

February 28/29, 2004

## Study Questions

*Fear or Faith (Part 2): A Study in the Life of Joseph*

### Forgotten in Prison

Genesis 40:1-23

Pastor Bryan Clark

#### Opening Discussion

1. Have you ever experienced circumstances in your life that either stretched your faith or exposed a weak faith? Circumstances that caused you to wonder why God would allow that in your life? Share your story.
2. Are we disappointed with God sometimes because God lets us down or because we have unrealistic expectations of God? What should we expect from God?

#### Bible Study

1. Review Joseph's story so far. How many of his trials appear to be his fault?

What must he have been thinking in prison? (note 40:14,15)

2. Chapter 40:1 opens with the words: "Then it came about after these things..." This is a time reference. Joseph was 17 when he was kidnapped and sold and is 28 years old in chapter 40. We may read the events in this story quickly but must remember these unfair circumstances have unfolded over 11 years. Why is it that the hardest trials are the ones that linger year after year? What happens to our faith over time?
3. Think about Joseph's statement regarding the dreams of the baker and cupbearer as it related to his own dreams (v. 8). He obviously believed God is sovereign and in control of circumstances, yet his own circumstances could hardly have made any sense. What do you believe caused Joseph to keep such a strong faith in the midst of his circumstances?
4. Joseph is a man of faith, but he clearly wants out of prison. How hard would it be to get your hopes up again, only to be forgotten for two more years? How do we manage the emotional roller coaster that often accompanies unfair circumstances?

Why would God do this to him? Why would God get Joseph's hopes up, only to make him wait two more years?

5. Obviously by the dreams of the baker and cupbearer and fulfillment of the dreams, God is in control of circumstances. Yet, at this point in the story Joseph's circumstances made no sense. How do we sort out what God can do with what He actually chooses to do?

How does this affect our faith? Does the true faith walk force us to rise above explanations and reasons? Why or why not?

## **Application**

1. In what practical ways does Joseph's story help you cope with current circumstances?  
What is God teaching you about Himself through the Joseph story?
2. What 3 specific things can you do to prepare for the trials that may await you tomorrow?  
What will be necessary to have Joseph-like faith?
3. Pray for one another, especially for those struggling with current trials.