



## Pause. Listen. Act. be You.

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**MONDAY 7.4.22**

*Buying Grains*

**Scripture: Genesis 42:1-5**

Joseph's brothers were in a real pickle. A Famine had swept the land, which wasn't uncommon in those days. Much like their ancestor, Abraham, they were forced to go to Egypt in search of food. Out of desperation, they left behind the family who couldn't travel, looking for a new opportunity so their family could survive.

- Have you heard a modern-day Joseph story in which a relationship was transformed after betrayal?
- Have you happened upon an "enemy" from the past? How did you treat them?

**Prayer:** Life-giving God, heal our lives, that we may acknowledge your wonderful deeds and offer you thanks from generation to generation through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**TUESDAY 7.5.22**

*Hidden Identity*

**Scripture: Genesis 42:6-8**

Joseph was in a position of great power over the brothers who had betrayed him 20 years in the past. A lifetime had passed between this day and the last time they spoke, and Joseph could have turned back into the man he was before when he was around his brothers. Joseph had a choice to make.

- How do you think Joseph should react? How would you in this situation?
- Psalm 37:1-9 tells us not to fret or seek vindication. When is that good advice and when isn't it?

**Prayer:** Faith giving God, help us remember we are valuable and important, even when the world tells us we are not. Enable to act out of security in your love, not the insecurity of our own vulnerability. Amen.

**WEDNESDAY 7. 6.22**

*Tricksies*

**Scripture: Genesis 42:9-16**

Joseph's first reaction when seeing his brothers was to weep. What was behind the weeping? Joe? Sadness? Disbelief? Either way, Joseph's crying jag set him free to craft a sneaky plan to see his father. Joseph is eager to forgive and restore the family, not just for his generation, but for a dysfunction that permeated the earlier generations of Jacob/Esau and Isaac/Ishmael. He was generous and gracious where his ancestors chose to continue division and hatred.

- Have you ever put a stop to a bad situation which had gone on for generations? How did you find the courage to do so?
- How do you see God at work in Joseph's generosity?

**Prayer:** God of all who wander in the wilderness, you go before us as beacon and guide. Lead us through all danger, sustain us through all desolation, and bring us home to the land you have prepared for us. Amen.

**THURSDAY 7.7.22*****On Guilt*****Scripture: Genesis 42:17-24**

Joseph's generosity caused his brothers to become aware of their guilt. We don't know if the brothers ever felt bad about selling Joseph before now but faced with a then unknown Egyptian official who showed kindness to their desperation, the brothers finally fully saw how awful they'd been to Joseph. Reuben, of course, couldn't help but say "I told you so" and Gideon, who didn't have anything to do with the original plot, was held prisoner.

- Joseph is playing a nasty game and trick on his brothers. Should he feel guilty about that or did his brothers deserve it?
- When have you chosen the least bad option? How did it turn out? What might you do different next time?

**Prayer:** Redeeming Sustainer, visit your people and pour out your strength and courage upon us, that we may hurry to make you welcome not only in our concern for others, but by serving them generously and faithfully in your name. Amen.

**FRIDAY 7.8.22*****Returning the Silver*****Scripture: Genesis 42:25-35**

One of my favorite scenes in *Les Miserables*, the musical, is when the priest gives Jean Valjean the silver he was trying to steal. A prisoner released without any resources, Jean is an honest man who was forced to steal – first bread, then the priest's dishes – to eat in a France which didn't care for its poor. When the priest claims to have given the silver to Jean, this act of kindness sets him free to become a businessman, adoptive father, and savior of a revolutionary. This act of forgiveness set everyone free and changed the course of at least three people's lives.

- Is there a time when you have been more generous with your forgiveness than the person deserved?
- When was the last time you received a gracious forgiveness from someone else? What did you do with that forgiveness?

**Prayer:** Lord, sometimes we think we cannot do what is needed on our own. We studied for a test but fear we don't know all the answers. We did not study and know we don't know the answers. We have been assigned a task we fear we cannot do. We are tempted to cheat or plagiarize. When we are scared, help us not to be tempted by the whispers of sin. Amen. - Prayer by Carolyn Brown

**SATURDAY 7.9.22*****Stratigery*****Scripture: 1 Peter 1:3-23**

First Peter is a letter of encouragement and strategy. Yes, it encourages Christian membership to extend mutuality (1 Pet 3:8) and hospitality (4:8–10) to each other. Yes, it exhorts them to brace for the inevitability of trials, attacks, and persecution (1:6, 2:19; 4:19). Yes, it stresses the importance of the community understanding its identity as a Christian race, priesthood, nation, and people (2:9). Without question, 1 Peter champions Christian community and promotes collective resilience. But it also encourages accommodation. 1 Peter is not passive, but intentional. The letter writer pens encouragements to counteract how its Christian readers are treated by non-Christians who target the collective from outside it. 1 Peter, we leave behind experiences of Christianity as normative for societal arrangement and expression, as is the case for Western social and religious contexts. We must travel to the margins of an ancient society, established on social and political theologies of polytheism, military conquest, group-oriented identities, and hierarchy. First Peter is addressed from the margins to the margins.

- How does a faith which sees itself outside of and/or apart from mainstream society behave differently?
- 1 Peter tells us our decisions social decisions should be made with a God frame of mind. How might you put that into practice in your life?

**Prayer:** God of the unexpected, help us to see you in the uncertain of the not-quite-directed moments of our lives. Open us up to have a thankful heart.