

Series: Pivot

Message: Pivotal Circumstances

November 2, 2014

**Every faith story involves events/circumstances viewed as pivotal.** Genesis 37, 39

**The Bible teaches us that events test, strengthen, and launch faith.** James 1:2-4

Trial  Test of Faith  Perseverance  Stronger Faith

**Pivotal Circumstances: Introduce God into the conversation. Our response makes all the difference.**

Q: Did God Cause it? Or Allow it?    A: God is in it!

*WARNING: It feels like God is doing something TO us. That's when we lose faith. He is doing something IN us. That's when our faith gets bigger.*

Ask for both WISDOM in the trial and DELIVERANCE from the trial. James 1:5; Mark 14:32-42

## Life Group Questions

For week of November 2, 2014

To prepare for this week's meeting, take some time to focus on the questions below and be prepared to share your answers with the group. Have a great meeting as you come together to connect, encourage one another to grow and to see God change your lives from the inside out!

### GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Have you ever encountered a difficult situation where you thought it was impossible for any good to come out of it, only to realize later that it was an important part of your personal growth? If so, explain.

### Going Deeper

Why do you think people have a tendency to blame God when things go badly?

Now read Genesis 39:1-2. If you want, scan the story that follows in Genesis 39. Based on the story, how could anyone possibly conclude that "the Lord was with Joseph."

In *The Problem of Pain*, C.S. Lewis writes: *God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.* In your opinion, why is it so easy to factor God out of our lives when things are good, and so difficult to factor him in when things aren't? Why does God almost always become part of the conversation when bad things happen?

Read James 1:2-4. James says that trials test our *faith*, or *confidence in God*. How is a trial a test of our faith?

James says the goal of these tests is "perseverance." The implication is that trials can create *persevering faith* in God. But why trials? Can you think of other ways God could create persevering faith in us?

How can the following verses help you stick with it and affirm God is more involved than you realize?

Jeremiah 32:40-41

John 10:27-30

Philippians 1:6

Asking God for wisdom and applying it is foundational to God growing us. It also allows us to be authentic as to what's going on while still navigating through the situation in the way God has called us to.

As you read the following verses, what do you learn about how to gain wisdom, along with its benefits?

Proverbs 1:7

Proverbs 11:2

Proverbs 13:10

Proverbs 14:8

Which of these Proverbs about wisdom would be the best one for you to read every day for the next week?

**Prayer:**

**Lord, help me to lean into you, rather than away from you. I know it feels like you are doing something to me. Help me to see if you want to do something in me so that you can do something through me. As I move forward with the full confidence that you, oh God, are with me, I surrender the circumstance to you.**

### **Moving Closer to God Review**

**God is most honored by our faith—our confidence in him.**

**The point of trust is where things were broken.**

**The point of trust is where they will be put back together.**

**For the rest of your life, these five things will intersect with your faith:**

- 1. Stay in an environment of practical teaching.**
- 2. Be intentional and available relationally (providential relationships).**
- 3. Stay involved in spiritual disciplines: pray, read, give (private disciplines).**
- 4. Step out and serve (personal ministry).**
- 5. Look for God in the pivotal circumstances of life.**