**Learn in Community**

 Small Group Study

**Volume Overview**

**How does God help me overcome?**

For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength. ([Philippians 4:13](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Php4.13))

*Life can be full of challenges. Thankfully, when we make the decision to live for God, we can have confidence that we’re no longer walking through life alone. Because God wants us to succeed, He commits to being with us every step of the way. In a challenging and chaotic world, God offers His help to us throughout every difficult circumstance.*

*He knows that we’ll face fears, decisions, and emotions we don’t feel equipped to handle. The good news is that He has a plan for every fear, every worry, every emotion, every sin, and every decision we face. God’s desire is for us to live free from the worries of our world, so we can enjoy living fully for Him. When we don’t know what to do, we can turn to God for the answer. He will help us overcome every challenge.*

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| **First time leading *Learn* for Adults? Check out the** [***Facilitator Guide***](https://0b769b0ed3569ef9d18b-f88d8272f61086866d50d048b43ef630.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/sites/biblengagementproject/Listen_Facilitator_Guide.pdf). |

To access session content and videos from a computer, visit: [BibleEngagementProject.com/downloads](https://bibleengagementproject.com/downloads)

**Engage**

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| **QUESTION**Which do you think is worse: loneliness or poverty? |

In our increasingly interconnected world, we often seem to be more isolated than ever. Technology and science make discoveries every day to supposedly make our life richer. Yet, we seem to be relationally worse off as a society—feeling less connected and less loved.

Mother Teresa—no stranger to human suffering—once said, “As far as I’m concerned, the greatest suffering is to feel alone, unwanted, unloved. The greatest suffering is also having no one, forgetting what an intimate, truly human relationship is, not knowing what it means to be loved, not having a family or friends.” Living in India, Mother Teresa saw unimaginable suffering caused by hunger and poverty every day. Yet with piercing clarity, she understood that far worse than an empty stomach from lack of food is an empty soul who lacks connection with God and others.

Dealing with loneliness is a part of life for all of us. God designed us to be connected with Him and others. He can equip us not only to survive times of loneliness, but to thrive. As we’ll see in the next part of Joseph’s story in Genesis, God is with us and can accomplish incredible things, even in our loneliest moments.

**Watch**

As we watch this video, think about your answer to this question: What was one of the loneliest times in your life?



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| **QUESTION**What was one of the loneliest times in your life? |

**Consider What the Bible Says**

We know that because Joseph honored God, even in challenging circumstances, God also honored Joseph ([Genesis 39:2](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ge39.2), [5](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ge39.5)). After being sold to traders on their way to Egypt and ending up as Potiphar’s slave, Joseph was falsely accused of a crime and imprisoned. That’s where we pick up the part of his story we’re about to read.

What we’ll discover is a practical way forward during times of isolation in our own life. Joseph’s experience shows us that being alone doesn’t need to lead to debilitating loneliness. If we’re open to what God wants to accomplish during difficult times, we can experience God in powerful ways and help others do the same.

**Trust God’s Purposes When You’re Lonely**

Read [Genesis 40:1–8](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ge40.1-8).

Joseph could have focused on the fact that he was in jail for a crime he didn’t commit. Most of us could easily let something like that consume us, leading us to wallow in our unwanted fate. But Joseph took a different route. He chose to believe that God was with him and had purpose for his pain and difficulty.

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| **QUESTION**Share a time in your life when your focus was on your difficult circumstances rather than on God. |

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| **QUESTION**What are some practical ways you keep your focus on God when circumstances are difficult? |

**Stay Close to God When You’re Lonely**

Read [Genesis 40:9–19](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ge40.9-19).

Joseph was separated from his family and homeland, but his connection with God was as strong as ever. Despite all the reasons Joseph had to be consumed by anger and bitterness, he chose to focus on God. Joseph kept his heart and ears open to God’s voice. We can do the same. We can tune out the lies our spiritual enemy wants us to believe when we’re facing loneliness and tune into what God is speaking and doing in our life.

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| **QUESTION**What could it have potentially cost Joseph if he had allowed himself to be consumed by bitterness in his situation? |

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| **QUESTION**Why is it so hard for us to tune out negative thoughts and focus instead on the truth that God is with us and working on our behalf? |

**God Does Not Forget You When You’re Lonely**

Read [Genesis 40:20–23](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ge40.20-23).

God had more extraordinary things in store for Joseph, but the time hadn’t come. What must have felt like an unwelcome waiting period was actually a grace period. Joseph still needed to learn some lessons that would help him accomplish what God had been planning all along.

Loneliness loses its grip on us when we realize that our circumstances aren’t about us, but about what God is accomplishing. It’s not an easy thing to learn, but it’s vital to stay the course and arrive at God’s destination for our life.

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| **QUESTION**What can make unwanted times of waiting different from other challenges in our life? |

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| **QUESTION**Do you know someone who has greater trust in God than you do? What do you see in them that you could begin to incorporate into your walk with God to increase your confidence in Him? |

**Did You Know?**

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| *Many scholars agree that what really caused the imprisonment of both the cupbearer and the baker was a failed assassination attempt on the Pharaoh. Both positions were integral to the preparation of food for the Pharaoh, arguably the most powerful leader in the world at that time. Their positions were created to protect the Pharaoh. If an attempt to poison Pharaoh ever took place, both positions could be held responsible. In this instance, it appears that regardless of the attempt being foiled, the baker was either held responsible or actually was responsible. He was impaled for his actions or lack of protecting his leader.* |

**Reflect**

**God Helps Me When I Feel Alone**

Loneliness and the unhealthy thoughts that can accompany it can consume our life if we aren’t careful. When we allow thoughts of being abandoned by others, or especially by God, to gain traction in our mind, they can be difficult to stop. Joseph won the battle in his mind by keeping his focus on what God was trying to accomplish rather than on his present circumstances in prison.

What Joseph did to defeat unhealthy thoughts isn’t only for biblical characters and “super” Christians. Ordinary people can accomplish that victory too. The key to following in Joseph’s footsteps is remembering that God *is* with us—even if we feel alone. In this struggle, our faith must triumph over our feelings.

**Listen to God**

Let’s pause and listen to what God might want to say to us about what we have read and shared. Be silent for a few moments and reflect on the following questions. Respond to the one that most resonates with what God is saying to you now. Then complete the others during Day 1 of your devotion time this week.

**Personal Reflection Questions**

*Record your answers to the following questions in the space provided or in your personal journal.*

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| **QUESTION**At what times in your life has loneliness been a struggle? What feelings did you experience during those times? |

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| **QUESTION**Looking back, what purposes do you feel God may have had in your loneliness that were difficult for you to understand at the time? |

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| **QUESTION**Is someone in your life discovering great purpose from God in their pain? How can you apply what you’ve observed about them to your own life and struggle with loneliness? |

**Activate**

When we feel lonely, one of the easiest lies to believe is that we’re the only one struggling. That’s not true. People all around us are fighting this battle. The good news is that God can use us to help others just like He did with Joseph during his years in prison.

**Challenge**

Take a few moments to think about others in your life. Who among your friends, co-workers, family, and neighbors might be lonely? One of the best ways to combat your loneliness is to help someone else conquer theirs. Not only does it lift you to be used by God, but it will also give you a welcome change of pace. You might even gain a new perspective about your situation.

**Prayer Requests**

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| Note any requests from the group and remember to pray for them during the week. |

Before next time, continue to spend time in God’s Word with the personal devotions.

**Learn on Your Own**

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| *Before you begin each devotion, pray and ask God to speak to you through His Word. Record your answers to the following questions in the space provided or in your personal journal.* |

**Day 1: God Helps Me with Loneliness**

Read [Genesis 40:1–23](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ge40.1-23).

Look back over Learn in Community and complete your responses to the Personal Reflection Questions. Plan how to complete the Activate component if you haven’t already done so. If time permits, reread the Scripture too.

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| **QUESTION**What is God saying to you about finding purpose in seasons of loneliness in your life? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 2: God Helps Us to Be Content**

Read [Hebrews 13:1–6](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Heb13.1-6).

Being content is challenging under any circumstance, but even more so in our culture of comparison. When we feel alone, we tend to magnify those comparisons. The temptation to compare our life with others reaches a new height. In verse [5](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Heb13.5), the writer of Hebrews shows us the key is not financial security or anything else we could put our trust in, but that God’s presence is sustaining us.

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| **QUESTION**How have you seen people become stuck in life by comparing their circumstances to others? |

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| **QUESTION**What’s an example of how you have done this in your own life? |

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| **QUESTION**How can you seek God’s help to overcome the temptation to compare yourself with others and learn to be more content in your circumstances? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 3: God Will Guide Us**

Read [Proverbs 3:1–8](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Pr3.1-8).

Staying the course is complicated when we feel we’re without direction. Seasons of loneliness can strain our ability to trust that God is leading us somewhere. Seeking God’s will each day not only helps us maintain our trust like Joseph did, but it can also increase our faith that God sees us.

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| **QUESTION**Who is someone in your life who consistently seeks God’s will for their life? How do you see that discipline impacting their faith in God? |

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| **QUESTION**Where do you feel God is leading you? What can you do to seek His will more effectively? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 4: God Never Grows Tired**

Read [Isaiah 40:25–31](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Is40.25-31).

Our energy and strength are finite. We have to rest one-third of every day just to survive. It’s easy to forget that we need to renew our strength spiritually as often as we do physically. Thankfully, God’s strength is infinite. On no day is God not at full capacity. The good news for us is that He makes His strength available to us. He can renew us each day.

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| **QUESTION**What are the areas of life where you need God’s strength the most? |

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| **QUESTION**What is your daily routine for renewing your spiritual strength by tapping into God’s infinite energy? How can you adapt your habits to take advantage of the energy and strength God is offering? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 5: God Sees the Lonely**

Read [Psalm 68:1–6](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ps68.1-6).

We can easily feel unseen when we’re alone. The Psalmist reminds us that God not only sees us when we’re lonely, but He takes action. God places those who need companionship in families. As Christians, one family God has prepared for us is our local church. That’s why it’s so important to find a church home. A church family may just be the answer to many of our prayers.

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| **QUESTION**How does the truth that God places lonely people in families encourage you? |

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| **QUESTION**How can you connect with your spiritual family—the church you attend—in a more significant way? |