**1. Motivate**

What is your number one survival tip to prepare for a crisis?

* buy low, sell high
* stockpile food
* chocolate
* claim the 2nd amendment, right to be armed
* be prayed up

A video introduction to the lesson is available. View at <https://watch.liberty.edu/media/t/1_0eum2k85> . If you have no wi-fi where you teach, best to download to your computer from <https://tinyurl.com/3yxbve78>

* memorize scripture
* trust God

**2. Transition**

A tragedy or crisis can happen at any time …

* Many times we are unprepared for such a crisis, but God is never surprised
* Today we look at the fact that God has a plan to see you through any crisis

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 Seek God’s Wisdom

Listen for breaking news.

Genesis 41:28-32 (NIV) "It is just as I said to Pharaoh: God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do. 29 Seven years of great abundance are coming throughout the land of Egypt, 30 but seven years of famine will follow them. Then all the abundance in Egypt will be forgotten, and the famine will ravage the land. 31 The abundance in the land will not be remembered, because the famine that follows it will be so severe. 32 The reason the dream was given to Pharaoh in two forms is that the matter has been firmly decided by God, and God will do it soon.

What did Pharoah’s dream mean?

* seven years of great abundance are coming
* throughout the whole country
* followed by seven years of famine
* famine so bad, the seven good years will be forgotten

What words and phrases tell you about to whom Joseph gave credit concerning his interpretation of the dreams?

* God has shown
* firmly decided by God
* God will do it soon

In what ways do we see the activity of God in these verses?

* gave the dream to Pharaoh
* provided an interpreter of the dream, Joseph
* this was all set up so the descendants of Abraham, the line of patriarch would be preserved
* Israel’s line would live on and not perish in the famine
* God put Joseph in the right place at the right time

Besides being active, what other truths about God do you see here?

* God is in control
* God speaks to people directly
* God is at work in controlling history to accomplish His purposes
* God has an overall plan, even plans within plans
* His attributes … wisdom, power, authority, love, righteousness/justice

Why was God not surprised by the turn of events that were about to occur in Egypt?

* He had things planned out all along
* He works through individuals to shape and mold history
* He can do this, even though we are all acting of our own volition, our own wills
* God does not have a plan B, He can and does accomplish His will no matter what our actions are

What are some reasons we might *fail* to seek God’s wisdom when making decisions?

* ignorance … not aware of the Truth of God’s power, authority, and love for us
* failure to receive the Truth God has made available to us
* rebellion … “God can’t tell me what to do, I run my own life”
* lazy … don’t read and apply God’s Word

What are some ways we *can* seek wisdom from God?

* in Joseph’s time they did not have written scripture
* they only had oral history from family events
* we have the entire body of Scripture
* We have history of God at work as well as principles God wants us to know
* believers have the indwelling presence of God’s Holy Spirit in our lives to convict/convince and to guide our daily steps

How should we live our lives so that those around will view us as people in whom the Spirit of God dwells?

* allow God’s Holy Spirit to demonstrate through us the Fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control
* what we say, how we say it shows these qualities
* make wise decisions guided by God
* allow God to be on the throne of our lives – He is in control, we submit to Him

3.2 Follow God’s Plan

Listen for how Joseph followed God’s plan.

Genesis 41:47-49 (NIV) During the seven years of abundance the land produced plentifully. 48 Joseph collected all the food produced in those seven years of abundance in Egypt and stored it in the cities. In each city he put the food grown in the fields surrounding it. 49 Joseph stored up huge quantities of grain, like the sand of the sea; it was so much that he stopped keeping records because it was beyond measure.

How did Joseph involve himself in the plan he had proposed to Pharaoh?

* collected 20% of all the food produced during 7 years of abundance,
* stored it in different cities
* had multiple local storage sites, each in the region where there were fields producing
* the storage was huge quantities
* records ceased to be sufficient to record the actual quantities

What can we learn from Joseph’s plan to guide Egypt through the years of abundance and famine?

* our economy will go through cycles also (maybe not 7 years)
* as God blesses with a good year, be setting aside a reserve
* don’t blow all your money just because you have a little extra
* bad times and good times come,
* use the good times to have a reserve and prepare for crisis situations

How do you think God is preparing our church for present and future challenges?

* provides us with surplus that we could save both for our own personal future needs as well as being generous in God’s work
* lots of opportunities all around us to share the Gospel … individually, as a church
* God brings the right people along in both leadership and in various ministry roles
* God prepares our hearts and minds

When is it most challenging for you to follow God’s plan?

* when it’s something new that you’ve not tried before
* when it goes counter to what might be popular in our society
* when we have to step out in faith, trusting God to supply your needs
* when hardships come along

How can we discern that something is God’s plan and not our own?

* it must be in line with the principles and commands from Scripture
* God’s Holy Spirit will be at work in our hearts and minds, bringing thoughts and impressions to us to guide us
* God opens and closes doors of opportunity

3.3 Be Fruitful Even in Famine

Listen for events in Joseph’s personal life.

Genesis 41:50-54 (NIV) Before the years of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph by Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On. 51 Joseph named his firstborn Manasseh and said, "It is because God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father's household." 52 The second son he named Ephraim and said, "It is because God has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering." 53 The seven years of abundance in Egypt came to an end,

It appears Joseph’s family was an arranged marriage. Note the meanings of the names he gave his two sons. What might be some words in our language that would be descriptive names for these sons?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Manasseh – Forgot My Troubles | Ephraim – Fruitful after Suffering |
| * Happy * Joyful * Lucky * Jubilant * Ecstatic | * Prosperous * Change of Fortune * Rich * Thriving * Flourishing |

We might not name our children with some of these descriptive names, but what could we be doing or saying to express our awareness and thanksgiving for God’s working in our lives?

* less complaining
* verbally declaring our thanks to God
* our conversations speak less to life’s trivia, more to how God is at work
* positive outlook on life because God is at work, God is in control
* excited each day to see what God’s Word has to say to us
* looking at the world around us with the realization that God’s creation is beautiful, wonderful, amazing

With what kinds of life crises are people struggling with these days?

* many have health crises related to the pandemic
* there are job losses and financial crises also related to the pandemic
* some have prodigal sons or daughters or children with other spiritual struggles
* there are struggles with substance abuse, temptations of materialism

While it is not healthy to deny our feelings and to act as if our struggles aren’t real, what can you do to learn from a current crisis that would increase your faith and draw you closer to God?

* talk to God each day, listen to Him … early and often
* be involved in various ministries of the church
* listen to what God is saying … as you read God’s Word, as you take in sermons, as you participate in group Bible studies
* practice what you declare to believe

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

Application

Make a list.

* Make a list of all the beautiful things happening in your life right now.
* Tape it to your bathroom mirror and begin every day with praise.

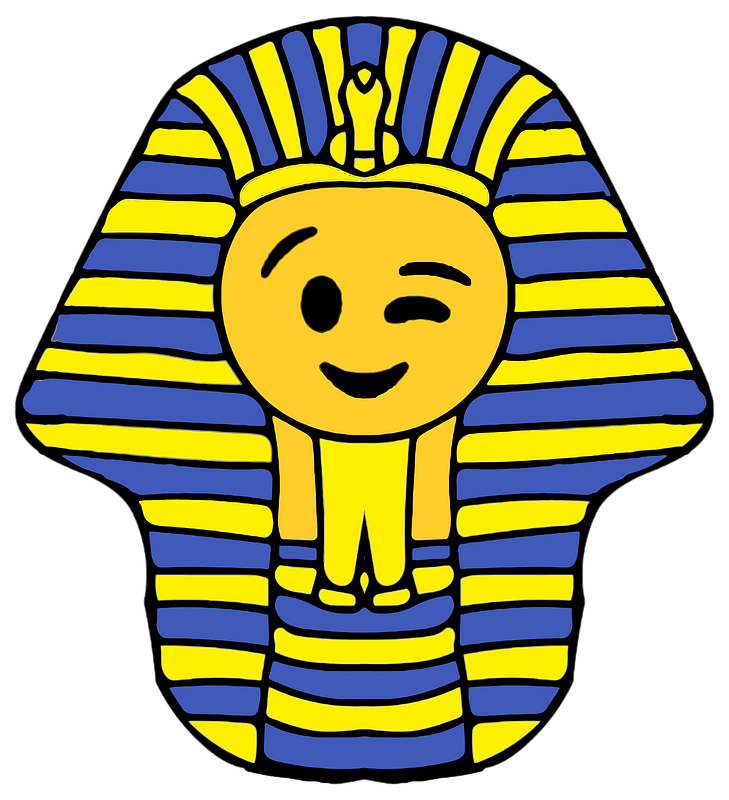
Consider.

* Consider all the hard things you are going through right now.
* As you pray while you take a walk around your neighborhood, read them aloud and give them all to God.

Memorize.

* Memorize Isaiah 26:3. It’s an easy one!
* “You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you.”

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Need help? Go to <https://tinyurl.com/3yxbve78> . There’s other stuff there to carry you through hard times also.

Crossword Puzzle