worked hard, though, and because of Joseph's presence in Potiphar's house, God blessed Potiphar, making him very wealthy. As a result, Potiphar placed Joseph in charge, and gave him complete control over everything, even over other servants!

Despite his hard work, Joseph's life was soon changed by Potiphar's wife. She saw that Joseph was very handsome, and wanted to sleep with him. But what was Joseph's reaction? Let's read what happens in Genesis 39:6b-20.

"Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance.

"And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, 'Lie with me.'

"But he refused and said to his master's wife, 'Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?'

"So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her.

"But it happened about this time, when Joseph went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house was inside, that she caught him by his garment, saying, 'Lie with me.' But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside. And so it was, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and fled outside, that she called to the men of her house and spoke to them, saying, 'See, he has brought in to us a Hebrew to mock us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice. And it happened, when he heard that I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me, and fled and went outside.'

"So she kept his garment with her until his master came home. Then she spoke to him with words like these, saying, 'The Hebrew servant whom you brought to us came in to me to mock me; so it happened, as I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me and fled outside.'

"So it was, when his master heard the words which his wife spoke to him, saying, 'Your servant did to me after this manner,' that his anger was aroused. Then Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were confined. And he was there in the prison."

Joseph did not let go of his faith in God. He knew that everything he had been given was because of God's blessings, so he did not betray his faith. Joseph ran away from temptation! However, because of his refusal to sin, he was accused of a very, very serious crime. In fact, Potiphar would have been fully justified executing him on the spot! But instead, he threw Joseph into prison. Although it seemed like Joseph's situation just kept getting worse and worse, in truth, God was protecting and guiding Joseph for His own plans. Of course, Joseph could not have known this at the time, and he had to suffer even though he had done nothing wrong. But he still didn't lose faith in God! Let's read on and see how Joseph reacted to this new trial.

The Third Trial: Joseph Interprets Dreams

In prison, Joseph continued to work hard. Let's read Genesis 39:21-23. Although he was thought to be a criminal, the prison keeper eventually trusted Joseph enough that he placed him in charge of the other prisoners. It was because of God's protection that he was treated well and trusted, and it was God's blessing that

caused Joseph to succeed in everything he did.

One day, Joseph encountered two very troubled prisoners. One was the king's chief butler, that is, the king's chief cupbearer, and the other was the king's chief baker. Both of them had dreamt very strange dreams. Let's read Genesis 40:7-19 to see how Joseph dealt with the situation. They said to him, "We each have had a dream, and there is no interpreter of it." So Joseph replied, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell them to me, please."

Joseph knew that God would help him in interpreting their dreams. He was also very honest, as he did not lie to the baker to make him feel better. These are two very important qualities that also helped Joseph later on.

"Then the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, 'Behold, in my dream a vine was before me, and in the vine were three branches; it was as though it budded, its blossoms shot forth, and its clusters brought forth ripe grapes. Then Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand.'

"And Joseph said to him, 'This is the interpretation of it: The three branches are three days. Now within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your place, and you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand according to the former manner, when you were his butler. But remember me when it is well with you, and please show kindness to me; make mention of me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house. For indeed I was stolen away from the land of the Hebrews; and also I have done nothing here that they should put me into the dungeon.'

"When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said to Joseph, 'I also was in my dream, and there were three white baskets on my head. In the uppermost basket were all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, and the birds ate them out of the basket on my head.'

"So Joseph answered and said, 'This is the interpretation of it: The three baskets are three days. Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head from you and hang you on a tree; and the birds will eat your flesh from you.'"

Soon enough, the dreams of the baker and the cupbearer came true. The baker was hanged, and the cupbearer was returned to his duties. However, the cupbearer, in all his happiness and relief, forgot about Joseph, and Joseph remained in prison. Let's read what happens next in Genesis 41:9-14.

God made sure that the cupbearer met Joseph in prison, and gave him dreams that Joseph could interpret, and when the right time came, reminded the cupbearer of Joseph's help. God made all of this happen so that Joseph would be given the opportunity to speak to Pharaoh! But His plan did not stop there. Let's read about Pharaoh's dreams in Genesis 41:17-24.

"Then Pharaoh said to Joseph: 'Behold, in my dream I stood on the bank of the river. Suddenly seven cows came up out of the river, fine looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow. Then behold, seven other cows came up after them, poor and very ugly and gaunt, such ugliness as I have never seen in all the land of Egypt. And the gaunt and ugly cows ate up the first seven, the fat cows. When they had eaten them up, no one would have known that they had eaten them, for they were just as ugly as at the beginning. So I awoke. Also I saw in my dream, and suddenly seven heads came up on one stalk, full and good. Then behold, seven heads, withered, thin, and blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them. And the thin heads devoured the seven good heads. So I told this to the magicians, but there was no one who could explain it to me.'"

Do you know what Pharaoh's dreams meant? Joseph told him that there would be seven years of abundance, and seven years of famine. However, Joseph did not only interpret Pharaoh's dreams, he also suggested a solution. He suggested that the Pharaoh set someone over the land to collect some of the excess crops and store them up for the coming seven years. God gave Joseph the wisdom to offer a smart solution for the Egyptians. And what was the result? Let's read Genesis 41:37-40.

"So the advice was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants. And Pharaoh said to his servants, 'Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God?'

"Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, there is no one as discerning and wise as you. You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you.'"

Remember, Joseph had been sold as a mere slave upon entering Egypt, and had just come from imprisonment before meeting the Pharaoh! It was truly God's wonderful and miraculous work that allowed Joseph to rise to such an important position. It was not only God's work, though. There is something very important about Joseph's interaction with the Pharaoh. Let's read what he said in Genesis 41:16. He did not pretend to be very wise, but rather refused to take any credit for himself, and by doing so, glorified God.

In the end, Joseph proved to those around him that God was with him: first when he helped Potiphar run his

household, and second when he helped the prison keeper run the prison. Joseph also proved his faith by refusing to sleep with Potiphar's wife and by relying on God to help interpret dreams. It was through this faith and reliance on God that Joseph became a living testament to God's power in front of the Egyptians. As a result, Pharaoh placed Joseph in an incredibly important position: Joseph was now ruler of the country, with only Pharaoh having more power than him!

What can we learn from Joseph?
Joseph persevered through difficult circumstances by relying on God and God alone. His life was filled with dark experiences, yet the final outcome was truly amazing! Joseph taught us much about how to deal with trials in our lives. The lessons that we can learn from Joseph are:

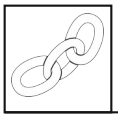
Trial 1
He overcame his siblings' anger, hatred, and strife. Jacob's family was riddled with anger, strife, hatred, and deception. The conflicts with his brothers started very early on. When Joseph told his brothers about his dreams, they were furious and hurt. As a result, tension was built upon tension, anger upon anger.

When Jacob sent Joseph to check on his brothers, the ten brothers felt resentment. We can see their degree of resentment toward Joseph in Genesis 37:23 when they take his coat from him. They continued acting on their anger by casting Joseph into a pit, and later, selling him into slavery.

In Genesis 50:20, Joseph said, "As for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive." This exemplified Joseph's amazing strength, as he embraced God and trusted in Him completely. He was truly a man full of forgiveness—he overcame hatred with love and forgiveness, understanding that God had a purpose for him to go through this trial.

Trial 2
He overcame temptation. In Genesis 39:6, the Bible said Joseph was "handsome in form and appearance." In other words, he was good-looking and well-built. Potiphar's wife kept casting her eyes on Joseph. She was attracted to him physically, so she wanted to lie with him. Joseph refused her by fleeing; his actions showed powerful conviction! Where did Joseph get this conviction? He feared God and had a close relationship with God! He understood that all sin is against God. Sexual sin is definitely very sinful in the eyes of God. 2 Timothy 2:22 teaches us to "flee also youthful lusts." This is a very vital teaching. When we face temptation, we should not reason or deal with it; we must flee! We need to recognize that we are children of God! Our bodies belong to God. Sin will have a devastating effect on us and also on others. Most of all, when we give in to temptation, we sin against God.

Trial 3
He overcame disappointment. Joseph was imprisoned and treated harshly after Potiphar's wife accused him. As always, God was still with Joseph. Even in prison, Joseph rose to a position of leadership. God gave him favor with the prison keeper (Gen 39:21) and the prison keeper entrusted everything to Joseph's care. Do you know why? Because Joseph feared God, and in return, the Lord made his actions prosper. The only way to overcome a trial is by faithfully serving God and patiently waiting for His timing. Joseph was unjustly imprisoned, but he faithfully served God. God did not forget him. Joseph didn't allow his own pain to prevent him from caring about others in pain. Even though Joseph's life was filled with disappointment, he invested his time by meeting the needs of others. In times of hardship, we must remember that God never forgets what we go through. We need to place our trust in the hands of God, who knows all about our circumstances. It is important for us to be patient, as Joseph was. God will deliver us out of it in His time, the right time.



Linking to the Ten Basic Beliefs

2-5 Minutes

One True God

In a world that is constantly changing, it may be hard to understand why certain things happen to us. Why do I need to move, why have my parents lost their jobs, why can't I do this or that, why can't I buy what I want, and so on. Today, we learned that, despite the fact that Joseph was cut off from his family and became a slave in an unfamiliar land, he still trusted in God and understood God's power. Because of his trust and faith in God during those times, God protected him and took care of him. It's the same for us today. This same God can protect and watch over us, too, no matter where we are or what we're trying to accomplish.

Check for Understanding

5 Minutes

1. **Why did Joseph's brothers hate him?** Jacob loved Joseph more than his other sons and gave him a colorful and beautifully-decorated robe. In addition, Joseph had two dreams about his brothers bowing down to him.
2. **What was in Joseph's first dream?** His brothers' sheaves of grain bowed down to his standing sheaf.
3. **What was in Joseph's second dream?** The sun, moon, and eleven stars bowed down to him.
4. **Why was Joseph put in prison?** Because Potiphar believed his wife's lie about Joseph attacking her.
5. **Describe Pharaoh's two dreams.**
   a. First dream: He saw seven fat, healthy cows and seven scrawny, thin cows. Then the scrawny, thin cows ate the seven fat, healthy cows.
   b. Second dream: He saw seven heads of grain, plump and beautiful, growing on a single stalk. Then seven more heads of grain appeared, but these were shriveled and withered by the east wind. These thin heads swallowed up the seven plump, well-formed heads.
6. **After Joseph interpreted the dreams for Pharaoh, what position did Pharoah give him?** He made him second-in-command. Joseph was in charge of the entire land of Egypt, and only Pharaoh had more power than him.
7. **What can we learn from Joseph's life?** He overcame his siblings' anger and hatred by forgiving them and trusting in God's plan. He overcame temptation by fleeing from it. He overcame disappointment in prison by faithfully serving God and caring for others.

Life Application

10 Minutes

[Hand out the Life Aplication worksheets and ask the students to complete them. The answers have been listed below.]

1. Trials Are Tests of Our Faith

[**Teachers:** Once they have completed the activity, discuss with your students some ways they can become seeds that have fallen on the good soil. Remind them that those who take root in Christ will grow into truly fruitful Christians, and will be able to overcome any trials or tribulations that they may encounter.]

The Bible often tells us that God will protect us as long as we trust in Him. So, why do we, as Christians, still experience hardships in our lives? To discover why, read each verse below and fill in the blanks.

Acts 14:22	We must go through many hardships to <u>enter the kingdom of God</u>.
Romans 12:12	It is a test of our faith and <u>patience</u>.
Romans 5:3	Suffering gives us the <u>perseverance</u> to go on.

God gives us trials and tribulations so that we can overcome them and also learn from them. By having faith and relying on God, we can make it through these trials and emerge with a stronger faith. However, the Bible says that everyone deals with trials differently, and some may not even succeed in passing them.

Not everyone is like Joseph, who managed to maintain a strong and firm faith in God, despite experiencing so many hardships. In fact, it's very difficult to have the same kind of faith in God that he had. **So, how do we overcome these trials and tribulations so we don't fall away?**

1. Joseph experienced extreme hatred and jealousy from his brothers. We may also experience dislike from other people, such as our classmates, our siblings, or maybe even a brother or sister in church. This can make you feel hurt or angry. How can we deal with this trial? **Prov 19:11 – "The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, and his glory is to overlook a transgression."** A patient person is slow to anger, and more willing to forgive. Joseph never got angry at Potiphar, or at the prison keeper. Moreover, he waited more than ten years before he was elevated to his high position! That must have taken a lot of patience! If we emulate Joseph's patience, we too will be blessed and eventually see God's plan for us.	**2. Joseph had to serve as a slave in a foreign country, all alone with an uncertain future.** Fear is something that everyone experiences. We might fear things such as darkness, heights, or switching schools. Sometimes, we might even fear for our future, either physically or spiritually. How can we deal with this trial? **Deut 31:8 – "And the Lord, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed."** God has promised never to leave His children. Jesus repeats this promise in Matthew 28:20. As long as we put our faith in Him, no matter what fears we have, He will take care of us. And with God's power, what can anything in this world do to us?
3. Joseph was wrongfully accused, and was trapped in prison for a crime that he did not commit. There will be times when it feels like nothing is going right, like no one understands you, or like everyone is against you. Sometimes, it even feels like the entire world is trying to make your whole life go badly. How can we deal with this trial? **Ex 14:14 – "The Lord will fight for you; and you shall hold your peace."** Joseph followed this command to the letter. He did not protest, or try to fight. He obediently went to prison, even though he did not commit the crime, because he knew that God would fight for him.	**4. Joseph encountered some very troubled people who had dreams that could not be interpreted. But Joseph helped them by using the wisdom God gave him.** We are not the only ones who will encounter tribulations; often, our friends may encounter trouble, or be in a tight spot and need help from us. Let's read what the Bible says about this. **Gal 6:2 – "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."** Jesus commands us to love our brothers and sisters, and the Book of Ecclesiastes tells us that a "threefold cord is not quickly broken." By helping each other, you build up a deep and meaningful friendship where you can support each other spiritually, and bring each other closer to God. This is the best kind of friendship that you can possibly have.

2. Trials! Trials! Trials!

1. Sister Brooke prays to God daily for His guidance. She trusts that He will provide a kidney donor for her at the right time. In the meantime, she asks Him to give her the strength to overcome the pain.
2. Sister Jaclyn knows that it's hard to fit in at a new place, so she prays to God and asks Him for the courage to start making new friends. Even though she is lonely, she knows that God is always by her side and will never leave her alone.
3. Even though Cameron is upset that Marty is lying about him to others, he trusts that God will provide for him. He prays to God and asks for guidance regarding his job. Marty's comments do not matter to Cameron, because he knows that if God wants him to keep working there, He will keep his job; if God has another plan for him, then he is also ready for that, too.
4. Harold understands that his parents are busy because they are trying to provide a good life for him. So, when he needs help with his schoolwork, he asks his friends for help. He also tries to do his best in school and in church so that they don't have to worry about him. He prays to God to guide and protect his parents when they are at work. He also asks his parents ahead of time if they are free to spend time with him in the future.

Activity

Calendar

10-15 Minutes

Objective: To help the students remember that whenever they are in trouble, they can always turn to God.

Materials

- Calendar templates
  Fill the dates in beforehand and photocopy sets for the students. Cut each page in half horizontally.
- Scissors • Stapler • Colored pencils or markers • Bibles
- (Optional) Card stock or thicker paper as backing, cut to the appropriate size (one per student)

Instructions

1. Make sure each student has a set of 12 months. They should have six pages each, with two months on each page.
2. From the suggested verses below, have the students choose six verses, and have them write one verse per page in the blank space above the months.
3. Time permitting, they can color and decorate some of the pages. If they completed the life application, perhaps they can draw seeds or plants to illustrate their faith. Other things they can draw are scenes from the Bible story, such as Joseph and his coat, or any of the dreams.
4. Have them stack the pages together, and staple the tops for them. They can rip off each page as the months pass.

Suggested Verses

- **Exodus 14:14** "The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace."
- **Deuteronomy 31:8** "And the Lord, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed."
- **Psalm 46:1-2** "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea."
- **Psalm 116:1-2** "I love the Lord, because He has heard my voice and my supplications. Because He has inclined His ear to me, therefore I will call upon Him as long as I live."
- **Psalm 118:6** "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"
- **John 14:27** "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."
- **John 15:7** "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you."
- **Philippians 4:6** "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God."
- **Philippians 4:13** "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."
- **James 5:13-15** "Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven."

Homework Answer Key

1. blessed
2. control, everything
3. chief cupbearer, chief baker
4. A
5. C
6. C
7. B
8. His brothers' sheaves of grain bowed down to his standing sheaf.
9. The sun, moon, and eleven stars bowed down to him.
10. Potiphar's wife attempted to lure Joseph to sleep with her, but he fled, so she falsely accused him of attacking her.
11. Joseph gave credit to God.
12. We can overcome anger and hatred by forgiving and putting trust in God's hand; we can overcome temptations by fleeing from them; we can overcome disappointment by faithfully serving God and caring for others.

Trials in Joseph's Life

The First Trial: Joseph and His Brothers
As you learn about the story, answer the questions in the left box, and draw your answers in the right.

Answer	Drawing
Jacob loved Joseph very much, and gave him a... _____ (Gen 37:3)	
What was Joseph's first dream? (Gen 37:6-7)	
What was Joseph's second dream? (Gen 37:9)	

Do you know how old Joseph was when all of this happened? He was only seventeen! If you were sold into slavery, you'd probably be very lonely and scared, and may even question if God is really with you or protecting you. But throughout all of this, Joseph never lost his faith in God. Let's read on and see how.

The Second Trial: Joseph and Potiphar

1. "The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a _____ man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the _____ was with him and that the Lord made all he did to _____ in his hand. So Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority."

2. "So it was, from the time that he had made him _____ of his house and all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for _____ _____; and the blessing of the Lord was on all that he had in the house and in the field."

3. Potiphar's wife saw that Joseph was very handsome, and wanted to sleep with him. He said, "Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this _____ _____, and _____ against God?"

4. Potiphar's wife said, "Lie with me." But Joseph left his garment in her hand, and _____ and _____ outside.

Joseph did not let go of his faith in God. He knew that everything he had been given was because of God's blessings, so he did not betray his faith. Joseph ran away from temptation! However, because of his refusal to sin, he was accused of a very, very serious crime. In fact, Potiphar would have been fully justified executing him on the spot! But instead, he threw Joseph into prison. Although it seemed like Joseph's situation just kept getting worse and worse, in truth, God was protecting and guiding Joseph for His own plans. Of course, Joseph could not have known this at the time, and he had to suffer even though he had done nothing wrong. But he still didn't lose faith in God! Let's read on and see how Joseph reacted to this new trial.

The Third Trial: Joseph Interprets Dreams

1. In prison, Joseph encountered two very troubled prisoners: the king's _____ _____ and the king's _____ _____.

2. "We each have had a dream, and there is no interpreter of it." So Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to _____? Tell them to me, please."

3. "So the advice was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants. And Pharaoh said to his servants, 'Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the _____ of God?'"

4. "Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, there is no one as _____ and wise as you. You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be _____ according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you.'"

Remember, Joseph had been sold as a mere slave upon entering Egypt, and had just come from imprisonment before meeting the Pharaoh! It was truly God's wonderful and miraculous work that allowed Joseph to rise to such an important position. He did not pretend to be very _____, but rather refused to take any credit for himself, and by doing so, _____ God.

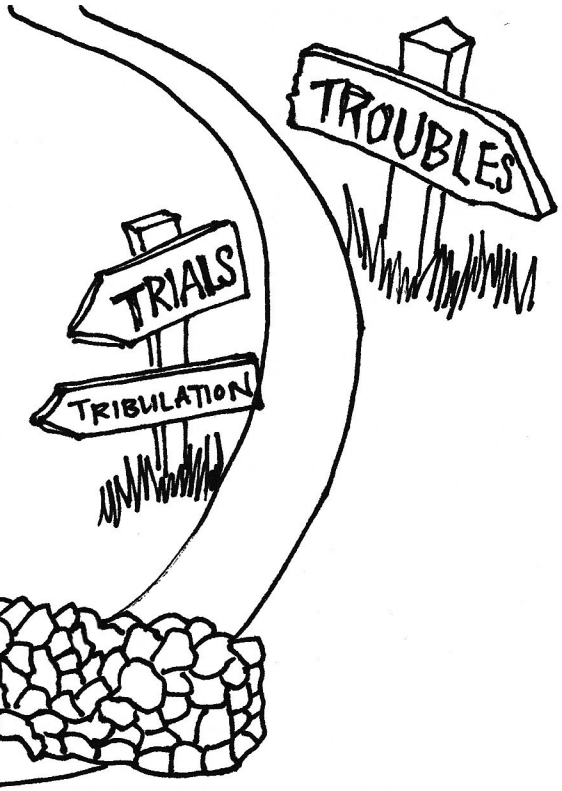
Trials Are Tests of Our Faith

The Bible often tells us that God will protect us as long as we trust in Him. So, why do we, as Christians, still experience hardships in our lives? To discover why, read each verse below and fill in the blanks.

Acts 14:22	We must go through many hardships to _____.
Romans 12:12	It is a test of our faith and _____.
Romans 5:3	Suffering gives us the _____ to go on.

God gives us trials and tribulations so that we can overcome them and also learn from them. By having faith and relying on God, we can make it through these trials and emerge with a stronger faith. However, the Bible says that everyone deals with trials differently, and some may not even succeed in passing them.

Not everyone is like Joseph, who managed to maintain a strong and firm faith in God, despite experiencing so many hardships. In fact, it's very difficult to have the same kind of faith in God that he had. **So, how do we overcome these trials and tribulations so we don't fall away?**

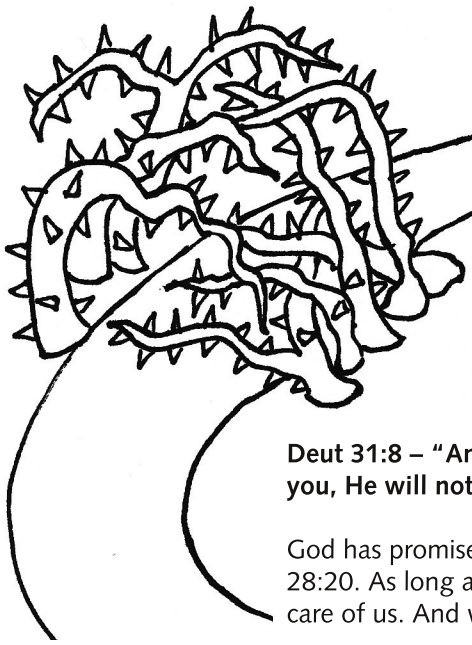


1. Joseph experienced extreme hatred and jealousy from his brothers.

We also may experience dislike from other people, such as our classmates, our siblings, or maybe even a brother or sister in church. This can make you feel hurt or angry. How can we deal with this trial?

Prov 19:11 – "The _____ of a man makes him slow to anger, and his glory is to _____ a transgression."

A patient person is slow to anger, and more willing to forgive. Joseph never got angry at Potiphar, or at the prison keeper. Moreover, he waited more than ten years before he was elevated to his high position! That must have taken a lot of patience! If we emulate Joseph's patience, we too will be blessed and eventually see God's plan for us.



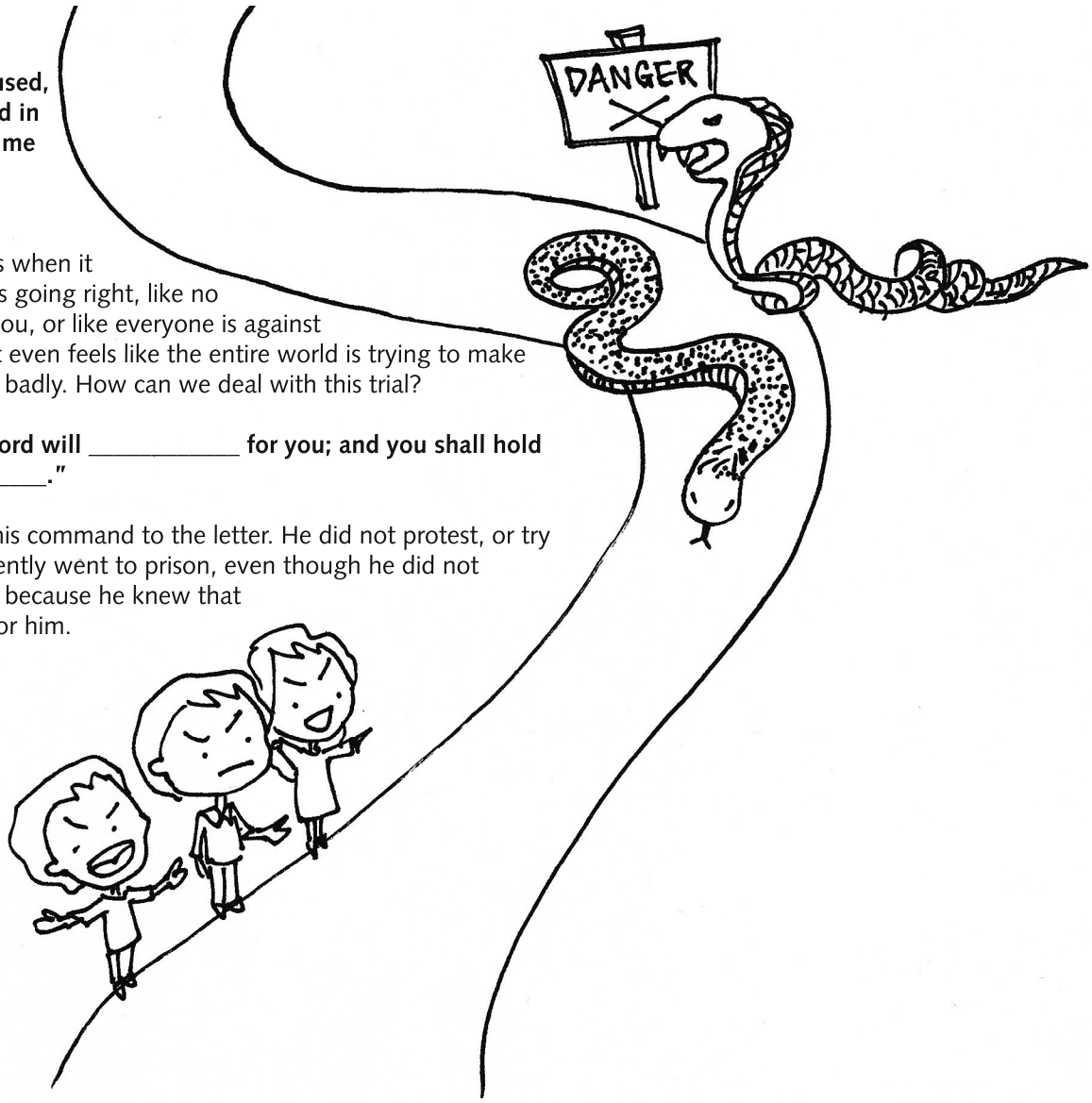
2. Joseph had to serve as a slave in a foreign country, all alone with an uncertain future.

Fear is something that everyone experiences. How can we deal with this trial?

Deut 31:8 – "And the Lord, He is the One who goes _____ you. He will be with you, He will not leave nor forsake you; do not _____ nor be dismayed."

God has promised never to leave His children. Jesus repeats this promise in Matthew 28:20. As long as we put our faith in Him, no matter what fears we have, He will take care of us. And with God's power, what can anything in this world do to us?

3. Joseph was wrongfully accused, and was trapped in a prisonfor a crime that he did not commit.



There will be times when it feels like nothing is going right, like no one understands you, or like everyone is against you. Sometimes, it even feels like the entire world is trying to make your whole life go badly. How can we deal with this trial?

Ex 14:14 – "The Lord will _____ for you; and you shall hold your _____."

Joseph followed this command to the letter. He did not protest, or try to fight. He obediently went to prison, even though he did not commit the crime, because he knew that God would fight for him.

4. Joseph encountered some very troubled people who had dreams that could not be interpreted. But Joseph helped them by using the wisdom God gave him.

We are not the only ones who will encounter tribulations; often, our friends may encounter trouble, or be in a tight spot and need help from us. Let's read what the Bible says about this.

Gal 6:2 – "_____ one another's _____, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

Jesus commands us to love our brothers and sisters, and the Book of Ecclesiastes tells us that a "threefold cord is not quickly broken." By helping each other, you build up a deep and meaningful friendship where you can support each other spiritually, and bring each other closer to God. This is the best kind of friendship that you can possibly have.

Trials! Trials! Trials!

How would you handle these trials?

Joseph went through many trials. Read the following cases and write down how you would handle each trial.

1. Sister Brooke has been sick for a while. Both of her kidneys are not doing well and she is in need of a transplant. A kidney transplant is when they take the bad kidney out and replace it with a good working one. It is not always easy to find a good kidney for transplants. This requires either someone living to donate a kidney to her or one to be donated after someone passes away. But that's not all, their blood types must match, too, or else her body may reject the new kidney. In the meantime, she needs to go through a painful process that requires doctors to use a machine to clean her blood. It's a very uncomfortable process that needs to be done frequently.

If you were Brooke, how would you handle this trial?

2. Jaclyn and her family moved to a new city not too far away from their old home. At first, she felt like it would be okay because she'd only be 45 minutes away from her old school and church friends. However, when she started school, she had a hard time making new friends. So, on the weekdays, she would go to school, come home, do her homework, and then do it all over again the next day. She had no friends to play with after school.

She thought that Sabbath days at the new church would be better because they were all brothers and sisters. But she didn't know everyone that well and most of them were really good friends with one another already. She continued to feel quite lonely for close to two months.

If you were Jaclyn, how would you handle this trial?

3. Cameron had been doing a terrific job at his company. He was never late to work and he finished his work on time. His boss was very pleased with him.

Cameron's co-worker Marty, who had worked in the company longer than Cameron, was beginning to feel jealous and didn't want Cameron to get any kind of promotion or pay raise.

Marty began to say bad things about Cameron in front of others and complained to his boss about Cameron—all in the hopes of ruining Cameron's reputation to get him fired.

If you were Cameron, how would you handle this trial?

4. Harold's parents worked long hours and so they were not able to see each other much during the week. Harold's father had two jobs and would always be very tired when he got home. His mother worked a late shift, so by the time Harold got home from school, his mother had to start work. Even though Harold also lived with his two younger sisters and his grandparents, he still wished he could spend time with his parents. Sometimes, he had questions with his schoolwork or wanted to go out somewhere, but because they were not around, he could not do anything.

If you were Harold, how would you handle this trial?

E2 Year 1 Book 3 Lesson 2—Trials in Joseph's Life

Homework Assignment

Name: _____ **Parent signature:** _____ **Date:** _____

Bible Reading: Please put a check mark in the space when you complete the reading each day.
Prayer: Please put a check mark in the space on the days you prayed to God.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Read							
Pray							

What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. _____

_____

_____

2. _____

_____

_____

Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse. **(Psalm 28:7)**

_____

Fill In the Blank

1. Because of Joseph's presence, God _____ Potiphar's household.
2. Potiphar gave Joseph complete _____ over _____ in his household, even the other servants.
3. In prison, Joseph encountered two very troubled prisoners. One was the king's _____ _____, and the other was the king's _____ _____.

Multiple Choice

4. _____ : Joseph's master put him in charge of everything in his house because ____.
   a. God was with Joseph and gave him success in everything he did.
   b. Joseph was the most handsome servant.
   c. His masters were lazy.

5. _____ : The chief cupbearer and chief baker were sad one morning because _____.
   a. Pharaoh gave the order to have them both killed.
   b. Pharaoh had a birthday and they were not invited.
   c. They could not understand the dream they each had.

6. _____ : When Joseph heard about the two prisoners' dreams, he said to them, _____.
   a. "I am gifted in interpreting dreams. I will tell you what they mean."
   b. "If you promise to get me out of here, I will interpret your dreams."
   c. "Interpretations come from God."

7. _____ : When Pharaoh asked Joseph to interpret his dreams, Joseph ____.
   a. Demanded freedom in exchange for his interpretation
   b. Answered Pharaoh honestly and offered a solution to the problem
   c. Acted wise and smart to try and get into Pharaoh's good graces

Short Answer

8. What was in Joseph's first dream?

9. What was in Joseph's second dream?

10. Why was Joseph put in prison?

11. When interpreting the dreams of the chief cupbearer, chief baker, and Pharaoh, to whom did Joseph give credit?

12. What can we learn from Joseph's trials?