

Journey Into  
*Victorious Living*  
*Student Edition*



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**Journey Into Victorious Living  
STUDENT EDITION (ESV®)**

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# Preface

If you think there are no stories about teenagers in the Bible, you are wrong! The Bible has a lot to say to teenagers and the problems they face. Joseph is still a youth when God starts using him to change world history. So, he is biblical proof God's plan for your life starts before you become an adult.

For what kind of person is this study written?

If you are confused about what God wants you to do with your life, this study is for you. If you are struggling with issues in your family relationships, this study is for you. If you don't know why God is allowing unfair things to happen in your life, this book is for you. If you are tired of conflict with teachers and friends, this study is for you.

The truth is we all struggle with these things throughout our lives. As children, we are not mature enough to realize all the problems around us. When we reach adolescence, we begin to notice how unfair life is, and this sparks lots of questions. Sometimes these questions lead to bitterness, disillusionment, conflict, and other negative things. However, this study, which tracks the life of Joseph, gives us a healthy perspective on these difficult issues.

God intends for us to experience victory throughout our lives—in our successes and in our failures. If you don't understand what God is doing behind the scenes in your life, then you won't be ready to deal with problems that come your way. And, trust me, they are on the way.

God has promised to test our faith, but in the Bible we find the resources we need to live victoriously through these tests.

Let's get started!

# 1: When Life Is the “Pits”

## Genesis 37

Where in the Bible can we learn how to find victory in the midst of unfair and difficult circumstances? How can we be victorious over feelings of revenge, bitterness, and hatred? We learn the answers to these questions from the life of Joseph. Joseph’s life is so important God uses one-fourth of the book of Genesis to tell us his story. Joseph’s life was not fair. He dealt with envy, injustice, sexual temptation, family problems, and more. Yet, he overcame all of these unfair circumstances.

Joseph is an example of what fact found in 1 John 5:3-4?

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Joseph is just seventeen years old as we pick up the story in Genesis 37. Through this teenager, God teaches us **three** ways to overcome life’s “pits.”

### 1. Refuse to be \_\_\_\_\_.

Joseph is born into a dysfunctional family. His father, Jacob, has thirteen children by four different wives. Since Joseph and his younger brother are the youngest and the children of Jacob’s favorite wife, their half-brothers and sisters are often envious of them. Therefore, the house is filled with rivalry and tension.

The situation worsens when Joseph’s father gives him a special robe of many colors (37:3). This gift clearly reveals to Joseph’s brothers that he is the favorite son, so they become filled with envy. As a result, what do we read in Genesis 37:4?

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To make things worse, Joseph has two dreams in which his brothers are bowing down to him. When Joseph tells his family about the dreams, his brothers become even more envious, hating Joseph more and more (Gen. 37:5-11). Then, one day that envy leads to evil actions.

As Joseph comes to meet his brothers out in the fields, they see him from a distance. What happens next, according to Genesis 37:18-20?

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Thankfully, Reuben, the oldest brother, convinces them not to kill Joseph. Eventually, they decide to sell him to some slave traders who are on their way to Egypt (Gen. 37:21-28). So, their envious feelings drive them to evil actions.

From time to time, we all face the temptation to be envious when we see someone receive an honor, promotion, or blessing we think is undeserved. At those times, we must remember what warning God gives us in James 3:16-17?

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To overcome life's "pits," **refuse to be envious**, and . . .

**2. Reflect on the \_\_\_\_\_.**

When life is the "pits," things can sometimes get worse before they get better. We can feel like no one cares. How does Psalm 69:20 describe such feelings?

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God allows unfair situations to come into our lives. Life is painful when we have family problems, face teasing at school, make a bad grade, strike out and lose the game, or have health problems. However, we can **reflect on the long term** and know God is still in control. We can also do a third thing to overcome life's "pits:"

### 3. Rely on God's \_\_\_\_\_.

Joseph is carried by the slave traders to Egypt and sold to an important man named Potiphar, who is the commander of the royal guards who protect the Pharaoh. God uses these miserable circumstances to bring Joseph into a very important family in Egypt. God is working out a promise He made to Joseph's great-grandfather Abraham in Genesis 15:13. What is that promise?

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There is no way that Joseph can understand God's good purpose at the time. Just as God had a good purpose for allowing Joseph's life to be the "pits," He has a good purpose for the problems in our lives. What promise do we have in Romans 8:28?

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## Lesson Activity:

**In your small group, read aloud the following unfair situations and discuss the questions that follow.**

Johnny turned 16 years old several months ago, but his family doesn't have the money to buy him a car. His best friend shows up in a brand-new pickup that his parents bought him. Everyone at school is talking about how awesome the friend's truck is.

*What are some potentially dangerous effects if Johnny lets envy grow in his heart towards his friend?*

*How might God use this unfair situation to benefit Johnny in the long term?*

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Holly loves basketball. She practices hard, has a good attitude, and always supports her team mates. Another girl on the team is a natural athlete, but loafs in practice, has a bad attitude, and mistreats the other girls. When the team awards are given at the end of the season, the coach gives the MVP award to the girl with the bad attitude.

*What are some potentially dangerous effects if Holly lets envy grow in her heart towards her friend?*

*How might God use this unfair situation to benefit Holly in the long term?*

EXTRA NOTE: There are things recorded in the Bible that God allows but does not approve. We see two examples in the life of Joseph: polygamy and slavery. These are recorded in the Bible as **bad examples** for us to avoid.