

WEEK 1

# The Coat of Many Colors

## A QUOTE:

Character is doing the right thing when nobody's looking."

— J.C. Watts

# Day 1

1. On a scale of 1 to 10, how important are clothes to you? What do your clothes say about you?
2. Although clothing can be a fun way to express oneself, it only reveals a tiny glimpse of who we are. Character, on the other hand, goes much deeper. Character is the group of qualities that make each of us who we are. Unlike outward appearances, character is rooted deep in the heart. According to the following verses, how do our hearts reveal our character?

**Proverbs 27:19**

**Luke 6:45**

3. Read this ad by a company that sells makeup. They define character this way:

**Character** (noun): *An accessory you wear daily. Unlike armor you hide behind, it's proudly worn on your chest, close to your heart. Character is you at your very best — and at times, at your worst. It is the real you. That is its beauty. That is your beauty.*

Do you agree with this definition? Why or why not?

4. How much time did you spend deciding what to wear this morning? Just as we think about our outfits, or the clothes in our closet, we can think about and work at what kind of character we're going to put on as we face the day's challenges. Over the course of this series, we're going to memorize a verse that says a lot about how to dress ourselves to look more like Jesus. Write **Colossians 3:12** in the space below:
5. Which of these characteristics do you most display?
6. Are these qualities that you look for in a friend?
7. How do you identify someone's character?
8. What are some other qualities that you look for that are not listed in **Colossians 3:12**?

## Day 2

1. Clothes seem to play a key role in Joseph's story. Everyone in that culture wore a robe or cloak, which was useful for everything from keeping warm to wrapping babies to packing up items for a journey. Read **Genesis 37:1-4**. What made Joseph's coat so special?
2. Common people in that day only owned two garments: an outer garment and an under garment (which made getting dressed for school a breeze). To Joseph's brothers, his ornamental robe was a constant reminder of his position as Jacob's favorite son. What was their response?
  - ☐ They babied Joseph.
  - ☐ They ignored him.
  - ☐ They were mean to him at every opportunity.
  - ☐ They loved him just as their father did.
3. Read the rest of **Genesis 37**. God had a unique plan for Joseph, giving him a glimpse of it in his dreams (**Gen. 37:5-10**), but that plan would require him to go from a high position as Jacob's favorite son to a low position as a slave. When have your circumstances changed suddenly, causing you to go through a difficult time?

What positive or negative effects did it have on your character?

4. One of the character traits God was developing in Joseph through these early experiences was humility. How would you define humility? (Check all that apply)
  - ☐ Shame and embarrassment
  - ☐ Not thinking of yourself more highly than you should
  - ☐ Feeling worthless
  - ☐ Opposite of proud
  - ☐ Other:
5. Although Joseph couldn't see it from the bottom of the pit where his brothers had thrown him, amazing things lay in store for him. Why do you think it was important for Joseph to hit rock bottom before being put in a place of power?
6. Think about the things that decorate your life. Where do you get your sense of pride? From your grades? Your goals and touchdowns? The number of friends you have?
7. If all of those things were taken away, would you still seek God's dreams for you?



## Making It Personal

Like Joseph, Jesus was stripped of his robe of glory and took on the nature of a servant (**Philippians 2:5-11**). Jesus' eyes were fixed on the long-term, knowing a reward awaited Him for his obedience. Pray and ask God what important lesson you can learn about humility....

WEEK 2

# The Coat He Left Behind

## A QUOTE:

Live in such a way that you  
would not be ashamed to sell  
your parrot to the town gossip."

— Will Rogers

# Day 1

1. Last week, we worked on memorizing **Colossians 3:12**. Write the verse (from memory, if you can!) in the space below:
2. Developing a great character doesn't just require taking on new things; it can also require getting rid of things. In this week's lesson, we'll see how Joseph obeyed God, even when it meant leaving his coat behind! Read **Genesis 39:1-20**.

In the chart below, write down the three main people in this story and one character trait that each displayed through his or her actions:

Person:	Character Trait:

3. Being in charge of Potiphar's home was a major promotion for Joseph. In Ancient Egypt, the rich lived in extravagant homes full of hand-carved furniture, costly rugs, paintings, flowers, and instead of silverware — goldware! What did Potiphar notice about Joseph that made him willing to put everything he owned under his care?
4. With all that Potiphar had entrusted to Joseph, what one thing was off-limits?
  - ☐ His chariot
  - ☐ His wife
  - ☐ His garden
  - ☐ His DVD collection
5. What reasons did Joseph give for refusing Potiphar's wife? (Check all that apply)
  - ☐ His master would be returning home at any minute.
  - ☐ He would not betray his master's trust.
  - ☐ He found her unattractive.
  - ☐ It would be wrong to sleep with another man's wife.
  - ☐ It would be a sin against God.
6. Was Joseph's temptation by Potiphar's wife a one-time incident?



7. What steps did he take to avoid her advances (v. 10)?
8. What does this story tell you about Joseph's character?

## Day 2

1. Joseph's situation got a lot more serious when Potiphar's wife finally ambushed him. According to verse 11, when did she choose to attack?
  - ☐ When her husband left for work
  - ☐ When Joseph was taking his break
  - ☐ When she was feeling bored
  - ☐ When the servants were gone and the house was empty

2. Why are we especially vulnerable to temptation when we're alone?

3. How did Joseph respond to her attack?

- ☐ He ran — even leaving his cloak behind!
- ☐ He stayed and explained to her why it was a bad idea.
- ☐ He blushed and remained silent.
- ☐ He asked if he could pray with her.

Why was this the best possible response? (Hint: Read **1 Corinthians 10:13**.)

4. What do you think prompted Potiphar's wife to lie about what happened? What do you notice about the way she tells the story?
5. The normal punishment for such a crime would be death, but instead, Potiphar put Joseph with the king's prisoners. In light of this, do you think Potiphar really believed his wife's story? Why might he have reason to doubt?
6. Living with temptation is a struggle. In moments of weakness, we would be wise to run away, as Joseph did. But when we mess up, the last thing we should do is run away from God. He does not want us to live in guilt and shame. According to **1 John 1:9**, how will He respond when we confess our sins and repent?

## Making It Personal

Taking on the character of Jesus means we have to ask for God's help every single day, sometimes on a minute-by-minute basis. Joseph didn't make a one-time decision to obey God and that was the end of the story. He had to make that decision every time Potiphar's wife came around the corner.

Is there a temptation in your life that you seem to have to deal with over and over? How does Joseph's story encourage you? What practical steps can you take to stand strong in moments of weakness?



WEEK 3

# Prison Rags

## A VERSE:

It's better to suffer for doing good, if that's what God wants, than to be punished for doing bad."

— 1 Peter 3:17 (The Message)

# Day 1

1. Have you ever been accused of something you didn't do? How did that make you feel? What did you do?
2. Even though Joseph had proved himself trustworthy, he still landed in jail when Potiphar's wife falsely accused him. His position as head servant was taken from him as quickly as the cloak off his back. Read **Genesis 39:19-23**. Despite his troubles, how was Joseph treated in prison?
3. Staying strong in the middle of this difficult situation required perseverance. What does it mean to persevere? (Check all that apply)
  - ☐ To plot revenge
  - ☐ To keep going even when you're discouraged and facing tough times
  - ☐ To let life pass you by
  - ☐ To rely only on yourself
  - ☐ To surrender your circumstances to God and trust Him to get you through
4. Perseverance requires strength. We get that strength from God. Use **Romans 5:3-5** (NIV) and fill in the blanks below:

*Not only so, but we also rejoice in our \_\_\_\_\_, because we know that suffering produces \_\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_; and \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.* And \_\_\_\_\_ does not \_\_\_\_\_ us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.
5. Joseph had to deal with a lot of disappointment in life, but God continued to pour out His love on him, even in prison. What evidence did God give Joseph that He was with him?
6. Describe a time when you were in a difficult place and you sensed God was with you.

# Day 2

1. Read **Genesis 40**. The actual word for "dungeon" in verse 40:15 (NIV) is the same word used for "pit" in **Genesis 37:29** (KJV). Compare the two situations that Joseph was in. How are they similar?
2. What two very important prisoners were placed under Joseph's care while in jail?

3. What specifically had upset these two prisoners (40:8)?

- ☐ They knew they were going to die.
- ☐ They felt they deserved better treatment.
- ☐ They were jealous of Joseph.
- ☐ They both experienced strange dreams and had no one to interpret them.

4. Use **Genesis 40:9-19** to fill in the chart below:

Prisoner	Dreamed of:	Interpretation:
#1		
#2		

5. Think about how this story might have been different if Joseph had not been accustomed to going to God for the interpretation of his own dreams. Did Joseph take credit for interpreting the dreams?

- ☐ Yes      ☐ No

6. What specific request did Joseph make of the cupbearer (40:14-15)? Did the cupbearer follow through (40:23)?

7. To "lift up your head" (**Genesis 40:13, 20**) means "to summon for the purpose of taking up your case." How does that change your understanding of David's song in **Psalms 3:3** – "But you are a shield around me, O LORD; you bestow glory on me and lift up my head"?

In what way does Jesus "take up our case"?

## Making It Personal

What situations in your life right now make you feel trapped or powerless, like Joseph must have felt? Ask God to show you how He is working in those situations. Remember that He is with you always, even in the darkest of times (**Isaiah 43:2**).





WEEK 4

# A Close Shave

**A QUOTE:**

In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity.”

— *Albert Einstein*



# Day 1

1. Which of the following best describes you?

- ☐ I'm an optimist. I look on the bright side of life.
- ☐ I'm a pessimist. I don't expect things to go my way.
- ☐ I stay pretty calm whether things are good or bad.
- ☐ Ask me tomorrow. I can never predict my moods.

2. Name a time when you were presented with a great opportunity that caught you completely by surprise (such as a trip, a day off, a new friendship, etc.).

3. Opportunity can come knocking anytime — even on the locked door of a dungeon. When we last saw Joseph, he was still in prison, forgotten by the chief cupbearer...and everyone else, it seemed. Day after day passed, until two full years had gone by. But in all this time, Joseph did not forget about God, and God certainly did not forget about him. Read **Genesis 41:1-40**.

What happened to Pharaoh that caused him to send for Joseph?

- ☐ Joseph appeared to him in a dream.
- ☐ Pharaoh had a dream that no one could interpret.
- ☐ Pharaoh had a change of heart and decided to release all prisoners.
- ☐ Potiphar told Pharaoh he had made a mistake in sending Joseph to prison.

4. God often brings opportunities into our lives with only a moment's notice. Readiness is an important character quality that keeps us on the lookout for what God is doing. How did Joseph respond to Pharaoh's call and his questions? (**Genesis 41:14-16**)

5. Picture the contrasting scenes: one minute Joseph was sweating in a filthy prison; the next minute he was clean-shaven and standing in the presence of the ruler of Egypt. What emotions do you think he felt?

6. How might his years in prison have prepared him for this very moment?

7. In what situation in your life right now do you sense God preparing you for something bigger? What is He teaching you?



## Day 2

1. How did Joseph interpret Pharaoh's dream?

Seven good cows & good heads of grain equals...

Seven ugly cows & bad heads of grain equals....

2. In Egyptian culture, the Pharaoh was considered to be god incarnate ("in the flesh"). What does Joseph's response to Pharaoh and his interpretation of the dream tell you about his faith?
3. After interpreting Pharaoh's dream, Joseph recommended a four-step action plan to rescue Egypt. Use **Genesis 41:33-36** to fill in the chart below:

Verse	Action Step
Genesis 41:33	
Genesis 41:34	
Genesis 41:35	
Genesis 41:36	

4. What did Pharaoh notice about Joseph that both Potiphar and the jailer had also noticed (v. 38)?

Is this a character quality that you notice in your friends? Name three people in whom you can see God at work (and make a point to tell them this week!).

5. Many of the people with whom we come in contact do not know God. Joseph had to stand before a man who thought he himself was god! But Joseph was ready and willing to deliver the Lord's message. What instructions do we find in **1 Peter 3:15** that emphasize this?

6. Read **Ephesians 2:10**. What can you do to be prepared for unexpected opportunities to serve God?

What is God doing to prepare you?

## Making It Personal

Following Jesus requires us to keep our eyes on Him. When we look down and concentrate on our situation rather than on God, we risk losing sight of the opportunities He has prepared for us. Ask Him to give you a spirit that is ready and willing to follow Him — anytime, any place.



WEEK 5

# Bling-Bling

## A QUOTE:

Every job is a self-portrait of the person who does it. Autograph your work with excellence."

— Anonymous



# Day 1

1. Name one job that you are responsible for. It may be a paid job (mowing lawns or babysitting) or just one of your routine chores. It could also be a position of leadership at your school or in your extra activities.

What responsibilities go along with that job?

2. To be trustworthy means to be “worthy of confidence,” meaning that people can count on you to be honest and reliable. In the job you named, how would you rate your trustworthiness?

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

*Totally unreliable*

*Somewhat reliable*

*Completely trustworthy*

Who are the people who are depending on you to get the job done?

3. As a student, you may be tempted to think: At my age, what does it really matter? Once I’m out on my own and have more responsibilities, I’ll work hard and be trustworthy. According to Jesus in **Luke 16:10**, how does your current behavior shape your future character?

What do you think God is asking you to do with the “very little” He has given you? Why?

4. Your level of trustworthiness affects all of your relationships, not just work-related ones. Name some other relationships where trust plays an important role.
5. If trustworthiness is marked by honesty and dependability, the opposite of trustworthiness is deceptiveness. Lies, cheating, stealing, betrayal — all of these are enemies of relationship, and they are among Satan’s favorite weapons. Why is deception so destructive to a relationship?
6. What does **Psalms 34:12-14** teach about this?

7. What are some ways you can demonstrate greater trustworthiness in the following relationships?

With my parents:

With my friends:

With my teachers:

With my coach/boss/mentor:

## Day 2

1. If you were looking for a spokesperson for trustworthiness, Joseph would make a pretty good choice. Though he had to deal with some shady characters, Joseph made sure to base his character on what God asked of him, not on the behavior of the people around him. Read **Genesis 41:41-57**.

Based on what you've studied so far, how did Joseph demonstrate trustworthiness in the following situations?

Situation	Bible Verses	Examples of trustworthiness
As Potiphar's head servant	Genesis 39:8-10	
When he was thrown in jail	Genesis 39:20-23	
During the years of plenty	Genesis 41:46-49	
During the years of famine	Genesis 41:55-57	

2. What was the secret to Joseph's success? (**Genesis 41:38-39**)
3. Though Joseph's wardrobe had changed many times — from his richly ornamented robe, to a servant's cloak, to prison rags — his character stayed consistent throughout. How did his wardrobe change once again when Pharaoh made him his second-in-command? (**Genesis 41:41-43**)

4. With such a big promotion, it would have been easy for Joseph to get distracted by his newfound power and prestige (not to mention all that bling-bling!). How might his past experiences have helped him stay focused? (Hint: remember **Luke 16:10**.)
5. If Joseph hadn't remained trustworthy during the years of plenty (**Genesis 41:47-49**), what would have been the consequences?
6. How did Joseph give credit to God in **Genesis 41:50-52**?
7. Joseph was able to prove himself trustworthy because he believed God to be trustworthy, even in his darkest moments. What are some ways that God has shown Himself trustworthy in your life? If you are experiencing a time of struggle, how does Joseph's story encourage you to stay strong and trust God?

## Making It Personal

What temptations are you currently experiencing to avoid being trustworthy with your parents, your teachers — even with God? Who in your life is influencing you to fall into deception?

Be very careful what voices you allow to speak into your life. Surround yourself with friends who will encourage you to be honest and do the right thing. Remember, in all you do, it is the Lord Christ you are serving (**Colossians 3:23-24**).



WEEK 6

# The Naked Truth

## A VERSE:

Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they will be called sons of  
God."

— *Matthew 5:9*

## A QUOTE:

Peacemaking is a daring act of  
obedience to God."

— *Ken Sande*

# Day 1

1. What's the longest period of time you've been separated from your family? How did that feel? What was the reunion like?
2. Which is more difficult: to be separated by distance, or hard feelings?
3. When the famine began, Joseph had been separated from his family for over 20 years! All that time, his brothers had lived with the guilty knowledge of what they had done to Joseph. As Genesis 42 begins, they are just setting out on the long journey to Egypt to buy grain. Read **Genesis 42:6-26**.

What did Joseph do when he recognized his brothers?

- ☐ Revealed who he was
- ☐ Ordered them to be put to death
- ☐ Embraced them
- ☐ Spoke harshly to them

4. What dreams came to mind when Joseph saw his brothers standing before him? (See **Genesis 37:5-11**)
5. If there ever was an opportunity for revenge, this was it. Joseph had complete power over his brothers, their lives, and their future. He might even have used his dreams as an excuse to punish them. What hint do we see in **Genesis 42:24** that Joseph was experiencing a moment of deep personal struggle?
6. When someone has wronged you, are you more likely to seek revenge or to offer forgiveness?

Why is it hard to make peace with someone who has hurt you deeply?

7. At the beginning of this series, you memorized **Colossians 3:12**. Now continue reading **Colossians 3:13-14** and fill in the blanks below:

*Bear with each other and \_\_\_\_\_ whatever grievances you may have against one another.*

*\_\_\_\_\_ as the \_\_\_\_\_ . And over all these*

*virtues put on \_\_\_\_\_ , which binds them all together in \_\_\_\_\_ .*

8. As we put on the character of Jesus, what makes forgiveness such an important part of our “wardrobe,” according to this verse?

## Day 2

1. When you are face-to-face with conflict, as Joseph was, is it a good idea to always say the first thing that comes to your mind?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Doesn't matter

Why do you think Joseph took his time in revealing his identity?

2. In a move toward making peace with his brothers, Joseph began a series of tests to see how they had changed since their last meeting. Meanwhile, what did the brothers think was happening to them? (**Genesis 42:21-22**)

What did they need to seek from God?

3. In the scene of forgiveness in **Genesis 45**, Joseph's true character is revealed. As you read over the chapter, think about what it took for Joseph to make peace with his brothers. After revealing his identity, what were Joseph's first instructions to them? (v. 5) \_\_\_\_\_

4. What reasons did Joseph give for his suffering in **Genesis 45:5-7**?

5. In **Genesis 45:22**, what did Joseph give to his brothers — the same people who had once stripped him of his robe?

6. How might the character of Joseph's brothers change, from this point forward, now that they have experienced his forgiveness and blessing?

7. What evidence have you seen of how forgiveness transforms lives?



8. How does forgiveness transform you?

## Making It Personal

With whom do you need to make peace rather than seek revenge? Pray for God to soften your heart toward that person so that you can forgive them. Even if they do not respond as you would like, you are being obedient to God and displaying the character of Jesus. As someone once wrote, "Your life may be the only Bible some people read."