WEEK ONE
YOU’LL GET THROUGH THIS

No one travels far down the road of life without discovering that this journey is not always smooth or perfect. We can pray and wish for safety on the way. We should enjoy the stretches of the ride when the sun shines and things go beautifully. We ought to thank God for the times when we find ourselves, singing, whistling, laughing, and smiling as we travel along.

But every single human being has discovered that there are bumps, detours, and even collisions that can bring our joy to a screeching halt. This not fatalism. It s not negativity. It is certainly not a lack of faith. It is life on this planet.

If you meet someone – a preacher, teacher, or sales person – who rtries to tell you otherwise, BEAWRE! If someone is peddling promises of a life with eldlessly calm seas, perpetual blue skies, freedom from back pain, a guarantee of financial security, and ear-to-ear smiles all of your days, be very, very careful.

The Bible is filled with faithful friends of God who suffered in this life. Moses was violently opposed by the people he spent his life loving and trying to lead. David learned to dodge spears hurled at him by a mad king. Ruth walked through the death of her husband and became a stranger in a strange land. Jeremiah was beaten and thrown into a pit. Stephen, an early church leader, was stoned to death. The apostle Paul was strapped up and beaten no less than five times. This list could go on an on.

Then there is Joseph. He discovered at a young age that the road of life is not always smooth. His story is peppered with rejection, false attacks, deceitful accusations, enslavement, imprisonment and long stretches of loneliness.
If you have ever hit a hard patch of road and though, “I’ll never get through this,” you just might want to look over Joseph’s shoulder and learn from his journey. It was hard. It was not a weekend trip but a tour of duty that lasted about two decades! But his story echoes through the centuries to remind us that we can make it through even the toughest times. We really can.

The Survivor’s Creed

I’ll get through this.
It won’t be painless. It won’t be quick.
But God will use this mess for good.
In the meantime, don’t be foolish or naïve.
But don’t despair either.
With God’s help, I will get through this.

TALK ABOUT IT

Think about a situation you faced during which you felt, “I don’t think I will ever make it through this.” How did you feel when you made it through?

Read Genesis 37:12-24.

Tell about a time you ended up in a cistern and how you got there. How did you feel while in the cistern? How did you plead with God and even with people in an effort to get out of that painful situation?

If you are in a cistern right now, briefly share the situation here. If comfortable let’s talk about it and how the women here can support you in this time.
Read Genesis 37:1-11.

Some of the pain we face in life comes from the very people who should love and care for us – our family. This was certainly true for Joseph. What dysfunctional and unhealthy patterns in Joseph’s family led to heartache and pain?

When you consider the road of life you have traveled thus far, how has your family (or maybe even your church family) caused you pain and heartache? Why do these wounds pierce so deeply?

There are many ways we can respond when thrown into a pit by family, friends, strangers, or life’s circumstances. What are some of the typical responses?

God will use your mess for good. We see a perfect mess;

God sees a perfect chance to train, test, and teach.

Read Genesis 50:19-21.

Years after Joseph’s brothers threw him into a cistern, their father dies and they fear that Joseph will at last exact revenge. What do you learn about Joseph’s heart and outlook on life as you read his response in this critical moment? What can you learn from his example?
If you were in Joseph’s shoes and came to a point where those who had hurt you were now under your power, how do you think you would have responded?

Now, replace the hypothetical scenario with a real situation in your life. How do you believe God wants you to respond to and treat someone who has hurt you?

Max talks about how God re-wove the evil planned by Joseph’s brother and redeemed it for heavenly good. How has God re-woven something that was done to you with evil intent? What good did he bring from it?

*What Satan intends for evil, God, the Master Weaver and Master Builder, redeems for good.*

Joseph’s journey from a cistern in his teenage years to finally becoming a man of influence in Pharaoh’s court lasted about twenty years? How did walking a hard road over time shape Joseph’s character and outlook on life?

How has God used a journey of struggle in your life to shape who you are today? How have you looked up and seen God and drawn closer to him through your times in a pit?
God gets us through stuff. Through is a favorite word of God’s:

“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you”.

(Isaiah 43:2 NKJV)

Let Vengeance Belong to God

If you have been harboring judgment, anger, or bitterness toward someone who wronged you in the past, reconsider Joseph’s story as well as Romans 12:17-21:

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord. On the contrary: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

God cares about justice more than we do.

Self-Examination

How has God been with you in the cisterns and pits of your life?

How has God shaped and formed you into the person you are today, even through the hard times?

What are some ways you can extend grace and forgiveness, even to those who have thrown you into a cistern?