

## LifeGroup Discussion | Working in the Waiting | Week of 1/12

**Main Passage:** Genesis 39–40

**Supporting Passages:** Romans 8:35–39; 2 Corinthians 12:8–10; Revelation 21:1–4

**Main Idea/Question:** If God is present with us in the prison, how do we look for Him and take comfort that He's there?

**Culture Code Emphasis:** Presence Over Presence

### **Before LifeGroup**

- Review your LifeGroup Values.
- Ask yourself—"Which of these on-ramps (PORCH TALK, LIVING ROOM, AFTER GLOW) best reflects our values and the needs of our group this week?"
- Then start your discussion in that section. Week to week may change what section you resource for your meeting.

### **On-Ramps**

- **Porch Talk**—*use these questions over food or casual interactions. Feel free to make them more personable based on the contents of the sermon being discussed.*
- **Living Room**—*use these questions in an environment when your group is 'all in' and had the opportunity to attend or listen to the sermon prior to LifeGroup.*
- **After Glow**—*use this section if your group wants to dig deeper or as follow-up email/text messages or conversations that come up after your time as a group.*

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**PORCH TALK**—*use these questions over food or casual interactions. Feel free to make them more personable based on the contents of the sermon being discussed.*

What did you hear on Sunday?

Did you learn anything new?

Do you have any questions or was there anything you didn't understand?

How can we take what we've discussed into our week?

How can I be praying or holding you accountable in response to what you heard?

### ***More Scriptures to Consider:***

*Psalm 121:1-8; John 16:33; Romans 8:18; Galatians 6:1-9; 2 Timothy 1:7-10; James 1:2-4*

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**LIVING ROOM**—use these questions in an environment when your group is ‘all in’ and had the opportunity to attend or listen to the sermon prior to LifeGroup.

### Discussion

**To Know/To Share:** *Joseph had many dreams that—logically interpreted—would result in his leadership and good fortune. Instead, he finds himself in prison forgotten and wrongly accused.*

**Read:** Read Genesis 39:2–3, 21, 23 and 40:23

**Say:** Wherever Joseph went, the Lord was with him. Despite God’s presence, Joseph still landed in difficult situations. And while God did remember him, we see in Genesis 40:23 that man didn’t.

**Ask:** Have you ever been in a situation where, intellectually, you knew God was with you, but your circumstances made you wonder if He had forgotten you?

**Read:** 2 Corinthians 12:8–10

**Say:** Paul was one of the most influential Christians of the New Testament. And yet, he faced hardship and disappointment. Despite this, his words to the Corinthians were, “for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

**Ask:** Is it easy for you to join with Paul’s words and say, “I delight in weakness”?

**Read:** Revelation 21:1–4

**Say:** It’s important to note that Paul repeatedly asked God to take his “thorn in the flesh” away (2 Corinthians 12:8). Though God is present in our hardships, His ultimate plan will wipe every tear from our eye, and pain and mourning will be no more.

**Ask:** Would you be willing to share a hardship in your life so that we can be praying with you that the Lord would make His presence very real in your life even while you wait for relief or the peace to endure?

### Application

**Say:** Read together Psalm 121.

<sup>1</sup> I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from?

<sup>2</sup> My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.

<sup>3</sup> He will not let your foot slip—he who watches over you will not slumber;

<sup>4</sup> indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

<sup>5</sup> The Lord watches over you—the Lord is your shade at your right hand;

<sup>6</sup> the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.

<sup>7</sup> The Lord will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life;

<sup>8</sup> the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.

### Close in Prayer

**Sample:** Father, we thank You that You are always present with us. Help us to be present with those around us who face hardship. May we be present with our words, our actions, and our prayers. In Your Son’s name, Amen.

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**AFTER GLOW**—*use this section if your group wants to dig deeper or as follow-up email/text messages or conversations that come up after your time as a group.*

**Say:** One of our culture codes is *Presence Over Preference*. When it comes to the birth of a baby or someone who has a minor surgery, it seems we are quick to respond enthusiastically with our presence and resources. But when someone faces a chronic, long-term, or even terminal diagnosis it can be difficult to be present. We simply don't know how to respond or how to *keep* responding.

**Ask:** Do you agree with this summary? If so, how have you seen it played out in your own life?

**Follow-Up:** If you disagree, how have you been able to lean into the long-term pain and difficulties of another person in order to be the present body of Christ in their lives?

**Read:** Romans 8:35–39

**Say:** As Christians, we live in an already-not-yet state of being. We have already received Christ's forgiveness, but we still find ourselves entangled in our sins and the sins of others. We are new creations longing for a new creation that hasn't yet been redeemed.

**Ask:** Would anyone like to share a struggle you presently face that feels like a prison—where you know that God is present and that it won't always be your reality but for now this is where you live.

**Say:** In her book, *Prayer in the Night*, Tish Harrison Warren writes, "The theology of the cross teaches that the kingdom of God is topsy-turvy—that God is most present in the darkest moments of our lives."

**Ask:** Do you agree? Have you found this to be true in your own life?

**Further Reflection:** Listen/watch one of the following:

- Listen to this episode from the **Come and Listen** podcast. "No one is nearer to you than the keeper of you. <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/come-listen/id1723891661?i=1000673416467>
- Read this article about the Songs of Ascents. "The overarching theme of the songs of ascents is the very presence of God. <https://thedailygraceco.com/blogs/the-daily-grace-blog/what-are-the-songs-of-ascents-and-why-do-they-matter-to-us-today>

**Thoughts to Chew On:**

- "I can, with one eye squinted, take it all as a blessing." —Flannery O' Connor
- "There is no darkness into which he has not descended. He knows the texture and taste of everything I fear." —Tish Warren Harrison, *Prayers in the Night*

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