

Personal Problems

TEXT: Genesis 37:3-36; Psalm 105:16-22; 1 Peter 4:12-19

KEY VERSE: For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. — 2 Corinthians 4:17

Receiving salvation is not a guarantee that the Christian will face no difficulties. In fact, the Apostle Paul exhorted early Christians to continue in the faith, cautioning them that “we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22). But for those who remain true to God there is a deliverance and an answer to every troublesome problem. In this lesson we see how the hand of the Lord was over Joseph and moved in his behalf though he faced hard trials and personal difficulties. His story has been an example to Christians through the ages.

1. After reading the Genesis portion of our text, list the problems that were facing Joseph at this time in his life.

2. The problems faced by Joseph seemed to revolve, for the most part, around his relationships with other people—just as the problems facing us often do. The Scriptures give us many guidelines which direct our responses and reactions to others. Look up the following verses and note the attitudes we should maintain toward others to alleviate or minimize differences.

Romans 12:10

Romans 12:14

Galatians 5:14

Galatians 6:1

Colossians 3:13

3. What was Joseph’s response when his father asked him to journey to Shechem to inquire after his brothers’ welfare? In view of the fact that his brothers hated and envied him, what was notable about Joseph’s answer and what lesson can we learn from it?

4. In Genesis 37:15, we find Joseph facing a completely different type of problem. Identify his difficulty, and explain how a solution was provided.

5. Verses 19 and 20 reflect the contempt Joseph's brothers felt for him. As Christians today, we must sometimes face contempt for ourselves and for our beliefs. How are we to react to this and what will occur if we follow the admonition given in Scripture? See Matthew 5:11-12 and 1 Peter 2:19-20.

6. God, in His infinite wisdom, may allow trials to come for various reasons. Looking at Psalm 105:16-17, for what reason did Joseph have to go to Egypt?

7. Hebrews 12:11 brings out another reason we may need to go through some times of trial and testing. Identify the reason and explain what benefit it will bring.

8. In 1 Peter 4:19 there is a qualifying phrase which defines to whom this instruction is given. What is the phrase and why is it important?