Life Group Discussion Notes

Dream On! Part 2: The Unexamined Dream!
Scripture used: Gen. 37:5-11 (NLT)

OVERVIEW
Big Idea: Our dreams tell us about ourselves, and about God's plan for us.

Welcome back to the Dream On! sermon series, where we are examining the story of Joseph. His life clearly shows how God gives dreams as a way to help us pursue Him, and to bless the world. No one is too dysfunctional or broken for God to give them a dream. Joseph's own family inherited the brokenness of Jacob, who fought with his brother Esau. This ugliness did not stop God for giving Joseph huge, important dreams. God-sized dreams!

KEY POINTS
1) ***God gives everyone dreams.*** Even though we may feel unworthy, remember that each of us is called by God. We each have a dream to fulfill. There is no one who is so broken that they cannot be used for good.
2) ***Certain misconceptions keep us from pursuing God-sized dreams.*** Many of us will say these lies to ourselves. These lies tempt us to stay where we are and reject God's plan for us. But we cannot allow them to block us! Watch out for these lies. Have you ever said to yourself:
   a. *"I just don't have a dream."* Sometimes our dreams are not obvious to us. But that does not mean they don't exist. Grief can black out our vision, keeping us from finding our dreams. We have to keep searching until we find them, knowing that life will be better when we're living God's work.
   b. *"I have an insignificant dream."* Not everyone is going to change the world in a big flashy way. Some of us have more humble work to do. But there is no dream that is disconnected from God's purpose and plan for the world.
   c. *"I have a dream, but God will do it for me."* God does not want to accomplish these dreams by Himself. A God-sized dream requires that we choose to partner with Him, and even to sacrifice to help make His dream come alive.
   d. *"I had a dream, but it's too late now."* God can always redeem a situation. There is nothing impossible for Him, as shown by countless stories in the Bible.
3) ***We perceive our dreams in unexpected ways.*** Our dreams reveal a lot about both our theology and our psychology. Our pain and dysfunction tends to lead to certain things. We must be looking out for:
   a. *Ambitions that end in half-perceived dreams*. Joseph first chose to interpret his dreams in a selfish way. He emphasized the wrong aspects of the message, and used them to elevate himself over others.
   b. *Excuses that disrupt God's grace*. Joseph was treated terribly by his brothers. He felt this injustice his whole life, but it did not corrupt or defeat him. He never gave up on God, and was consistently protected and ultimately brought back into favor.
   c. *Opportunities to facilitate God's power*. Over time, Joseph learned to give credit to God for his gift and to use each interpretation as a way to glorify God to others. Reread Genesis 40:8 & 41:16 (NLT) to see the examples of his humility. We also learn to turn to God - the Dream Giver - in prayer to understand His intent.

DISCUSSION
1) **HEAR** - Each of us struggles with misconceptions that keep us from pursuing God-sized dreams. Maybe you are ready to acknowledge this dream. Ask yourself "Am I living my best life right now?" If the answer is no, what would you do to correct your life?
2) **UNDERSTAND** - Joseph did not have an easy road. As a brother, a slave, and an advisor, he was frequently challenged. But he always kept faith with God, and found people around him who could help. Who are the people that God has placed in your life to help you pursue His dream for your life?
3) **DO** - Take the January challenge. Over the next 4 weeks, read Genesis Chapters 37 & 39-45 to dive into the story of Joseph and his family. Take 2 steps: (1) schedule 15 minutes a day to read and think; (2) using a journal, list the questions and insights God brings to mind. Consider what questions are being raised in the scriptures, what insights you are seeing, and record what you think God is saying to you. Share with your group what you have written.