

# Roadblocks

## Study Guide

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### Series Overview

Studying the life of Joseph can help us identify and address internal and personal roadblocks to following Jesus.

### Using This Guide

You may choose to use this guide:

- for personal study and reflection
- as a discussion guide with any group of people interested in what the Bible says about these topics

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# 1- Family of Origin

## Icebreaker: Dysfunctional Family

Think of some dysfunctional families you've seen on television. What types of problems do they have?

## Questions: Joseph's Dysfunctional Family

- Joseph's father, Jacob, was **manipulative** ([Gen 27:1-19](#)).
  - ▶ Has anyone in your family ever tried to control things in a devious way?
  - ▶ Did you ever do something you knew was wrong when a family member told you to do it?
- Joseph's mother, Rachael, was **insecure** ([Gen 30:1-22](#)).
  - ▶ Was there anyone in your family who was insecure?
  - ▶ Have you ever felt inferior to others?
- Joseph's brothers struggled with **jealousy** ([Gen 37:2-4](#)).
  - ▶ Was there a member in your family that others envied?
  - ▶ Have you ever felt jealous of a member in your family?

As messed up as your family may have been, remember that God is better than the best parent you can imagine. If you have Christ as Lord and Savior, God wants to do good things for you ([Mat 7:11](#)).

- What has God already done for you ([Rom 8:31-32](#))?
- What can parents do to break family sin patterns ([1Pet 1:18-25](#))? Why is breaking those patterns important in our relationship with Jesus?

## Dig a Little Deeper: Break Free

Here are some things that can help you break free from generational patterns of bad behavior.

1. Recognize your personal struggles and any patterns that seem destructive. Immediately confess to God when you notice your sin (*Psa 51:10, Pro 28:13, 2Cor 10:4-5*).
2. Be a student of God's Word. Notice what it says about the problems you face (*2Tim 2:15, John 16:8*).
3. Pray, asking God to help you break any unhealthy patterns in your life (*Eph 2:10, Psa 76:8*).

## Application Exercise: Break Free Self-Assessment

How true are the following statements for you?

	not true ←→completely true
When I notice that I have said, thought, or done something displeasing to God, I immediately confess to Him.	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
I read God's Word several times a week. I make note of what it says about my struggles.	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
I pray every day, seeking God's help in breaking any unhealthy patterns in my life.	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

Based on this self-assessment, ask God where He wants you to make some changes.

# 2-Trauma

## Icebreaker: Scars

From your experience, what is most painful, the visible reminder of a physical scar or the invisible reminder of an emotional scar?

## Questions: Types of Trauma

- What kinds of trauma can a person experience at the hands of family members ([Gen 37:4-36](#))? How can the trauma become a roadblock to following Jesus?
  
- Doing the right thing doesn't always lead to physical relief. Joseph went to prison for doing the right thing ([Gen 39:7-20](#)).
  - ▶ What attitude does God want us to take to the unfairness of life ([1Pet 2:18-22](#))?
  - ▶ What is the best way to respond to suffering ([1Pet 4:12-14](#))?
  
- How do you think you might react when someone you helped, later turned his back on you ([Gen 40:14-41:1](#))?
  
- God is close to the brokenhearted and rescues those with crushed spirits ([Psa 34:18](#)). What does it mean to cast your burden on Him ([Psa 55:22](#))?

## Dig a Little Deeper: Betrayal

The betrayal Joseph suffered pictured the betrayal Jesus suffered.

	Joseph	Jesus
His brethren hated him.	<i>Gen 37:4</i>	<i>John 15:24-25</i>
People conspired against him.	<i>Gen 37:18-20</i>	<i>Mat 27:1</i>
One man tried to use subtlety to prevent the murder.	<i>Gen 37:21-22</i>	<i>John 7:50-53</i>
His blood was evidence for his father.	<i>Gen 37:31-33</i>	<i>Heb 9:14</i>
People thought he was dead.	<i>Gen 37:34-35</i>	<i>Mat 28:5-7</i>

### Application Exercise: Pray for Those Who Suffer

Pray for those you know who are suffering from trauma. Here are some sample prayers you can adapt to fit the circumstances.

- Lord, my friend has a broken heart and seeks Your comfort. I claim Your promise in *Psalm 34:18* that You will be near \_\_\_\_\_ during these struggles.
- Lord, I lift up Your servant \_\_\_\_\_, who needs physical, mental, and spiritual healing. Please bind up those wounds as You promise in *Psalm 147:3*.
- Lord, I implore You to expose the lies of the enemy that have entered my friend's life because of trauma. Please reveal Your truth to my friend through Your Word (*Rom 12:2*).

# 3-Depression

## Icebreaker: Oh My Soul

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DjNZf878ISQ&feature=youtu.be>

Discuss your reaction to this song.

## Questions: Lonely, Anxious, Broken

- How can thinking that no one remembers you contribute to depression (**Gen 40:23-41:1**)? Where do you turn when you feel alone (**Psa 6:2-4**)?
- In what way does anxiety contribute to depression and serve as a roadblock to following Jesus (**Pro 12:25**)? What is the most productive thing to do when you experience anxiety (**1Pet 5:7**, **Php 4:6-7**)?
- How can unfulfilled hopes bring depression and be a roadblock to following Jesus (**Pro 13:12**)?
- When has sorrow broken your spirit (**Pro 18:14 Pro 15:13**)? What did it take to restore your relationship with Jesus?

## Dig a Little Deeper: Jesus Knows What It is to Suffer

Jesus knows what it is to suffer.

- Satan assaulted Him (**Mat 4:1-11**).
- His friends thought He was insane (**Mark 3:21**).
- Leaders in the synagogue persecuted Him for His teachings (**Luke 4:28-30**).
- One of His disciples betrayed Him (**Mark 14:43-45**).
- His closest friends deserted Him (**Mark 14:50**).
- People falsely accused Him and the authorities arrested Him (**Mark 14:55-64**).
- Soldiers publicly humiliated Him (**Mark 15:16-20**).
- Soldiers crucified Him as a common criminal (**Mat 27:33-38**).

### Application Exercise: Healthy Habits

Depression has many causes. When it's severe or chronic, seek medical help to determine possible physical causes.

At the same time, establish healthy habits such as the following:

- Get adequate sleep and rest (**1Kgs 19:5**).
- Eat healthy food (**1Kgs 19:6-7**).
- Pray (**Php 4:6-7**).
- Listen to what God is telling you (**1Kgs 19:11-13**).
- Change your mental focus (**Php 4:8**).
- Renew your mind in His Word (**Rom 12:2**).
- Allow others to minister to you (**John 15:12, Gal 5:13-14**).
- Do something positive for others (**Gal 6:9-10**).



# 4-Fear

## Icebreaker: Top Fears

Take a poll with those you know to see what fears you share.

## Questions: Danger of Fear

- What led up to Joseph's brothers fearing him ([Gen 37:1-11](#))?
- Out of fear and jealousy, Joseph's brothers made some bad choices ([Gen 37:18-20](#)). Discuss times when you've let fear prompt you to do something you wouldn't otherwise do. When that happens, how can you get back in relationship with Jesus ([Psa 34:4](#), [2Tim 1:7](#))?
- Joseph's brothers feared that he would kill them out of revenge ([Gen 50:15-18](#)). Do we fear revenge because:
  - We know we're guilty?
  - We know we would take revenge if we were in the other person's position?
  - We don't trust the other person to forgive us?
- What is the downside of fearing people ([Pro 29:25](#))? What does it mean to let perfect love cast out fear ([1John 4:18](#), [Psa 91:1-2](#))?

## Dig a Little Deeper: Your Source of Help

Consider these lessons from [Genesis 42](#).

Don't wait until you are starving to seek food. The world is a poor source of help.	<a href="#">Gen 42:2</a> , <a href="#">Mat 5:6</a>
You can't "buy" help.	<a href="#">Gen 42:3</a> , <a href="#">Isa 55:1-2</a>
There's no point in trying to justify yourself to God.	<a href="#">Gen 42:10-11</a> , <a href="#">Rom 2:12-16</a>
You can't pay for your sin.	<a href="#">Gen 42:28-35</a> , <a href="#">Rom 3:22-28</a>

### Application Exercise: Pray to Cast Out Fear

Pray, asking God to:

- Give you a spirit of power, love, and a sound mind ([2Tim 1:7](#)).
- Pour out His love in your heart ([1John 4:18](#)).

# 5-Unforgiveness

## Icebreaker: Acrostic

Think of words that begin with each letter in the acrostic. Choose words related to how forgiveness affects the giver or recipient of forgiveness.

F:  
O:  
R:  
G:  
I:  
V:  
E:

## Questions: Why Forgive?

- In what way did the names of Joseph's sons reflect his forgiveness of his brothers ([Gen 41:49-52](#))?
- **Regular-Strength** Forgiveness: How can Christ's suffering motivate you to forgive someone ([Pro 10:12](#), [Psa 103:13](#), [Eph 4:30-32](#))?
- **Extra-Strength** Forgiveness: As you work toward a positive relationship with someone who has wronged you, how can you keep things in perspective ([Mat 18:15-17](#), [Gal 6:1-3](#), [Heb 12:14-15](#))?
- **Prescription-Strength** Forgiveness: How can doing good toward your enemies bring you freedom ([Mat 5:38-48](#), [Rom 12:17-21](#), [1Pet 3:8-9](#))?

## Dig a Little Deeper: Personal Path to Healing

Joseph gives us a pattern to follow when we forgive others.

- **Call Out the Evil:** Joseph knew that his brothers did evil ([Gen 50:20](#)). He did not make light of their sin.
- **Acknowledge that God Meant It for Good:** Joseph knew God used his brother's evil for good ([Gen 50:20](#), [Rom 8:28](#)).
- **Let God Handle the Punishment:** Joseph knew it was not appropriate for him to take revenge ([Gen 50:19](#), [Rom 12:19](#)).
- **Reflect Christ's Love to Your Enemies:** Joseph promised to provide for his brothers. He comforted them and spoke kindly to them ([Gen 50:21](#), [Mat 5:44](#)).

### Application Exercise: I Forgive You, Forgive Me

- **I Forgive You:** Think about those in your life you have not forgiven. Take a step toward forgiving them. Ask God to guide you through the process. Ask God to free you from any bitterness so that you can be more fruitful for Him ([Eph 4:29-32](#)).
- **Forgive Me:** Think about those in your life you have harmed. Take steps to acknowledge what you did. If possible, make reparations. Prove your commitment to not harm them further. (This could be a lengthy process.) Ask for their forgiveness. Thank God for His forgiveness.