

BESTSELLING AUTHORS

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GOD WON'T LEAVE YOU THERE

JOSEPH'S STORY



EXCLUSIVE FIRST LOOK CHAPTERS

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A PERSONAL WORD FROM THE AUTHORS

It has been a joy for us to write this book together. We both love the story of Joseph—the favorite son of a wealthy father, rejected and sold into slavery by his jealous brothers, enslaved as a servant to an Egyptian official, then incarcerated in Pharaoh’s prison before being elevated to a position that was second only to Pharaoh himself. In that exalted and powerful position, God used Joseph to save the world—including his own family—from starvation and famine. In the process, he was able to bring his brothers to a point of deep, sincere repentance and reconciliation with himself. In the end, Joseph shared a beautiful reunion with his aged father and witnessed his own sons receiving his father’s blessing.

As we stepped into his story, we saw Jesus in the shadows of Joseph’s life. An exceptional Old Testament character, Joseph exhibited a Christlike character in a beautiful way. We believe you are going to be thrilled, moved, and greatly impacted by his example. Joseph shows us that God, regardless of what life throws at us, won’t leave us in the pit of hopelessness but will faithfully bring us through to confident hope in His ultimate purpose for our lives.

Rachel-Ruth has done the heavy lifting in our co-authoring. She taught this section of Genesis in her online Bible study, and so

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she was freshly familiar with the text when we began writing. Like a miner of diamonds, she plunged into the depths of the passages and unearthed incredible treasures.

Although the gems were wonderful as they were, Anne had the privilege of being like a lapidarist. She took the jewels Rachel-Ruth found, then cut, smoothed, added facets, and polished them until the result is this priceless gem of amazing brilliance and clarity that is both captivating and awe-inspiring. While the book has been written in Rachel-Ruth's first person, it is a collaborative effort.

It is now with heightened anticipation of the blessing to come that we invite you to step into Joseph's story and walk away with this truth: *God Won't Leave You There.*

INTRODUCTION

Step into Joseph's Story

Joseph, the son of Jacob and the grandson of Abraham, was a young man just leaving boyhood as our story begins. He was a typical teenager who seemed to have a little swagger in his step. He was a prince of the desert: wealthy, handsome, and singled out for special honor when his father revealed his favoritism by giving Joseph a rare and coveted coat of many colors. While the coat was a symbol of his father's favor, it was also the stimulus for jealousy among his ten older siblings.

Joseph's story begins when, in obedience to his father, he set out to check on his brothers, who were tending their father's sheep. When he didn't find them where he expected them to be, he kept looking. He didn't return to the comfort of home and tell his father he had done the best he could, but his brothers were not where they were supposed to be. Instead, Joseph continued searching.

As Joseph left his father's tents, walking the familiar path to the fields, listening to the birds chirping in the trees, hearing the crunch of rocks and dirt underneath his sandaled feet, he had no way of knowing he would never return. He could not have imagined that within hours his life would be turned upside down and inside out, plunging him into unimaginable suffering.

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When Joseph finally found his brothers, he had no forewarning of their rage. They violently seized him and threw him into a deep pit, stripping him of his princely robe. Then his brothers dipped the robe in an animal's blood so they could cover their evil deed by telling Jacob that Joseph had been killed by a wild animal. Joseph was subsequently shackled and sold to his cousins, a group of traveling Ishmaelites, who transported him to Egypt, then placed him on an auction block to be resold as a slave.

Joseph suddenly found himself far away from his family and all that was familiar. Plummeted into the frightening swirl of a foreign, sophisticated culture, Joseph was surrounded by strange people who spoke an unknown language, practiced unfamiliar customs, and ate unfamiliar food. And he was alone.

He must have been terrified by the prospect of a very uncertain future—if he even would have a future. And he had done nothing wrong! In fact, he had gone the extra mile to do everything right! Yet in just moments, his life had drastically changed, seemingly for the worse. Much worse! Forever! Joseph had no way of knowing that when his life had turned upside down, he was actually on the road to the fulfillment of God's ultimate purpose.

Anne and Rachel-Ruth's lives also have been turned upside down in dramatic moments of suffering. Anne's life was suddenly changed by the tragic death of her husband of forty-nine years, followed three years later by a cancer diagnosis. Rachel-Ruth's life has been forever changed by two back-to-back rare SCAD heart attacks. These events occurred when both Anne and Rachel-Ruth were serving in obedience to their heavenly Father, going the extra mile in many ways, seeking to make Him known through the way they lived for Him and served Him. There have been other areas of additional suffering in their lives, which makes Joseph's story extremely personal for both of them. Based on their experiences, as you step into Joseph's story, it will be very personal for you as well.

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What stands out in Joseph's life is that throughout his suffering, God was with him, guiding him and transforming him into a truly magnificent person and an incredibly powerful leader—someone he never would have become living in Jacob's tents. Joseph's life is even more amazing as we are given the distinct impression that Joseph lived a life that was a reflection of Jesus' life. Which leads us to conclude that sometimes God uses suffering to get us where He wants us to be and to develop us into the people He created us to be . . . for our own good and His glory. Like with Joseph, our path of suffering may actually be the road to His ultimate purpose.

So let's reflect: In obedience to his father, Joseph set out on an unknown path of intense suffering that lasted for years, eventually leading him back to reconciliation with his brothers. But this path would be a lot longer, the journey fiercer, the attacks more brutal, and the pain more immense than Joseph ever would have believed he could endure. But in the end, he wouldn't wind up in a pit . . . he would sit on a throne! His brothers wouldn't be in a rage; they would be on their knees in humble submission . . . *to him!* Joseph wouldn't be a boy in a coat of many colors; he would be a man clothed in royal robes. He wouldn't be known as a favored son but as a man of dignity, honor, forgiveness, strength, and courage. In the end, the path God had placed Joseph on led to his own exaltation and glory and the salvation of his family and of the world! Yet we wonder, *Was there an even greater dimension to God's ultimate purpose for Joseph's suffering?*

Think about the parallel. In Joseph's life, we see a reflection of Jesus Himself in the shadows. Jesus, the beloved favored Son, was sent by the heavenly Father to find and save His "brothers." In obedience to His Father, Jesus began a journey that was thirty-three years long. Although He was in His Father's will, doing the right thing and even going the extra mile all the way to the cross, He, too, was set on a path of suffering—a path fiercer, the attacks

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more brutal, and the pain more immense than we could conceive or a human heart could endure. Jesus, too, was rejected by those He sought to redeem, despised by those He loved. He was stripped of His robe, which was not dipped in animal's blood but soaked in His own blood and gambled for by cruel soldiers. His brothers didn't throw Him into a pit; they crucified Him! He was alone. Forsaken.

Yet, like Joseph, in the blink of an eye, Jesus was raised up to sit on a throne! And from that exalted position He was, and still is, able to save not only His family but the entire world, which includes anyone and everyone who comes to Him by faith. One day the whole world will acknowledge His authority as every knee bows before Him. Jesus won't be wearing a seamless robe that was gambled for but a robe of light more brilliant than the sun! He will be the center of universal praise as the One who alone is worthy of all glory, honor, power, strength, and wisdom. In the end, the Father's ultimate purpose is revealed. The Son of the Father is known to the whole world as the Lamb of God whose blood atones for our sin. Jesus will be known as the only Savior whose suffering opens the way for our reconciliation with His Father, as the Risen Lord who one day will rule the world as King of kings.

Could it be that God also has an ultimate purpose when your life turns upside down? Could it be that you, like Joseph, are in the process of becoming a reflection of Jesus? If you find yourself on a path of suffering that is made even more painful because you have done nothing wrong, look for Jesus in the shadows. He is with you. He is guiding you. And He will bring you through. Step into Joseph's story because God won't leave you there . . .

PART ONE

GOD
IS
WITH
YOU . . .

CHAPTER 1

GOD IS WITH YOU
FROM THE BEGINNING

Genesis 37

*“For I know the plans I have for you,”
declares the LORD,
“plans to prosper you and not to harm you,
plans to give you hope and a future.”*

JEREMIAH 29:11

One of my favorite classes in high school was a business management class because the teacher made it so interesting and interactive. At the beginning of the semester, she assigned each of us our own pretend business. Every day at the beginning of class, we'd open the designated filing cabinet and locate our name on a folder that held a large yellow envelope. We were then instructed to open the envelope and remove its contents, which explained what was currently happening in our fake business. Each of us took care of whatever matters arose in our business according to the information in the envelope.

Some days I found that my business had run out of paper or light bulbs, or that maintenance was needed on the copy machine. Then I calculated how much it would cost to address the matter and whether my budget allowed it. Each day the teacher walked us through whatever our pretend business encountered. It was the perfect way to give us a hands-on learning experience.

I will never forget the shock I experienced one particular day. My business had been running well, and I was in the black with my budget. Feeling pretty good about myself and my entrepreneurial skills, I opened my envelope and read this sentence: "Fire has burned your business to the ground!" In total shock I stood and shouted to the class that my business had burned! I was horrified that all my perfect planning and careful plotting had gone up in a burst of fake flames! The class cracked up, as did I after my initial shock. My sweet teacher began the process of teaching me what to do when a crisis like this hits your business. Each day after, she helped my fake business get back on its feet.

If only I could remember all that she taught me! But the overarching lesson that has stuck out to me all these years is: That's life! We don't know what will be in our "yellow envelope" each day when we wake in the morning. Some days it might be the normal everyday ho-hum, but there will be days when we get slammed

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with bad news or circumstances that shake us to the core. As shocking and awful as it may be, God's Spirit is the gentle Teacher¹ who is not caught off guard by our situations. He walks with us step-by-step, has a plan in place to teach us and make us better, and He will never leave us nor forsake us on our journey.²

Joseph was about to open a "yellow envelope" that would change his life forever. Joseph's story begins in Genesis 37 when he is a strapping, handsome seventeen-year-old going about his daily responsibilities, which included helping his brothers tend his father's sheep (v. 2).³ He's a shepherd. Nothing glamorous about that. But we soon glimpse Joseph's budding character. On a day that must have been typical, he was out in the fields when he noticed some of his brothers doing something that wasn't acceptable. We're not given any details about what took place or what Joseph saw, but we can imagine that his brothers may have been shirking their duties, harming the sheep, or neglecting to properly care for the flock. Whatever transpired, their behavior upset Joseph to the point that he reported it to their father.

While Joseph may come across to us as a tattletale, his action revealed he had a heart to do the right thing, even if it put his relationship with his brothers at risk, giving us insight into a leader in the making. While risking his brothers' wrath, he must have felt he had his beloved father's protection and felt safe making his report. And I expect Jacob was grateful for a son who kept him apprised of the family's business and the problems that arose in it.

But Joseph's report put him at sharp odds with his siblings. The situation worsened because Jacob openly favored and loved Joseph over all his other sons.⁴ Jacob even went to the point of having a richly ornamented robe made for Joseph.⁵ If I were Joseph, I would have cringed! Never would I have wanted to parade myself around my older brothers with a colorful, expensive robe that my dad had exclusively spoiled me with. But, at seventeen, who knows what

any of us would have chosen to do. Unfortunately, Jacob showed a complete lack of wisdom, and Joseph showed a complete lack of humility. The result was a recipe for disaster among the siblings. His brothers hated him even more for it.

In hindsight, we can see that God had a reason for placing Joseph in the position of being hated by his brothers. He was setting up Joseph for the future. God purposefully placed Joseph as the youngest of eleven brothers. He intentionally placed him in a field as a shepherd where he would see his brothers misbehaving. God even allowed him to be placed in a position as his father's favorite. God needed Joseph in Egypt, so He orchestrated events in his life to lead him there.

This is an incredible picture of the sovereignty of God truly working everything out for Joseph and his family's ultimate good and for His ultimate glory. Even though Jacob's favoritism was foolish and selfish, and even though the brothers' jealousy of Joseph was sinful, God used all of it—the good, the bad, and the ugly—to move Joseph out of Canaan and into Egypt so he could save his family, and the world, in the future.

God also allows and arranges the events of our lives to teach us, to grow our character, and to bring about His ultimate purpose for each of us. One such example was when my daughters spent their elementary and middle school years at a local Christian school. Their elementary years were wonderful, but as they approached middle school, friendships became more difficult, so I scrambled to find alternatives.

Day after day the girls came home in tears, describing their heart-wrenching difficulties. The bullying was real, and it was rough. We were all miserable. During her second week of ninth grade, my oldest daughter, Bell, came home and said she couldn't do it anymore. We prayed and fasted that weekend, and God gave us very clear guidance from Scripture confirming that we were to pull her out

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immediately.⁶ The next day we enrolled her in the school where my husband coached football. As a result, all three of my girls attended that high school, which proved to be an incredible answer to prayer.

Looking back, I realize that I never would have removed them from their former school if God hadn't allowed the heat to be turned up seven times hotter.⁷ It was His will to allow the difficulties to intensify in order to push my daughters toward where He wanted them to be. He placed them in the new school because He wanted to use my girls as lights in what are often confusing high school years. Each of my girls led multiple kids to place their faith in Jesus while there.

Where has God placed you? Has it become intolerable or unbearable? Could God be getting ready to move you? Have you wondered why God placed you in a dysfunctional family? Or in a war-torn country? All His placements have purpose. He is incredibly strategic, down to the smallest detail. He has promised "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."⁸ That was true for Joseph, and it's also true for you.

One of my grandmother's heroes was Amy Carmichael. Amy was an Irish girl who grew up always wishing she had been born with blue eyes instead of brown. As a little girl she even asked God to change her eyes to blue, but He didn't answer that prayer. When she was twenty-seven years old, she traveled to India as a missionary. It struck her that God had given her brown eyes so that she could blend in with the people.

For fifty-five years, God used her in India to save many young girls from temple prostitution. There were many times when she slipped out in the middle of the night to rescue a little girl. Her disguised form, wrapped in an Indian sari, helped her avoid detection. Blue eyes would have been an instant giveaway.⁹ God is in the details! Down to the minutiae, even eye color! You can trust where God has positioned you in your life.

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If the “yellow envelope” that you’ve opened has you in a dysfunctional family, with a disability, in the middle of a crime-filled city, or with brown eyes instead of blue, you can take it straight from God’s loving hands. He knows what He is doing! Trust Him and be patient as He works out His placement in your life.

In Joseph’s situation, he added insult to the injury of the spectacular robe when he was given dreams that he unwisely shared with his family. Joseph didn’t seem to pick up on any social cues from his brothers, but not many seventeen-year-old boys would have. Instead of keeping his thoughts to himself, Joseph shared his first dream with his older brothers. It wasn’t the typical scary dream of a bear chasing you through the house or dreaming you are giving a speech in your underwear. Joseph’s dreams were extraordinarily detailed and prophetic.

I wonder if Joseph was sitting around the breakfast table with his brothers when he decided to share his dream: “*Listen to this dream I had: We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it*” (37:6–7).^{*} Whether Joseph wanted to get a rise out of them like a typical teenage brother would or if it was because he had a captive audience and pridefully wanted to make himself feel important by sharing it, we don’t know. Whatever he was thinking, his telling was not received well. *They hated him all the more* (37:5). Their indignant response was, “*Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?*” (37:8).

Joseph didn’t learn from his brothers’ resentful reaction, because when he had another similar dream, he again didn’t keep it to himself. He shared it with his father as well as his brothers. “*Listen . . . I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were*

* All verses that tell Joseph’s story in the book of Genesis are in italics and followed by chapter and verse numbers.

bowing down to me” (37:9). Somewhat floored and even offended, his father said, “*What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?*” (37:10). How absurd it must have sounded to all of them. How in the world could the youngest of Jacob’s eleven sons rise up and rule over the whole family?¹⁰ After Jacob questioned Joseph about the insulting dream, [*Jacob*] *kept the matter in mind* (37:11). I wonder . . . did Jacob sense there was something significant to this dream? Was God giving him a glimpse into the future? If he had listened closely, was the God of his fathers, Abraham and Isaac, trying to convey something to him that would carry him through the dark years to come?

Keep in mind that Jacob and his sons didn’t have a copy of the Bible to pull out and claim promises for themselves. Instead, in those days God often used dreams or prophetic visions to speak to an individual.¹¹ When Joseph shared his dream, perhaps his father, Jacob, remembered how God had spoken to him at a young age through a dream. Just as God had encouraged Jacob at the beginning of his journey in the wilderness, letting him know he had a future and that God would be with him and bless him, God had brought Joseph a prophetic dream too. God gave Joseph a vision that essentially promised him hope that he would need years later when he was a slave and prisoner in Egypt.

Listening to God speak to us through His Word is vital in the Christian life. You and I never know when God’s promise given to us today will be our bedrock when life falls in on us tomorrow.

It’s interesting to note that God gave Joseph two dreams with the same meaning. God may speak to us multiple times about something in order to get our attention.¹² So pay attention. He often uses repetition to emphasize and confirm that what we have heard is most assuredly a message from Him.

While I was writing this chapter, the Lord gave me the same

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verse twice in two different settings: “As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work.”¹³ With so many tasks needing to be done, I was overwhelmed. I read this verse in my morning devotions, then it appeared again in a prayer letter that was sent to me. I knew God was giving it to me twice to get my attention. He seemed to be saying, “Work! Get to work while there is still time left.” His Word gave me stamina, perseverance, and motivation. God knew how overloaded I felt, but He had called me to it, and I was assured He would equip me with the energy and ability to complete it. And He did!

Again . . . pay attention! God speaks to us, but we have to be listening.¹⁴ There is no question that God still speaks through His Word, our Bible. But do you read it simply for facts and information, or do you read the Bible expectantly, listening for His voice to speak to you through it? Obviously, Joseph was listening, even though he didn't understand fully what he was hearing at the time.

As a growing, energetic teenager, life was good for Joseph. He was adored by his father, he proudly wore an expensive and colorful one-of-a-kind robe, and he didn't seem to have a demanding work schedule like his brothers did. His father appeared to have kept him close by, showering him with love and affection while his brothers tended the sheep. He lived like a prince in Canaan as a member of a wealthy family.

He'd had a couple of good dreams, then very probably enjoyed taunting his older brothers with the idea of ruling over them as any younger brother might have done. Joseph was loved by his father, which surely made him feel comfortable and secure. He obeyed and behaved like a favorite son would. Life was looking good.

At seventeen years of age, it's possible Joseph was beginning to think about his future. Because he was favored by his father, was he a little spoiled? Entitled? Was he making plans as to where he

would live? Did he already have his eye on a young girl he might like to marry? Had he thought about how to expand his father's flocks and herds, or did he have in mind another occupation? Did his dreams excite him with the thought that God would raise him to a lofty position in the coming years? Maybe he imagined he'd be the chieftain of the Bedouin shepherds, or the wealthiest desert king, or a ruler over a portion of Canaan. His thoughts may have been ambitious and hopeful.

Anything was possible for Joseph's future. His path seemed secure. What could possibly go wrong? No matter what daydreaming Joseph may or may not have done, it's unlikely he could have imagined the path God was about to lay out for him. Joseph's situation reminds me of something I've heard my mother say: The way up is down.

God has never promised that our paths would lead us to a future of health, wealth, or prosperity. He often leads us on a path of difficulty for a greater purpose. No one ever wants life to take a sudden, dire turn, but we need to trust God when it does.

Joseph certainly didn't expect a life-changing event the day his father sent him out to check on his brothers tending sheep in distant fields. Because of Joseph's earlier report on the brothers' unacceptable activity, Jacob must have felt he needed Joseph's first-hand information once again. He instructed Joseph to bring back word about his brothers' work and the status of the flocks.

As Joseph set out, I wonder if the growing teenager grabbed a pomegranate off the table to snack on while he walked down the path. I wonder if the sun was shining, casting shadows on the rolling hills that spread out before him. Perhaps a breeze tousled his hair as wispy clouds floated by in the distance. Did he notice the sound of birds chirping and the crunch of rocks under his sandaled feet as he continued on that fateful path? How could he have known that every step led him closer to an unimaginable nightmare? By

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evening, the events of that day must have played out a thousand times in his mind.

Joseph arrived in Shechem where his brothers were supposed to be, but they were nowhere to be found. At that moment he could have turned around. He could have returned to his father and said he had done his best. He had searched for his brothers, going as far as he had been told, but couldn't find them. His father may have shrugged, patted his shoulder, and thanked him for trying, then awaited his other sons' return. As much as we want to shout through the years at Joseph and yell, "Turn around! Go home!" God had him on a divine path that would culminate in an incredible future beyond anything Joseph could have imagined. God would take the young, somewhat spoiled teenager and turn him into a seasoned rock of a man who would save his family, and through them the nation of Israel, Egypt, and the entire known world. For that to take place, God needed Joseph to be in Egypt.

While Joseph was *wandering around in the fields* (37:15), a man saw him and asked what he was looking for. When Joseph told him, the man said he overheard his brothers say they were going to Dothan. So Joseph went the extra mile, setting out for Dothan as he continued searching for his brothers in obedience to his father. There was nothing random about this decision. God was orchestrating it, just as He orchestrated every part of Joseph's life—even as He orchestrates your life and mine.

As you reflect on your own path, are you questioning, "If only . . ."? *If only I hadn't taken that job. If only I hadn't gone to that college. If only I hadn't gotten into that car. If only I hadn't gotten into that relationship. If only I hadn't acted on impulse. If only I didn't move away. If only I hadn't had that conversation. If only I had just walked away. If only I hadn't married that person.*

Could it be that your "if only" has been the very thing God used in your life to draw you to Himself, to build rich character in

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you, and to use you for His glory? He not only knows your path, but He has laid it out before you! Proverbs says “a man’s heart plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps.”¹⁵

My biggest “if only” happened on January 5, 2022. Due to a benign, rapid heart rate since high school, I scheduled a routine stress test to ensure my heart function was still in great shape. I wasn’t worried one bit about the appointment. My mom, however, insisted that I take my daughter Sophia with me. We had a rule in our family that if possible, everyone was to take a family member with them for any doctor’s appointment. Sophia waited in the lobby while I took the stress test, which was the first of many glimpses of God’s sovereign mercy in affliction during the ordeal that followed.

When I entered the dark room with the technician, I instantly felt uneasy. The young male technician came in, took one look at me, and appeared nervous. He dropped his pen multiple times on the ground, fumbled around with his papers, and seemed extremely uncomfortable. Then he got very angry. He was rough and rude during the echocardiogram. Because he couldn’t capture the pictures of my heart that he wanted, he called in a nurse to give me an IV. This IV would put gas on my heart to create clearer images on the ultrasound while I ran on the treadmill. I strongly resisted their demand but ultimately gave in, being the people pleaser that I am. If only! After nearly passing out completely on the treadmill, I finally made it to the table, where I passed out multiple times. Unknown at the time, I later realized I had been experiencing the beginning of a SCAD heart attack. At that point, I was alone in the room.

When I finally returned to the lobby, I was in tears. Sophia walked me to the car while I recounted what happened. I was grateful she drove me home, as I was too weak to drive. My chest hurt badly, and I couldn’t stop crying. Four days went by before I realized that my chest pain wasn’t a pulled muscle or acid reflux,

but was, in fact, my heart. I was rushed by ambulance to the hospital, where a doctor discovered I was having a spontaneous coronary artery dissection (SCAD)—a heart attack caused by extreme stress and intense exercise. SCAD causes the arteries to shred inside the heart, which prevents blood flow. That was the first heart attack.

My second heart attack happened the next day, and it was massive. So much so that my doctor said it was the worst documented SCAD he had ever seen. The attack happened while my mom and sister were in my hospital room. Eight nurses came in when Mom pushed the alarm button, but none of the nurses seemed to know what was happening. I knew I was dying. I could hear my mom praying out loud. The last thing I said in my mind was, *Lord, please take care of my girls.*

And at that moment, God made a path through my shredded artery to allow blood flow back to my heart. He kept it that way until I was wheeled into the operating room. The hospital's top cardiologist happened to be available to perform a heart catheterization. When he did, he saw that the damage from the first heart attack was healing. Before he pulled the catheter out of my heart, a second cardiologist came in and suggested he look at the back side of my heart. When he did, he saw that my entire artery was shredded from top to bottom. Every member of the medical team erupted in panic as the doctor placed large stents down the entire artery. My trustworthy God orchestrated that chaos into a fine-tuned symphony of perfect timing down to the minutest detail.

To be honest, I've often thought, *If only I hadn't gone for the stress test. If only I had stood up to the technician and nurse.* But I believe a sovereign God led me down that fateful path. Since that nightmare experience, God has taught me to genuinely trust Him. Through many sleepless nights and ongoing heart pain, He has strengthened and stretched my faith as I've learned to rely on Him; to believe His word when He speaks; to run to Him first and not the doctors; to

be more compassionate, more sensitive to His Spirit, more aware of His sovereignty; and to rest in His absolute protection. Even if it means the path He puts me on may end in death.

Joseph's path as he journeyed toward Dothan was about to plummet him into what seemed a bottomless pit of terror. Yet sometimes that may be exactly where God wants us. It was for Joseph. As he neared the place where his brothers were, they spotted him: *"Here comes that dreamer! . . . Come now, let's kill him and throw him into one of the cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we'll see what comes of his dreams"* (37:19–20). His brother Reuben protested and tried to save Joseph with a secret plan to have the brothers throw Joseph into a pit so that later he could come and rescue him.

As Joseph approached his brothers, did he sense something was off? Did he see the angry expressions or the cold, calculating eyes? There were no friendly greetings or brotherly hugs. Instead, the brothers quickly grabbed him, tore off the colorful robe that his father had given him, and violently threw him into an empty cistern. Then they casually sat around and ate dinner!

Stark panic must have seized Joseph as he lay crumpled in that dark, damp pit. He most likely was battered and bruised from the rough seizure and then the violent fall into the cistern. I expect, in the clear night air, he could have heard the voices of his brothers nearby. Perhaps he thought his brothers would surely relent. Had they only wanted to scare him? To teach him a lesson not to brag? Did they simply want to humble him before pulling him out to safety? Was this all a cruel joke? Did he call out each of their names, tearfully begging for their mercy and pleading for his release? Did he cry out to God for help? His desperation can only be imagined!

What is "the pit" you find yourself in? Was it the shocking news that a drunk driver took the life of your teen? Was it the sickening discovery that a business partner had swindled millions from you,

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leaving you in debt? Or the devastating revelation that your spouse was cheating on you? Or a terminal cancer diagnosis? Is it a best friend who won't speak to you anymore? Or having your identity stolen along with all your retirement savings? Were you anticipating a marriage proposal instead of a breakup?

As life-shattering and life-altering as all these very real scenarios are, none of them have ever taken the Lord by surprise. God is with you just as He was with Joseph. Your whole life is intricately mapped out by Him. Psalm 139:16 says, "All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be." He knows the path He has put you on, He knows the situation you are currently facing, and He knows how to walk with you through it. You are never too far gone, too desperate, or in too much danger to be separated from God's loving presence and sovereign purpose!

God has a plan for your future just as He had a plan for Joseph's future. In the end, Joseph would clearly give testimony to the fact that God's plan was the perfect plan for his life no matter how difficult the journey had been. His story paints a clear and comforting picture to all who find themselves in severe suffering or heavily weighted trials. Right now, if you feel like you are sitting at the bottom of a dark pit with no way out, hold on!

For Joseph, the emptiness, coldness, and darkness in the bottom of that cistern must have added to the stark realization that he was alone. Would anyone fight for him? Would anyone rescue him? Would anyone find him? Was there a chance his father would come looking for him before it was too late? Did his mind race as he tried to come up with a way to escape? No matter what Joseph's thoughts and cries were, there was nothing he could do at the moment. He could only wait. What Joseph didn't know was that waiting would become his constant companion for years to come.

Waiting can feel like torture! No one wants to wait in line at a store, on the phone with the insurance company, or at a doctor's

GOD IS WITH YOU FROM THE BEGINNING

office. While those are everyday nuisances, waiting for the results of your blood work or biopsy, for the outcome of an MRI, for the doctor to come out of the operating room with news of your loved one's surgery, for the all-clear signal as you huddle in a bomb shelter, for your spouse's salvation, or for hostages to be released . . . those situations can indeed be tortuous, almost beyond our ability to endure. Yet much of life is waiting.

God would use waiting as one of Joseph's core lessons. For us, waiting can seem like such a waste of time. We want to get on with it. We are living in an era of fast-paced everything. We want instant foods, precooked meals, faster internet, and immediate analysis. We want whatever it is now, or else we move on to something else. But God knows there are valuable lessons to learn while we wait, so He allows us to be in situations where waiting is the only option. That's the situation Joseph found himself in.¹⁶

God was working in the shadows of Joseph's life. And God is moving in the shadows of your life as well. Sometimes God allows us to be in scary, life-threatening situations where He develops our trust in Him. We must wait to see what He will do.

While Joseph crouched in the cistern, no doubt he could hear his older brother Judah talking with the other brothers. Judah, not wanting to kill Joseph, suggested a plan when he saw a caravan of merchants on their way to Egypt. His plan? Sell Joseph to them instead of murdering him. Joseph's horror must have increased a hundredfold! Sold as a slave? With no hope of ever going home? Or seeing his father again? Surely his brothers wouldn't do something so cruel, so heartless, so vicious! But they did. They sold Joseph as a slave for twenty pieces of silver. To make matters even worse, the merchants who bought him were Ishmaelites . . . his own cousins!

Life was desperately hard for Joseph, made even harder by the fact that it was his family who had betrayed him. He must have felt his life was completely out of control. Shattered. Ruined. Yet every

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step was actually being orchestrated by God in order to get Joseph to Egypt and into the position where God ultimately wanted him.

Have you ever had family turn on you? Has a family member cheated you out of your inheritance? Or stolen your business idea? Or seized the family business? Or barred you from the family home? Or isolated your parents from you? Or slandered you on social media?

Years ago there was a TV show called *The A-Team*. The main characters were a group of four former military men who had escaped from prison and were on the run because of a wrongful conviction in a military court. While on the run, they helped people using their keen military knowledge. Hannibal was the leader, and whenever they faced a problem, Hannibal would grin and say, "I've got a plan." He would then come up with the most extravagant ideas for saving people in dire situations, and it always worked! The show invariably ended with Hannibal exclaiming, "I love it when a plan comes together!"

On a grander, not-make-believe scale, God has a plan! There is nothing He can't do. He is all-powerful, all-knowing, all-seeing, and all-mighty. So when you pull your life's circumstances out of the yellow envelope and want to shout to the whole world, "I can't believe this! My life is on fire! All my careful planning and dreams are in ashes!" take a deep breath and turn to the One who knows what He's doing and who knows how to orchestrate events so they turn out for your good and His glory. At this moment, He may be in the shadows. But you can be confident He is with you. And in the end, His plan always comes together!

JESUS IN THE SHADOWS

The disciples watched in horror as the Father's beloved Son was seized, bound, accused, tried, tortured, and then nailed to a stake of execution. They must have wanted to shout, "Not this! How can this be God's plan?!" They had to wait three excruciatingly long days before they were stunningly surprised with joy! The Son's death had indeed been God's plan. Because Jesus wasn't their beloved Master and Rabbi only; He was the Lamb of God, sacrificed on the wooden altar of the cross to make atonement for their sin. They had to wait through three days of grief and horror before He rose from the dead. He was alive! Their sins were all forgiven. Heaven's gates were opened wide. The way up to the right hand of the Father had been down. Down from glory. Down to earth. Down all the way to death on the cross. But because it was God's plan, it worked, and His plan includes a glorious future for you. Hallelujah! God's plans always come together!

PRAYER

Lord of Eternity,

I worship You as One who is omniscient. You know everything. You know the beginning and the end. You are the One who is omnipresent. You are with us 24-7, and You are omnipotent. Nothing is beyond Your ability to work out and to overcome. So on this day, I choose to trust You when You are working in the shadows of my life. I know You have marked out a path for me. I choose to fix my eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of my faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.¹⁷ Don't let me miss the glorious future You have for me tomorrow because today I am walking through the valley of the shadow.

For the glory of Your great name . . . Jesus! Amen.

CHAPTER 2

GOD IS WITH YOU
WHEN SUFFERING

Genesis 39:1-6

*Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.*

PSALM 23:4

I remember going to kindergarten wearing a dress on an unusually warm November day. What makes this day stand out from all the other distant, blurry memories is that at some point during the morning, my dress snagged on the corner of something and tore open all the way down the side seam. I was horrified and deeply embarrassed!

Without telling my teacher about the tear, I ran to my classroom cubby and found my winter jacket that I had left when temperatures had been much cooler. I quickly put on the thick, puffy jacket with a faux-fur collar, zipped it up to my neck, and pretended like I was freezing while sweat poured down my face and back. Even during recess, my teacher, who didn't know what had happened, kept imploring me to take off the jacket because it was so hot. I shook my head and said no thank you.

My mom was teaching Bible study that day and was late picking me up from school. I sat on the steps of the church where I attended school (back when they didn't watch kids when school let out) and waited in the broiling sun with my coat still zipped up to cover my exposed side. When my mom finally arrived, I ran to her station wagon, bawled my eyes out, and told her what happened. She was mortified that I had dealt with what seemed like a life-shattering trauma all day by myself. She gave me a huge hug, then drove straight to the department store and bought me a new dress. It was yellow, and I loved it!

Unconfessed sin is like wearing a torn dress all day. It leaves you feeling exposed, embarrassed, and isolated before God. You can try to cover it up, but it's still there. That hidden sin needs to be brought to the light, confessed, and repented of in order to be cleansed so that you can be clothed rightly before God. King David committed adultery with Bathsheba, then covered up his sin by murdering her husband, Uriah. David wrote this agonizing testimony: "When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day

long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the LORD.’ And you forgave the guilt of my sin.”¹

Regrettably, Joseph’s brothers covered up their sin, causing years of hurt and pain in their entire family. While innocent Joseph was on the road to Egypt with his rotten Ishmaelite captors, most likely shackled, hungry, and scared, back at the crime scene, his brother Reuben found the cistern empty and was so distraught that *he tore his clothes* (37:29). But his distress was limited because he and his brothers immediately devised a plan to dip Joseph’s robe in goat’s blood and take it to their father. They wanted to convince Jacob that Joseph had been killed by an animal. Upon hearing the brothers’ story, Jacob was so heartbroken that he could not be consoled. *Then Jacob tore his clothes* (37:34). The brothers thought getting rid of Joseph would be the answer, but it only brought unbearable grief and pain to the whole family.

Sin can shred apart your life. It’s not a coincidence that Joseph had his robe ruthlessly torn from him, distressed Reuben tore his clothes when he found Joseph gone from the cistern, and Jacob tore his clothes in complete agony when he received the news and saw Joseph’s bloodied robe. Sin has a ripple-ripping effect! The pain it causes will tear through not only your own peace of mind, but it can also tear through families, marriages, businesses, communities, and even entire nations. Never think that sin in the heat of the moment won’t affect innocent people down the road, because it almost always does.

The brothers’ unchecked anger caused them to sin against Joseph, which led to a domino effect of sin and lies. This caused unfathomable suffering for Joseph for years, as well as inconsolable pain and depression for their father, Jacob. The lives of two innocent people were forever changed.

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Have you ever been like one of the brothers? Have your words or actions put someone else on the road to suffering? Are you hiding the tear in your dress under excuses, rationalization, or even denial? Is that the real reason you feel torn on the inside?

Pain can sometimes be a direct consequence of your sin, ripping your life apart in the form of sickness, a broken relationship, a lost job, a death, or any number of ways. Don't think you will skate by unnoticed. God sees, He is just, and you and I will experience the consequences. The time has come to take off the coat. Confess your sin. Run to your heavenly Father and bawl your eyes out. He will wrap His arms around you. Praise God! As King David testified, He forgives. Praise God! He restores. Praise God! Your life isn't over. Praise God!

You and I live on this side of the cross. We must look sincerely into our hearts and ask the Lord to reveal any sin that may be causing us or our innocent loved ones pain. Confess it now and repent, before it tears up your life or someone else's.

While his brothers sought to hide their evil deed, Joseph was torn away from all that he loved. The Bible doesn't give us details about his long journey to Egypt, but he would have traveled roughly three hundred miles. I wonder if he stared at the stars at night through tears and remembered the One who created them. Did he cry out to God when the rope or the shackles on his wrists made his skin raw and bloody? After days and weeks of traveling farther and farther from home, was he numb from shock? Had he expected his beloved father and his servants to come racing after the caravan to rescue him?

As Joseph entered Egypt, he must have felt his spirit collapse because all hope seemed to be gone. He had been rudely and violently severed from all that he knew and loved—his family, his home, his safety, his basic needs, his friendships, his future—apparently forever. In his spirit, he must have heard the door of all he had known slamming shut.

GOD IS WITH YOU WHEN SUFFERING

Joseph faced a critical, life-defining choice. Would he walk away from the God he had known in his father's household? Or would he trust and be faithful to God despite his very painful, brutal, and unjust circumstances?

Faithfulness is not a passive word. It requires action. For instance, we can say that we will be faithful to exercise but then sit on the couch every day. Being faithful to love, serve, and honor God when you are in physical, emotional, or mental pain is the kind of faith in action that makes people take notice. Joseph's life clearly shows he chose to be faithful to the God of his fathers—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—regardless of circumstances. And God was faithful to Joseph in every moment and in every situation.

Think about it. When this prince-like son of Jacob, great-grandson of Abraham, arrived in Egypt, was he placed on an auction block? Was he forced to stand in a slave lineup? Was he shackled to the back of a cart, or locked in a cage, like a faceless, insignificant animal to be bought? The broiling Egyptian sun must have beat down on Joseph's shoulders like the heavy weight of his circumstances. Merchants who bought and sold slaves would have milled around him. Did they stare and poke and prod? Discussing him as they would have discussed an ox or bull, speaking words in a language he didn't understand?

But the God to whom Joseph had committed himself was equally committed to him. In His infinite sovereignty He arranged for Joseph to catch the eye of Potiphar, *an Egyptian who was one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard, [who] bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him there* (39:1). Joseph's response to such humiliation was beyond belief. While he could have stomped on the ground, rattled his chains in a threatening fashion, yelled with a loud voice that he was the son of a very wealthy man in Canaan, demanded his freedom, fought his captors, spit in the face of Potiphar, and even turned his back on the God who allowed such

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injustice, Joseph did the opposite. When faced with the worst of circumstances and unimaginable suffering, Joseph humbly embraced his new life. And he thrived!

Joseph thrived because he chose to trust God, and, therefore, God was with Joseph. In the open-air slave market, God protected him from being bought by just anyone. Potiphar was an important man of wealth and power, a military man. He would have been disciplined, punctual, orderly, and intensely focused. A military man rarely leaves work at work. Potiphar's expectations of those who worked under his military command probably spilled over onto those who worked in his household. He likely demanded that everyone carry out his affairs with the same excellence and precision.

Joseph entered servitude in a house that was not frivolous or casual, sloppy or mismanaged. Potiphar's high expectations may be why he was looking for a new servant that day. Could it be that Potiphar had sold off a lazy servant who didn't live up to his rigorous demands? Whatever the reason, Potiphar's visit to the slave market was timed by God, because his eye fell on this seventeen-year-old Hebrew boy.

I expect many buyers were looking at Joseph. Joseph could have been sold to anyone with the money to buy him. He could have been sold to a brutal man who would have abused him and kept him like an animal in wretched surroundings. Instead, Joseph was placed in the house of an important official of Pharaoh's court, which most likely meant he had decent accommodations. Even so, Joseph could have chosen to live in defeat. Instead, with God's help, Joseph decided to do his best, and Potiphar soon realized he had bought wisely because everything Joseph was involved with prospered, giving evidence God was with Joseph even in his suffering.

Remember, no matter how severe your affliction is or how out of control your life seems to be or how deeply you are hurting, you are in the palm of the Lord's hand. He will guide you even if you are

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shackled, threatened, stuck with no possible way out, left all alone, and in pain. God has a purpose for your life, just as He had a purpose for Joseph's life. It was in Potiphar's house that Joseph most likely learned the Egyptian language and customs, as well as where he was trained as an excellent administrator. All of it was necessary because Joseph was on the path to God's ultimate purpose and place for him—the throne of Egypt!

God has a purpose for you, too, right where you are. Yes, He does! You and I may not understand why we are suffering so much or why events happened the way they did, but we must make the choice to faithfully trust God with our affliction.

For Joseph, no matter how humiliating it was to be sold to a man as a slave, *the LORD was with Joseph and he prospered* (39:2). God placed him in Potiphar's house and equipped him with all that he needed to succeed, even as a slave.

Never forget that God is with you! No matter if you are in a dark prison cell, a fisherman out at sea, in a thankless job in the middle of nowhere, a young mother trapped in a small house with small children, or in a miserable marriage. It's not the end of the story. God is with you. He will direct your path. Don't focus on your affliction. Focus on God and get to work! "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving."²

This brings to mind Mitch Mason's testimony.³ Mitch is currently the chaplain for the University of North Carolina football team. Over the years he has led many guys to place their faith in Christ, disciplined them, encouraged them, and challenged them through his words and his example. When my daughter Sophia was in high school, her English teacher asked the students to each invite one person to come and share about a topic of their choosing. Sophia invited Mitch, who came and shared his testimony.

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Sophia said that every kid in her class sat on the edge of their seat. By the end of his talk, every single student in the class was crying. Visibly crying. The kids had never heard anything like Mitch's story. His testimony is not one of easy upbringing or gentle circumstances. It was rough and raw, but he shared how Jesus changed his life.

A year later, Mitch began to have health problems. In the five years since, his health has greatly declined. The doctors have no answers. He is encased in constant severe pain. But Mitch is not wasting his suffering. He consistently posts on social media, sharing encouraging messages about not giving up in the fight. About staying strong in the Lord no matter what is thrown at him. He does not waste time being angry. Instead, he praises God in his pain.

Mitch's posts have encouraged me so much during multiple ER visits and through my ongoing recovery in the years since my SCAD heart attacks. In the worst of circumstances, he chooses to bring God glory in his pain. His choices make all the difference in his ability to have a positive attitude.

Attitude can make or break our day. We have to choose our attitude as we walk out of a tough doctor's appointment or when we work with a physical therapist after an injury. We choose our attitude when we live with our spouse after an argument or when we struggle with deadlines under a demanding boss. We choose our attitude when we parent a child with special needs or when we deal with a chronic illness. Our attitude can quickly spiral down into self-pity, anger, resentment, bitterness, or a complaining spirit. Or our attitude can help us soar to new heights of faith and peace and joy.

Attitude is a key element of sports. One event our family enjoys watching every summer is the Tour de France. It is a grueling, three-week bike race through the French Alps and the Pyrenees. The course takes cyclists over slippery cobblestone streets, down long stretches in sweltering heat and sometimes rain, around sharp

turns, up to dizzying heights, into terrifying descents, and all with large crowds lining the roads.

The late commentator Paul Sherwen was famous for his analysis. When a cyclist was giving it his all, pushing himself to the brink to traverse the mountain, Paul said in his British accent, “He’s got to dig deep into the suitcase of courage.”⁴ That’s true not only in cycling but in life when we are faced with difficult circumstances. We have to dig down deep into our suitcase of courage to choose a godly attitude when everything in us is screaming to just give up!

Similarly, Joseph dug deep into his suitcase of courageous faith, and *he prospered . . . in the house of his Egyptian master . . . [and] his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the Lord gave him success in everything he did (39:2–3)*. How in the world did Joseph prosper as a slave? How did he not demand his rights or scream, “This isn’t fair!”? Why didn’t he refuse to work, dissolve into tears, or curl up in a ball on the floor?

Joseph could have lashed out. He could have sabotaged Potiphar’s business and disrupted his household by way of revenge. How did he not allow a root of bitterness to take hold and infect his whole life? It was a choice! Joseph chose to faithfully work as hard as he could, completely submitting his life to God; therefore, he thrived in the worst of circumstances. His attitude reflected his absolute, rock-solid faith. Joseph lived for a higher purpose and served a greater Lord.

When you are in circumstances not of your choosing, what is your attitude? Do you choose to serve an unloving in-law with kindness? How have you responded to an unreasonable and demanding client? Do you pick the laundry up off the floor while mumbling under your breath? How patient are you with a new nurse administering an IV for the fourth time? Do you speak to coworkers respectfully when you’re tired and facing deadlines, or do you

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disparage them? Do you get out of bed with gratefulness even when experiencing chronic pain, or do you curse under your breath?

Whatever the Enemy is using to sabotage your attitude, don't let him win. Ask the Lord to give you an attitude of praise and gratitude. Even though your mind and heart may want to cry, *Foull!* or *This isn't fair!* or *Get me out of this!* His presence is right there with you. Deep physical or emotional suffering can take an enormous toll and wear down even the strongest believer. The key to thriving is to live for the God who loves you, who wants the best for you, and whose will is perfect.

Everything Joseph did in Potiphar's house prospered because God blessed his work. Potiphar soon put Joseph in charge of his whole household to the point that Potiphar had no responsibilities at home except to sit back, relax, and enjoy the prosperity and blessing Joseph brought to him and his entire household. The Bible records that *when his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD gave him success in everything he did, Joseph found favor in his eyes. . . . Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned (39:3–4).*

Instead of shirking his duties or doing just enough to get by, Joseph put his heart into all he did. In today's world, we'd say Joseph worked like he was trying to earn partnership in a law firm or win a starting position for a professional football team. Yet he was working as a slave! How could he be so selfless? He wasn't promised freedom or a bonus if he made the household prosper. He served to the very best of his ability because he was not just serving Potiphar; he was serving to honor God.

Think about your work ethic. When your heart is heavy with pain, do you perform your chores at home with energetic effort, or do you neglect them until the house is in complete disarray? At your job, do you give your best regardless of your salary or boss's approval, or is the gravitational pull to social media so strong

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it causes your work to pile up? Is scrolling through X (formerly Twitter) causing you to be mediocre at best? My grandmother hung a hand-painted sign over her kitchen sink that read, “Divine service will be conducted here three times daily.” In other words, she wanted to do even mundane household chores as unto the Lord.

Joseph surely received Potiphar’s approval and complete trust because of his work ethic and because he never gave in to self-pity. If he had become fixated on the injustice, the suffering he endured could have crippled him mentally, physically, spiritually, and emotionally. Instead, he rejected any pity party and by faith embraced the work right where God placed him. As a result, *from the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the LORD blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the LORD was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field. So he left in Joseph’s care everything he had; with Joseph in charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate (39:5–6).*

Where does God have you right now? Is it the last place you thought you’d be? If you’ve been living in bitterness and anger because your life has turned upside down, your circumstances are unbearable, or your position is humiliating and lowly, it’s not too late to change course! You can start doing all your work to the best of your ability as unto the Lord. With God’s help, like Joseph, you can prosper right where you are. Embrace where God has you and work not for your own comfort or advancement, but reach deep down into the suitcase of courage as you faithfully work for His honor and glory alone.

JESUS IN THE SHADOWS

John's gospel revealed that Jesus, the Creator of heaven and earth, came to His own—His “brothers”—and was rejected.⁵ That rejection placed Him on a path of unparalleled suffering. Not even Joseph's suffering could compare. But like Joseph, Jesus never lost His focus nor His trust in His Father. Isaiah prophetically quoted Jesus as testifying, “I have not been rebellious; I have not drawn back. I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting. Because the Sovereign LORD helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore have I set my face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame.”⁶ His path of suffering led to the cross and God's ultimate purpose for Him as the Savior of the world, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Never forget that after the cross came the crown!

Man of Sorrows, What a name!
For the Son of God who came!
Ruined sinners to reclaim.
Hallelujah! What a Savior!⁷

PRAYER

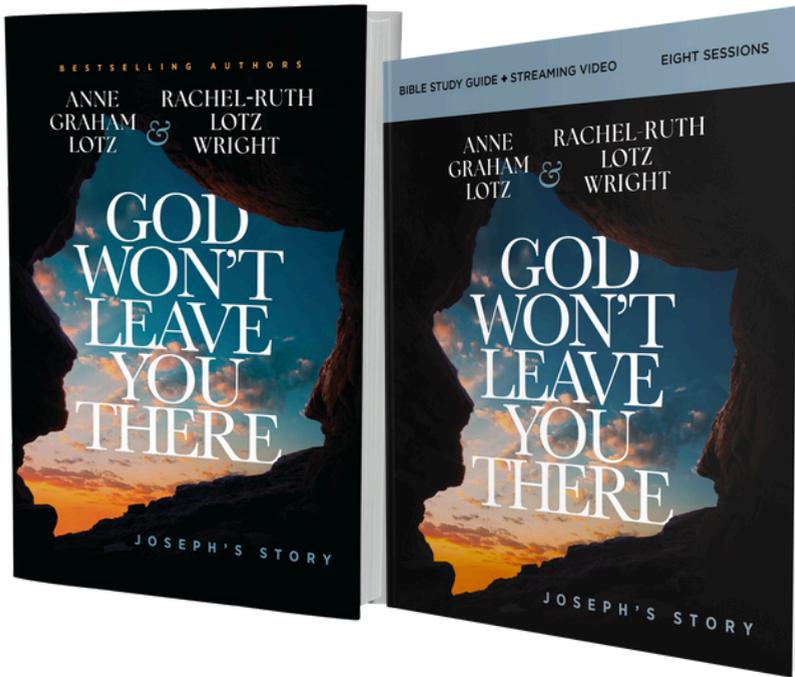
Beloved Son of the Father,

I confess that I am one of those ruined sinners You came to reclaim. Help me stay focused on You. Open my eyes to see that Your purpose for my life is not to make me prosperous, healthy, wealthy, or free of suffering. Your purpose is for me to bring You honor and glory in whatever situation I find myself. I submit to Your will for my life now with a heart filled to overflowing with praise and gratitude for Your choice to surrender Your life for me and for Your comforting, strengthening presence as I walk through the valley of suffering.

For the glory of Your great name . . . Jesus! Amen.

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**THROUGH JOSEPH'S STORY, LEARN HOW THE PATH OF
SUFFERING CAN BE THE ROAD TO YOUR GOD-GIVEN DESTINY**