ICE BREAKER

What's something you tried that turned out completely different than you expected? (Food, activity, trip, hobby, etc.)

LOOK BACK

- Have you ever been through a time where it didn't feel like God was with you?
- Looking back on that time, can you now see ways God was with you that you couldn't feel at the time?

LOOK UP

- Read Genesis 39:2-4. Joseph went from being thrown into a pit to slavery, yet he continued to honor God. How can you honor God where you are today?
- Read Genesis 39:20-23. Even in prison, "the Lord was with Joseph." Are your circumstances and feelings reliable indicators of God's presence? Why or why not?
- Read Genesis 50:19-21 and James 1:17. Why do you think Joseph trusted God despite difficult circumstances along the way? How does his faith shape your view of God when life changes?

LOOK AHEAD

- Where is your "pit or prison" right now, and what would honoring God look like there this week, before anything changes?
- If you're in a season of blessing, how could God use your influence to help someone who is stuck?

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Honor God where you are. Each morning this week, pray "God, give me enough for today," and name one way you can honor him in your current situation.

SUMMARY

In 2 Corinthians 4:8-9, Paul writes that we are hard pressed but not crushed, perplexed but not in despair, persecuted but not abandoned, struck down but not destroyed. "Struck down" is a word from wrestling and combat, and "destroyed" means perishing, lost for good. Paul's picture is a knockdown, not a knockout. But what is the plan when you aren't sure you have it in you to get up again? When you feel stuck in a job, a relationship, or a financial bind, you either turn your back on God or you honor God where you are.

Joseph's story is one of trusting that God is with you even when your circumstances say otherwise. Thrown in a pit by jealous brothers and sold into slavery, he honored God in Potiphar's house. Falsely accused and thrown in prison, he honored God there too. Forgotten by the cupbearer for two more years, he kept waiting. Scripture says four times that "the Lord was with Joseph," but did it feel like it? Be careful about trusting your feelings. Thirteen years after the pit, Joseph stood before Pharaoh and gave God the credit. He named his son Ephraim because God made him "fruitful in the land of my suffering." He didn't wait to leave Egypt to honor God. When his brothers finally bowed before him, he chose grace over revenge: "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good." If you are in a season of blessing, use your influence to bless someone who is stuck. If you are stuck, honor God where you are until he provides a way into the next season. Like the hymn "Great Is Thy Faithfulness," God does not change like shifting shadows, and his mercies are new every morning.

MAIN TAKEAWAY

Honor God where you are. Our circumstances and feelings may shift, but God never does.

CONVERSATION TIPS

- **Listen Well.** Give others your full attention, and listen to understand rather than to respond.
- **Share Honestly.** Be open about your thoughts and questions; none of us have all the answers.
- **End with prayer.** Share requests around the group, then close your time together in prayer.