



WEEK 3

HIS WISDOM IS PERFECT

Deep within Pharaoh's prison, unjustly confined for alleged offenses against Potiphar, Joseph finds himself sharing quarters with the royal cupbearer and baker. When both men are plagued by vivid dreams, Joseph, recognized as "chief prisoner" and a man of wisdom, steps into a new role: interpreter of dreams and bearer of difficult truths. The Lord of perfect wisdom helps him decipher their unsettling visions, revealing vastly different fates. This act of interpreting dreams, though seemingly small, marks a pivotal shift, launching Joseph on a path that will ultimately lead him from the depths of the prison to the high courts of Egypt and into the presence of Pharaoh himself. But even that destiny will have to wait a little longer.

THE SCRIPTURE: GENESIS 40:1-23

¹ Some time after this, the cupbearer³ of the king of Egypt and his baker committed an offense against their lord the king of Egypt. ² And Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker, ³ and he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison where Joseph was confined. ⁴ The captain of the guard appointed Joseph to be with them, and he attended them. They continued for some time in custody. ⁵ And one night they both dreamed—the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were confined in the prison—each his own dream, and each dream with its own interpretation. ⁶ When Joseph came to them in the morning, he saw that they were troubled. ⁷ So he asked Pharaoh's officers who were with him in custody in his master's house, "Why are your faces downcast today?" ⁸ They said to him, "We have had dreams, and there is no one to interpret them." And Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Please tell them to me." ⁹ So the chief cupbearer told his dream to Joseph and said to him, "In my dream there was a vine before me,¹⁰ and on the vine there were three branches. As soon as it budded, its blossoms shot forth, and the clusters ripened into grapes. ¹¹ Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand." ¹² Then Joseph said to him, "This is its interpretation: the three branches are three days.

³ **cupbearer** - In the ancient Near East, cupbearers were high-ranking officials responsible for ensuring the king's safety by tasting his drinks for poison.

¹³ In three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your office, and you shall place Pharaoh's cup in his hand as formerly, when you were his cupbearer. ¹⁴ Only remember me, when it is well with you, and please do me the kindness to mention me to Pharaoh, and so get me out of this house. ¹⁵ For I was indeed stolen out of the land of the Hebrews, and here also I have done nothing that they should put me into the pit." ¹⁶ When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was favorable, he said to Joseph, "I also had a dream: there were three cake baskets on my head, ¹⁷ and in the uppermost basket there were all sorts of baked food for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating it out of the basket on my head." ¹⁸ And Joseph answered and said, "This is its interpretation: the three baskets are three days. ¹⁹ In three days Pharaoh will lift up your head—from you!—and hang you on a tree. And the birds will eat the flesh from you." ²⁰ On the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, he made a feast for all his servants and lifted up the head of the chief cupbearer and the head of the chief baker among his servants. ²¹ He restored the chief cupbearer to his position, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand. ²² But he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them. ²³ Yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

LIFEGROUP QUESTIONS: WEEK 3

Your summary of this week's passage in one memorable sentence:

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. What's the one big question about the world or existence that you'd most love to have answered?
2. In your own life, is there a particular mystery or struggle you've faced where you'd really want to understand God's purpose?

DIVING DEEPER

3. As you carefully read the passage, pay close attention to the characters. Who do you think are the four most important people? Using the previous pages take some time to indicate in the text where are their names mentioned.
4. Remember that Genesis 39 closed by noting God presence and blessing with Joseph. How do you see that playing out in the first eight verses of Genesis 40?
5. Consider Joseph's words in verse 8: "Do not all interpretations belong to God?" Try to rephrase that in a manner that is clearer to you. How does this statement demonstrate how much Joseph has matured in the midst of his captivity? According to James 1:5, how are we to have insight into the wisdom of God?

6. In verses 9–19, we read of the third and fourth dreams mentioned in the Joseph narrative. Use the chart below to quickly jot down the details:

<i>Verses</i>	<i>Dreamer</i>	<i>Dreams</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
9–15			
16–19			

7. We get a glimpse of Joseph’s personal feelings in verses 14–15. What does his request tell you? Can we relate to Joseph’s plea to the cupbearer in your current life situations?
8. What do you think Joseph was feeling on day 3 when he got news that the chief cupbearer had been restored to his position, but had not remembered Joseph’s request?
9. In the face of the cupbearer’s forgetfulness, how does Joseph’s story encourage us to put our hope in God and not in people?
10. Joseph acknowledges God’s wisdom in verse 8, yet faces this bitter disappointment at the end of the chapter. How might forgetting God’s wisdom negatively impact him in the future he now faces, and conversely, how could remembering it benefit him for the days ahead?

11. Why is it so easy to doubt the wisdom of God when it comes to the circumstances we face our lives?
12. What according to Proverbs 1:7 is the starting point of all wisdom? Why is this the very first and necessary step? Do we see any clues that this is in place in Joseph's life?