

READ MATTHEW 28:16-20

1. Do you think this 'commission' is for
 - a. All disciples of Jesus, past, present and future?
 - b. Specific disciples who are gifted or trained in such things?
 - c. Just the ones Jesus originally said it to?
- ii. What influences your view?
2. Jesus told His disciples, in verse 20, that He would be "*with you always, to the very end of the age.*" Do you think this promise is for
 - a. All disciples of Jesus, past, present and future?
 - b. Only those who go out and do what Jesus instructs in verses 19-20?
 - c. Just the ones Jesus originally said it to?
- ii. What influences your view?
3. In Psalm 23:4 David said that "*Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me*". Can you think of a time recently where you had an awareness that God was with you whilst going through a specific, maybe difficult, situation?
4. Isaiah 55:6 says, "*Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near*". Does that mean that there will be times when the Lord can't be found or isn't near?

READ GENESIS 37:1-11

5. Joseph brought Jacob a bad report about his brothers (v2), Jacob favoured Joseph and bought him an ornate robe (v3), the brothers were jealous and hated Joseph (v4). Joseph's dreams made his brothers hate him more (v8), they ended up throwing him into a pit (v24), selling him to some Ishmaelites on their way to Egypt (v28) and faking his death so that his dad mourned for months (v34-35).
 - i. How would you describe this family?
 - ii. Why might his brothers have hated Joseph so much when it was his dad's fault that he was favoured?
 - iii. Joseph's brothers immediately interpreted what Joseph's dream meant (v8). Bearing in mind the tension that already existed between them, why do you think Joseph told them the dream?
6. Would you say that you have ever had God speaking to you through a dream?

READ GENESIS 39:1-6a

7. When Pharaoh's official, Potiphar, bought Joseph it says, "*The Lord was with him so that he prospered*" (v2). In what ways would you say that we "prosper" because the Lord is with us?
8. In verse 3 it says that Potiphar "*saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord gave him success in everything he did*" (v3). Do you think people around us should be able to see that the Lord is with us? If so, how, if not, why?
9. "*The Lord blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph*" (v5). Have you ever had the opportunity whilst in hospital, in a difficult working environment or when going through another type of 'dark valley' to be the means of spiritual blessing to others who are encountering the same thing?

READ GENESIS 39:19-23 – (context - Things seemed to be going well in Potiphar's house until Joseph was falsely accused of sexually assaulting Potiphar's wife and then flung into jail)

10. The Lord was with Joseph in prison (v21) and gave him the same favour in the prison (v22-23) as he had experienced in Potiphar's house (v4-6). What lessons can we draw from this?
11. Joseph's dark valley experiences eventually led him to becoming second to Pharaoh, overseeing the distribution of food during 7 years of famine – where his dreams of his brothers bowing down to him (37:7) came true (42:6). Have you ever been given a promise from God that many years later was fulfilled?
12. How might knowing that the Lord is with you this week help you in what you do and where you go?