

We love remembering our good experiences. We hate remembering our bad times. We go to great lengths to forget the people, places, things, and activities that have hurt us.

What does God want you to do with your painful past?

1. Own it. Your past is... your past. It is part of your life story. So, quit moaning about your past and start owning your past.
2. Place it. Your past is... past. It cannot affect you without your permission. So, quit basing your life on your past and start placing your past where it belongs - in the past.
3. Use it. You cannot change, forget, or erase any part of your past. So, quit trying to lose your past and start using your past to become stronger.

Last Sunday, we learned from Genesis 37 that Joseph was Jacob's favorite son because he was Rachel's first child. Joseph became a despised dreamer when he told his brothers they were going to bow before him one day in the future. Joseph became a sad slave when his jealous older brothers sold him to some slave traders on their way to Egypt.

Genesis 39:1-20 gives us the next chapter in Joseph's life...

1st – Joseph is a favored slave.

Genesis 39:1-6a

I'm sure it took some time, but Joseph eventually accepted that he was a slave in Egypt. Then, he became the best slave he could be.

How did Joseph become a successful slave?

- Joseph believed the Lord was with him. Romans 8:28
- To use your painful past... you must believe God is always with you.

God is with you in the good times and in the bad times. He has promised never to leave you (Deut. 31:8)!

2nd – Joseph is a faithful slave.

Genesis 39:6b-12

Joseph rose through the ranks to become Potiphar's right-hand man! Then, Potiphar's wife noticed Joseph was a handsome and well-built young man.

Why did Joseph stay away from Potiphar's wife?

- Joseph believed sin hurts people.

Joseph fled from Potiphar's wife because he believed having an affair with her would hurt him, her, and his master. Joseph also believed God was watching him and would stop blessing him if he chose to have sex with his master's wife. Joseph believed in the law of sowing and reaping (Galatians 6:7-8).

- To use your painful past... you must believe sin hurts people.

3rd – Joseph is a fettered slave.

Genesis 39-13-20

Verses 13-20 tell us that Potiphar's wife became so angry when Joseph refused to have sex with her that she told her husband his favorite slave had tried to rape her.

How did Joseph stay positive after he was thrown in prison?

- Joseph believed God was preparing him for his future. Psalm 105:16-22
- To use your painful past... you must believe God uses trials to build character. James 1:2-4

Joseph didn't try to lose his painful past. Instead, he used it to become the man God wanted him to be so he could do the job God wanted him to do. Joseph was able to use his past because he believed God was always with him, sin hurts people, and the Lord uses trials to mold our character.

Some Personal Questions...

- 1. Are you trying to lose or use your past?*
- 2. Do you believe God is with you, sin hurts people, and the Lord uses trials to mold character?*
- 3. Will you own, place, and use your painful past today?*