

OCTOBER  
2022

GRACEPOINT CHURCH



# Getting in SHAPE

HOME GROUP &  
DEVOTIONAL  
MATERIAL

DISCOVERING WHO GOD MADE YOU TO BE



## Sunday Sermon: Employing every experience – Ian France – 30.10.2022



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27 seconds ago

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### Scripture: Genesis 50:15-20

Open your mind and heart as you read the passage of Scripture aloud and then again quietly to yourself. Listen for God's word to you.

Spend some time in worship.

### Observation

Joseph had led an eventful life. With ten older step-brothers it can't have been easy as a child –

especially when he appeared to have ideas of grandeur and told his big brothers they would bow to him in deference. As a result of this and the fact that he was obviously their father's favourite son, the brothers decided to get rid of him – firstly to murder him, and then, taking advantage of a passing caravan of traders, to sell him into slavery.

But God had given Joseph the dreams he had dreamt. And God saw him through the next 25 years, in good times and bad. Joseph had many positive experiences as he rose to the top of Potiphar's household. But he had some bad ones too as he was unjustly accused of having an affair with Potiphar's wife and was imprisoned as a result. However God used even these bad experiences to hone Joseph's gifts so he could rise to the top of the hierarchy in Egypt and save many lives, including those of the brothers who had treated him so badly.



When Jacob, Joseph's father, died the brothers were afraid that at last Joseph would take retribution for the way they had treated him. It is possible they made up the story about Jacob's wishes in an attempt to protect themselves, knowing Joseph would honour his father's request. Perhaps Joseph wept out of grief for his father – or from sadness that his brothers still thought so little of him and did not trust the man God had made him to be.

Joseph knew whatever had happened between him and his brothers, it was not his place to take revenge. That was God's task. If God wanted to punish them He would do so, but Joseph would not be God's channel of revenge. Joseph was matter of fact. He told his brothers that he knew they had meant to do him wrong. But he then assured them that God had used all that had happened to him to bring about good – for them and for many people.

Whilst Joseph did not have Paul's words which he wrote to the Romans '*And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose,*' (Romans 8:28) he did know the truth of Paul's statement even in his own life so many generations before Paul wrote them.

Joseph had learned that, whatever life had thrown at him, God was in control and He brought about good from every situation. As we look back, in hindsight, it is evident that if Joseph had not been in Egypt in a position of power, his family – God's people – would have died in the famine. Even if some had survived, they would have been absorbed into the surrounded Canaanite tribes and lost their identity. It was only by coming to Egypt that their family line was preserved and so they were able to become a distinct nation.

Joseph's life history made him into the man God intended him to be and placed him in a position of authority that enabled him to save his family. It was from this family the nation of Israel grew; and from them the Messiah came. In the good times and the bad, Joseph's experiences placed him exactly where God needed him to be and made him exactly the person God required to protect His people and make their survival possible.

#### *Icebreaker:*

What event in history can you think of that seemed to be bad to you when it happened, but turned out for good? Briefly explain it.

#### **Application**

- When were you first aware of God speaking to you? How old were you? What did it mean to you at the time? How did it affect your life?
- How does God speak to you now? How do you know it is God? Do you give God time to speak – and do you listen? Can you see His hand in your life, guiding you, even if the direction is different to the one you had intended to take? If this is not happening now, share a time when it has happened and when good came out of an apparently neutral or bad situation.
- When have you heard God speak to you or how did He help you when you were going through a painful experience? Looking back now, can you see His hand of grace upon your life? Do you struggle to understand why this pain happened – even today? If you are still in a time of pain, are you aware of God's presence with you through this time? How can the group help you in this struggle?

- Where do you think you could use your experiences in life to help others? How can what you have been through help someone else, in the church environment or elsewhere? What have you learned (through actual experience or through studying how others have coped with a similar situation) that you can share with other people? Whether positive or negative experiences, how can you use them for good?
- Spend a few moments in silence. What is God saying to you about how He wants you to use your experiences for His glory? Share anything you hear from Him with the group.
- How can the group help you with the struggles you have mentioned during this session?

### **Prayer**

Pray for one another in regard to the issues that have been raised during your discussion time, and in regard to other needs of the group.

### **Service**

Be accountable to one another that you will go through the opportunities for serving at your church and pray about where God wants you to use your S.H.A.P.E. for His Kingdom and His glory. Share what you have heard Him say to you when you next meet.

### **Bibliography**

<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/genesis-50/> <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/genesis-50/>