



A 4-SESSION SERIES FROM GENESIS ON

JUSTICE

FROM OUR ANNUAL *TEACHING STRATEGY*

BY AUTHOR NAME



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**GET
ALIGNED!**



If your church is also using Grow Students, this series aligns with the series *Justice For All*, from Volume 5 of Grow Students.

ABOUT THIS SERIES

Revenge. Have you ever wanted it? Have you ever sought it? Have you ever gotten it? When we're treated cruelly or unfairly, it's natural to want justice. But what does "justice" really mean? Is it only about handing out consequences and punishment to the people who have wronged us? Or could it be about something more? When we are the victims of injustice, how do we balance forgiveness and grace with truth and consequences for the people who hurt us? In this 4-part series, we'll examine the story of Joseph from the book of Genesis. Through Joseph's story, we'll see that **justice is love in action**, and that, when we're wronged by others, we can still **hold on to hope**, trust that **integrity can withstand injustice**, and learn to practice justice that **restores what's broken**.

THIS SERIES AT A GLANCE

SESSION 1

In this session, we'll start at the beginning of Joseph's story and see how injustice exists where love is lacking.

- **THE BIG IDEA:** Justice is love in action.
- **THE BIBLE:** Genesis 37:1–11; 1 Corinthians 13:1–7

SESSION 2

In this session, we'll follow Joseph's journey through his brothers' betrayal and the beginning of his slavery in Egypt.

- **THE BIG IDEA:** When there is injustice, hold on to hope.
- **THE BIBLE:** Genesis 37:17–27; Psalm 138:7–8

SESSION 3

In this session, we'll examine Joseph's response to being unjustly accused and imprisoned for a crime he didn't commit.

- **THE BIG IDEA:** Integrity can withstand injustice.
- **THE BIBLE:** Genesis 39:1–23; Psalm 1:1–3

SESSION 4

In this session, we'll see the conclusion of Joseph's story as he is reunited and reconciled with his brothers and father.

- **THE BIG IDEA:** God's justice restores what is broken.
- **THE BIBLE:** Genesis 45:1–8, 50:19–21; Luke 6:37–38



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

This resource was created by our team here at Stuff You Can Use! We're a team of pastors, volunteers, church planters, writers, editors, designers, programmers, video creators, and more. We live in three countries, twelve states and five time zones, but somehow we all manage to hang out on Zoom at the same time. We're here to make ministry a tiny bit easier for you – and we really like making things for you!

CONNECT WITH THE TEAM!



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SESSION 1

DISCUSSION GUIDE



THE BIBLE

Genesis 37:1–11; 1 Corinthians 13:1–7

THE BIG IDEA

Justice is love in action.

WHAT? *What are we talking about?*

NOW WHAT? *What do we do about it?*

STORY

Tell a story about a time you (or someone else) cheated in order to win a game. Keep it lighthearted, but talk about how a cheater may negatively impacts others.

QUESTIONS

- **Have you ever seen someone else get ahead at your expense? What happened?**
- **What do you think "justice" would have looked like in that scenario?**

SAY . . .

"Justice" can be a loaded term that means different things to different people. For our next four sessions, we'll talk about what God's version of justice looks like — specifically when we've been treated unjustly.

SO WHAT? *Why does it matter?*

VIDEO | Session 1

Play the video for this session.

DISCUSSION

- **When you were growing up, how did injustice (or a lack of love) show up in your family? How do you think those childhood experiences have impacted you?**
- **How do you think Joseph could have interacted with his brothers in a more loving way?**
- **Talk about a time you hurt or angered someone because you didn't act or speak with enough love. What do you wish you had done differently?**
- **What are some reasons why we (or Jacob, or Joseph, or Joseph's brothers) fail to love each other well?**
- **What connections do you see between justice and love (or injustice and a lack of love)?**
- **In your relationships, what are some of the wrongs that love could help make right? And what will you do about it?**

PRAYER

REFLECTION | Start with Love

With our family, friends, or peers, conflict happens — but love can happen too, even in the middle of a fight. This week, take note of the conflicts, disagreements, and fights that pop up in your relationships. Each time they do, ask yourself, "How can I put love into action?"



SESSION 1

VIDEO SCRIPTS



THE BIBLE

Genesis 37:1–11; 1 Corinthians 13:1–7

THE BIG IDEA

Justice is love in action.

HOST 1: Hi, I'm ____!

HOST 2: And I'm _____. Welcome to our new series, Made Right. For the next four sessions, we're going to talk about a word that, these days, tends to have some interesting (and maybe controversial) connotations. And that's "justice."

HOST 1: For some of us, "justice" makes us think of crime, punishment, or maybe your favorite TV legal drama or true crime podcast.

HOST 2: For others, the word "justice" might bring up certain strong views on politics or culture.

HOST 1: And for a lot of us, "justice" might even remind us of a personal experience in which we were wronged or treated unfairly — a situation where we've struggled with forgiveness, unresolved hurt, or a desire for revenge.

HOST 2: It's true the word "justice" can be a loaded term. But instead of simply rehashing the opinions we, or our family members, or society, or our political opponents have about justice, for our next four sessions, we want to explore this question: what does "justice" mean to God?

HOST 1: But I'll be honest. We won't be able to cover that question fully. Scripture says way too much about justice for us to condense it all into four simple conversations. So rather than try to cover everything, we're going to take this big question and get really personal with it. Rather than trying to untangle all of the problems of injustice in the world today, we're going to stay focused on this question: what do we do when we're treated unjustly?

HOST 2: To do that, we're going to look at one specific story, in four parts, to see what God has to say when injustice gets personal. We'll ask questions like, "What do we do when someone really hurts us or when we're treated unfairly? When we've been wronged, what could it look like for those wrongs to be made right?"

HOST 1: Now, as we jump into this conversation, we're going to talk about a family in the book of Genesis, the first book of the Bible. And at the center of this family (and its drama) was a guy named Joseph. He was the second youngest sibling in a family with eleven brothers, his father was Jacob (son of Isaac, son of Abraham), and his older brothers were actually his half brothers.

HOST 2: How does that work? Well, at the time this story occurred, it wasn't uncommon for men to have multiple wives. Joseph and his younger brother, Benjamin, were the sons of Jacob's favorite wife, Rachel, while the older brothers were sons of their father's less-than-favorite wife Leah, who also happened to be Rachel's older sister.

HOST 1: If you're thinking that sounds like a complicated marriage situation that could create a very complicated family atmosphere . . . um, yeah, you would be right.

HOST 2: Joseph was born into a tense situation that only got tenser as he grew up. This tension was exacerbated as Joseph got older and began to live a very different life than his brothers. While his older brothers spent their time working hard in their father's fields, Joseph spent his time dreaming — and wearing fancy clothes.

HOST 1: Joseph was definitely his dad's favorite kid, and his brothers knew it. This favoritism was only further proved when Jacob gave Joseph a special gift — a fabulous coat of many colors. This wasn't standard attire for the son of a shepherd in this region and it certainly wasn't a part of his brothers' wardrobes.

HOST 2: Through acts of favoritism like this one, Joseph's dad created a pretty unhealthy family dynamic. But to be honest, Joseph added to the unhealthiness. Genesis chapter 37 tell us this about Joseph's life at home: **"Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. He said to them, 'Listen to this dream I had: We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it.'"**

HOST 1: **"His brothers said to him, 'Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?' And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said. Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. 'Listen,' he said, 'I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.'"**

HOST 2: **"When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, 'What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?' His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind,"** Genesis 37:5–11 (NIV).

HOST 1: The problem wasn't that Joseph had these dreams. As we'll see, God gave these dreams to Joseph and they were important. But Joseph could have considered his privileged and favored position in his family before he spoke. He could have communicated his dreams in a way that demonstrated greater compassion, awareness, and love to his family.

HOST 2: But that's not what Joseph did. Now, if you've heard the story of Joseph before, you may know (or may have guessed) that Joseph is going to experience a series of injustices. He's going to be wronged in some pretty big ways, and the first wrong is going to come at the hands of his brothers. Before we talk about how Joseph was wronged, let's consider how Joseph's brothers first felt wronged by him.

HOST 1: Remember, when Joseph was having these dreams, he was the most favored and influential sibling in his family. These dreams probably didn't seem very far-fetched to Joseph's imagination. Even his father seemed okay with the idea Joseph might one day rule over his brothers.

HOST 2: From Joseph's perspective, he was sharing a dream with his brothers that probably seemed perfectly reasonable and just. But it's not hard to see why this declaration would be difficult for his older brothers to digest — why it would have felt arrogant, unfair, and unjust. Why it felt *wrong*.

HOST 1: In the New Testament, written many centuries after Joseph and his brothers lived, a guy named Paul wrote a letter to the Christians in a city called Corinth. In this letter, Paul gave us a pretty famous passage that you may have seen written on a mug in a church gift shop or heard read out loud at a wedding because it happens to be about love. We'll read it for you. As we do, think about how Joseph didn't exactly live up to this definition of love — and how his family's story might have turned out differently if he had.

HOST 2: **"If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing."**

HOST 1: **"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres,"** 1 Corinthians 13:1–7 (NIV).

HOST 2: See, Joseph was like a clanging cymbal to his brothers. Sure, he was favored by his dad and uniquely called and gifted by God — but a lack of love made it difficult for his brothers to see that. Love was missing from Joseph's treatment of his brothers, but it was also missing from his family in some important ways.

HOST 1: That's because Jacob's "love" for Joseph was actually unjust favoritism — not love. That injustice created tension and hurt in their family and was a wrong that needed to be made right.

HOST 2: In some ways, Joseph was a victim of that injustice, but he was also a perpetrator of it. Joseph was young and appears to have been unaware of the ways in which his brothers were being wronged by him and their dad Jacob. But his brothers were anything but unaware. They were really frustrated by the injustice and lack of love they were experiencing from both Jacob and Joseph.

HOST 1: So often, when we've been wronged, we *think* we want revenge, but what we really want is for someone to acknowledge that what happened to us was unfair and hurtful. We want to be assured it won't happen again. We want that wrong to be made right. I imagine that was true for Joseph's brothers.

HOST 2: In our next session, we'll see how these brothers tried to right their wrong in a way that nearly destroyed their family. But it's important to consider how Joseph could have prevented all of this in the first place. When he was in a position of influence, he had the ability to choose love for his brothers in a way that could have helped right this wrong — but he missed it.

HOST 1: We said a few moments ago that people define "justice" in all sorts of ways. But you can't understand God's justice without also understanding God's love. Whether you're talking about God's justice as it relates to humanity, or sin, or people in need, love is the basis of it all.

HOST 2: So if you and I want to be people who pursue justice in the world or in our relationships, we need to start with that same foundation: love.

HOST 1: It's easy to count the ways others have failed to love us (and we'll soon see how Joseph was wronged by plenty of people), but it's not so easy to consider the ways we've failed to love others or contributed to their pain.

HOST 2: So before we dive any further into this conversation about justice, we have to start here — with us. Because if we want to be people of justice, people who make wrong things right, then we have to start with love. Because God's justice isn't actually all that complicated. **Justice is love in action.**

SESSION 2

DISCUSSION GUIDE



THE BIBLE

Genesis 37:17–27; Psalm 138:7–8

WHAT? *What are we talking about?*

ACTIVITY | Worst-Case Scenario

Split into two teams: the Best-Case Scenario team and the Worst-Case Scenario team. Give both teams the same prompt and 60 seconds to brainstorm how that could play out. Here are two suggestions: "You wake up from a nap with 20 missed calls." "You meet up with a friend and they say, 'Guess who's joining us?'"

QUESTIONS

- Are you more of a best-case or worst-case scenario thinker? What's an example?
- What's the difference between being realistic and pessimistic?

SAY . . .

When life is challenging, we all have different ways of coping. But let's talk about how to cope when life goes beyond just "challenging" and becomes painful or even unjust.

SO WHAT? *Why does it matter?*

VIDEO | Session 2

Play the video for this session.

THE BIG IDEA

When there is injustice, hold on to hope.

NOW WHAT? *What do we do about it?*

DISCUSSION

- Is there an injustice you've seen or experienced that you can't unsee or forget? Tell us about it.
- What might have caused Reuben to try to intervene on Joseph's behalf? What hesitations do you think Reuben may have had?
- Have you ever experienced similar hesitations when confronted with an injustice? What happened?
- Have you ever found yourself in need of a prayer like the one in Psalm 138? Why?
- How do you think holding onto hope in God is different from simply wishful thinking?
- As a group, how could we help each other hold onto hope right now? How could we help someone outside our group who is experiencing injustice?

PRAYER

ACTIVITY | Be a Learner

Unfortunately, there is so much injustice in the world – but there are so many ways for us to partner with God in fighting for justice. It starts with learning. As an individual or a group, choose a source of injustice to get educated about. This week, look for books, articles, or podcasts written by people who are experienced in that area and learn something new!



SESSION 2

VIDEO SCRIPTS



THE BIBLE

Genesis 37:17–27; Psalm 138:7–8

THE BIG IDEA

When there is injustice, hold on to hope.

HOST 1: Hey, I'm ____.

HOST 2: And I'm _____. Welcome to the second session of our series, Made Right, where we're talking about justice (and injustice) through the lens of the story of Joseph in the Old Testament.

HOST 1: Like we said last time, we know "justice" can be a loaded term. It's a word that can conjure thoughts about courtrooms, politics, protests, and all kinds of suffering. But in this series, we're not necessarily talking about the kind of injustice that happens in the world around us. The topic of "justice" in that sense can sometimes feel a little abstract. That's why we're focusing on justice in a very personal and specific way: what do we do when we've been treated unjustly?

HOST 2: And remember, we're not wanting to talk about justice as the world defines it (or as we'd like to define it). We're trying to understand how God defines it — because the truth is, Scripture talks about justice quite a bit.

HOST 1: If we're going to break it down the definition of "justice" into one simple phrase, I think it could be this one: justice is making wrong things right. When a situation, system, or circumstance is wrong, unfair, evil, or harmful to others, that's injustice. And when those wrong things are made right, that's justice.

HOST 2: But let's be honest. Sometimes, when we've been wronged (especially in really painful or consequential ways) justice seems impossible. When something truly unjust happens to us, or something is unjustly taken from us, or we're treated unjustly, it often leaves us feeling powerless.

HOST 1: So when there's injustice that impacts us personally, how do we survive it? How do we make sense of things when wrong things seem to stay wrong? How do we keep believing God is a God of justice after we've been so wronged?

HOST 2: In our last session, we met Joseph and his family. Their story is found in the book of Genesis and it's a story that deals with a whole series of injustices — seemingly more than one person (Joseph) should ever have to face on their own.

HOST 1: Joseph was the second youngest of twelve brothers, and his ten older brothers kind of hated him. Joseph had a different mother than his brothers did, and their father Jacob favored Joseph more than the rest of them. And he made it really obvious. Jacob even gave Joseph a special coat to signify his privileged status in the family.

HOST 2: But that's not the only reason Joseph's older brothers may have had negative feelings toward him. Joseph had dreams that were given to him by God, and in these dreams, Joseph saw he would one day be in a position of authority, ruling over his brothers. As we'll see, those dreams would turn out to be true! But, uh, it's not really something you want to hear your pretentious little brother (and your dad's favorite kid) bragging about.

HOST 1: When Joseph told his brothers he would be in charge of them, they were not happy. Their annoyance grew into hatred, and their hatred eventually motivated them to act. Here's what the book of Genesis tells us about how Joseph's brothers responded to his boasting:

HOST 2: "Joseph went after his brothers and found them near Dothan. But they saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him. 'Here comes that dreamer!' they said to each other. 'Come now, let's kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we'll see what comes of his dreams.'"

HOST 1: "When Reuben heard this, he tried to rescue him from their hands. 'Let's not take his life,' he said. 'Don't shed any blood. Throw him into this cistern here in the wilderness, but don't lay a hand on him.' Reuben said this to rescue him from them and take him back to his father. So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe — the ornate robe he was wearing — and they took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern was empty; there was no water in it," Genesis 37:17–24 (NIV).

HOST 2: Just a suggestion — if you're trying to sneak up on someone, maybe don't wear a brightly colored coat. Especially if the people you're sneaking up on really hate that coat.

HOST 1: When Joseph's brothers saw him coming their way and remembered how he thought he was so much better than them, they were enraged. In their anger, they made a decision. They didn't just want to kill his dreams. They wanted to kill him.

HOST 2: Maybe these brothers felt their actions were justified. But were they? Sure, they had been wronged by their father Jacob (who showed Joseph favoritism) and by Joseph himself . . . but was murdering him actually going to make that wrong thing right? Or is justice actually a lot more than just getting revenge?

HOST 1: Maybe Reuben, one of Joseph's older brothers, had that same question. He took a stand on Joseph's behalf, even planning a secret rescue mission later that night. It's hard to applaud him for still going along with the plan to bring physical harm on their little brother, but if it wasn't for his intervention, this is where Joseph's story would've ended.

HOST 2: **"As they sat down to eat their meal, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. Their camels were loaded with spices, balm and myrrh, and they were on their way to take them down to Egypt. Judah said to his brothers, 'What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? Come, let's sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood.' His brothers agreed,"** Genesis 37:25–27 (NIV).

HOST 1: So his brothers had second thoughts — not about killing Joseph, but about how much they stood to gain from the situation. They still wanted Joseph gone, but they also wanted some money for their efforts.

HOST 2: So they did it. They sold their own brother into slavery. That was their poor attempt at "justice." But instead of actually righting any wrongs, they simply added to the injustice by wronging someone else.

HOST 1: We're not going to tell you what happened to Joseph next — not yet, at least. Because when we're the victims of injustice, that feeling of uncertainty is real. When someone harms us, or life feels entirely unfair, or all the odds seem stacked against us, we can't help but wonder, "How is this going to end? Is anyone going to help me? Will I be okay? And in the midst of all of this, where is God?"

HOST 2: In the book of Psalms, there is a passage that might help us answer some of these questions. The psalmist writes this about God: **"Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life. You stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes; with your right hand you save me. The Lord will vindicate me; your love, Lord, endures forever — do not abandon the works of your hands,"** Psalm 138:7–8 (NIV).

HOST 1: There is no doubt Joseph faced incredible injustice from people who wanted to do him harm. Scripture doesn't tell us what Joseph was doing, thinking, or praying during this terrifying time in his life. But based on the choices Joseph would make after this moment, Joseph didn't give up hope. He trusted the God who had once spoken to him through dreams would not leave him in his darkest moment.

HOST 2: Now maybe this sounds nice, but you're thinking the situation you're in right now is different. I mean, your story isn't going to end up in the Bible, so who's to say if it's all going to work out, right? Who's to say justice will ever be done?

HOST 1: So in those moments when we're not actually sure if the wrongs done against us will ever be made right, how is it possible to find hope, and hold onto it, like Joseph and the psalmist did?

HOST 2: We can start by remembering who is in control. Often, injustice has to do with someone's misuse of power. Whether the wrong you've suffered was at the hands of a parent, employer, authority figure, or leader, injustice happens when powerful people abuse their power to harm others. But like the psalmist wrote, no unjust person or unjust system can stand against God. God is more powerful than those who seek to abuse, manipulate, and oppress.

HOST 1: We can remember we're not alone. If you are in a situation where you are being harmed or facing injustice, don't feel like this is your battle to fight all alone. This group, your community, your church, and even professional counselors or therapists are available to you. Justice won't always happen in exactly the ways we want it to, but the people around us can help make wrong things right by helping us find healing and hope in the midst of the hurt.

HOST 2: There's still so much more to explore in the story of Joseph. Joseph's story didn't end in that well and this is not where your story ends either. God isn't leaving you. God isn't done making wrong things right in your life or in the world around you. **So when there is injustice, hold on to hope.**

SESSION 3

DISCUSSION GUIDE



THE BIBLE

Genesis 39:1–23; Psalm 1:1–3

THE BIG IDEA

Integrity can withstand injustice.

WHAT? *What are we talking about?*

NOW WHAT? *What do we do about it?*

STORY

Tell a lighthearted story about a time you did something embarrassing, misguided, or wrong that you're very thankful nobody saw.

QUESTIONS

- Name an embarrassing thing you did when you were a kid that you would've never done if other people were around?
- Why do you think our decisions change based on who's watching?

SAY . . .

"Integrity" is often described as being consistent in character, even when nobody is watching. A person's integrity can be questioned with good reason, but what do we do when it's questioned unjustly?

SO WHAT? *Why does it matter?*

DISCUSSION

- Have you ever witnessed a misuse of power? What happened and why was it unjust?
- What options did Joseph have for reacting to Potiphar's wife's advances and accusations? Which one did he choose and why was it a difficult choice?
- Because of his integrity, Joseph said "no" when "yes" would've been much less complicated. Can you think of any similar situations from your life?
- When Joseph's reputation was jeopardized, what can his commitment to integrity teach us?
- When it's time for us to take a stand, where can we find the strength to choose integrity?
- What habits could we develop now to help build or preserve our integrity?

PRAYER

RESPONSE | Integrity Journal

Take some time this week to think through your values, standards, and the lines you never want to cross. Write those down as guideposts for your future self.

VIDEO | Session 3

Play the video for this session.



SESSION 3

VIDEO SCRIPTS



THE BIBLE

Genesis 39:1–23; Psalm 1:1–3

THE BIG IDEA

Integrity can withstand injustice.

HOST 1: Hello, I'm ____.

HOST 2: And I'm _____. Welcome to session 3 of Made Right, where we've been exploring what the story of Joseph (from the book of Genesis) can reveal about God's heart toward injustice — and how God is always seeking to make wrong things right.

HOST 1: To continue this conversation, let's talk about a specific kind of injustice — a kind we've all experienced at least once. Whether it was a childhood misunderstanding with your parents, a dispute at work, or maybe something a lot more serious, I'm talking about the injustice we experience when we're falsely accused.

HOST 2: Anytime an innocent person is accused of something they didn't do, it's unjust. Especially in an age with the internet around to allow rumors to move faster than ever before, it's a little scary to consider just how quickly a little misinformation can ruin someone's career, family, or whole life.

HOST 1: Although it might seem scary to think that, at any moment, someone could ruin your life by accusing you of something you didn't do, the truth is, it's pretty rare for that to happen to an innocent person — with one big exception.

HOST 2: You see, falsely accusing someone of a crime, mistake, or sin is a tool often used by powerful people to control, silence, or punish people with less power or influence. False accusations are much more effective tools in the hands of powerful people than they are in the hands of people with little to no influence. That's especially true when a less powerful person is attempting to speak out against a powerful person who has behaved unjustly.

HOST 1: Now, you might think we're alluding to one of what, I'm sure, could be a whole host of different scenarios in the news right now. But we're not. Not on purpose, anyway. We're actually talking about a scenario that happened thousands of years ago but still has relevance today.

HOST 2: With that in mind, let's head back to where we left off in the story of Joseph. So far, here's what's happened: Joseph grew up in a very tense household where he was favored by his father and hated by his brothers.

HOST 1: Eventually, his brothers' hatred led them to plot Joseph's murder. However, when it came time to carry out their plan, they sold him to slave traders instead. Let's pick up the story there.

HOST 2: "Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. Potiphar, an Egyptian who was one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him there. Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned."

HOST 1: "From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the Lord blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the Lord was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field. So Potiphar left everything he had in Joseph's care . . . "
Genesis 39:1, 4–6a (NIV).

HOST 2: Once in Egypt, Joseph was sold again to a powerful political figure named Potiphar. This would have been another reasonable point in Joseph's story for him to lose hope, but instead, Joseph found the strength to work hard and earn the trust and respect of Potiphar.

HOST 1: Under Joseph's leadership, Potiphar's business grew. Placing Joseph in charge was looking like the greatest business decision of Potiphar's life, all because of a Hebrew slave he seemingly purchased on a whim.

HOST 2: But then Potiphar's wife began to pursue Joseph — maybe because of his success, or because he was young and attractive, or maybe just because she could. As her slave, she would have considered Joseph her property, after all. And she was pretty direct in her pursuit.

HOST 1: Genesis chapter 39 tell us this: **"One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside. She caught him by his cloak and said, 'Come to bed with me!' But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house,"** Genesis 39:11–12 (NIV).

HOST 2: Joseph literally ran away to avoid this woman's unwanted sexual advances, but he couldn't escape without leaving a piece of his clothing behind. And that's when Potiphar's wife snapped. This woman, who held power and position over Joseph, was not interested in hearing Joseph's "no."

HOST 1: This is just speculation, of course, but based on the confidence with which she pursued Joseph, and her reaction to his refusal, I wonder if this wasn't the first time Potiphar's wife had done something like this. Maybe there were other times when she used her position and power to manipulate an enslaved person into doing what she wanted — even if it was far from what *they* wanted.

HOST 2: She was so angry that her own slave would dare disobey her (and maybe a little bit frightened that Joseph might tell others what she'd done) that Potiphar's wife decided Joseph needed to be silenced — and punished.

HOST 1: **"She kept his cloak beside her until his master came home. Then she told him this story: 'That Hebrew slave you brought us came to me to make sport of me. But as soon as I screamed for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house,'" Genesis 39:16–18 (NIV).**

HOST 2: We all see what's going on here, right? We've seen it before in the news, in the movies, and maybe even in our own lives too. When a person is about to be exposed for their own sins or crimes, it's not uncommon for them to lash out, deflect blame, or try to cover for themselves. That's exactly what Potiphar's wife did.

HOST 1: She had power. She had the attention of her even more powerful husband. And she had Joseph's cloak. She had more than enough to get Joseph imprisoned. So she did. The fact that she assaulted Joseph at all was already an injustice, but the fact that he was imprisoned because of her damaged ego only heightened the injustice. Because this woman abused her power, Joseph lost any hope he thought he would ever have of living a free or meaningful life.

HOST 2: At this point, it would've been understandable if Joseph had decided to give up, right? Hated and abandoned by his family, sold into slavery, and now wrongfully imprisoned after being assaulted — Joseph had been through so much injustice. But still, Joseph didn't stop trusting God. Even in prison, he was committed to being as full of righteousness, faithfulness, and integrity as possible, no matter who was watching.

HOST 1: Watch what Joseph does in prison. **"So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there. The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did," Genesis 39:22–23 (NIV).**

HOST 2: This is what it looks like to be a person of integrity. Even after everything he'd been through, Joseph didn't waiver. He held tightly to his own integrity, trusting God would help him (and his reputation) withstand whatever was to come.

HOST 1: In the book of Psalms, we read this: **"Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither — whatever they do prospers," Psalm 1:1–3 (NIV).**

HOST 2: This image of a tree by a stream is a really helpful way to think about integrity of character. We can't usually see a tree's roots, but those roots are what keep the tree anchored, steady, and flourishing. If the roots are working, the tree will be strong, healthy, and fruitful. It's easy to see the outcome of that tree's health — but the real measure of that tree's health is what happens below the surface, where nobody is looking.

HOST 1: Sounds a lot like Joseph, right? Even when no one was paying attention during his early days in Egypt, or in that moment with Potiphar's wife, or in the years he spent in prison, Joseph chose to make every opportunity matter. He chose to be a man of integrity.

HOST 2: Now, we've talked a lot about character, integrity, and truth for the last few minutes, but maybe you're wondering what this has to do with our faith. First, we're talking about character and integrity because God calls us (just like God called Joseph) to pursue godliness and Christlikeness in all we do.

HOST 1: We're called to reflect Jesus' character in the ways we live and interact with others, and working toward that consistently will result in consistency of character — integrity. It doesn't mean we'll always get it right, of course, but if we're constantly trying to bring our choices into greater alignment with Jesus' example, with the Holy Spirit's help, we will eventually see the fruit of that.

HOST 2: Second, talking about these kinds of injustices matter because they matter to God. Like we've been saying, justice is a theme throughout all of Scripture because God has always cared about righting wrongs both in the world and in our lives.

HOST 1: If you, like Joseph, know what it's like to be lied about or falsely accused, I'm so sorry. What happened to you was unjust. I can't promise you everything will be perfectly resolved someday, but I can promise this is true: God knows. And God is with you.

HOST 2: You can't control what happens to you, or what people choose to believe about you, but you can decide the kind of person you'll be. No matter what's happened in the past, you can choose Christlikeness. Because, remember, your **integrity can withstand injustice.**

SESSION 4

DISCUSSION GUIDE



THE BIBLE

Genesis 45:1–8, 50:19–21; Luke 6:37–38

THE BIG IDEA

God's justice restores what is broken.

WHAT? *What are we talking about?*

NOW WHAT? *What do we do about it?*

QUESTIONS

- If you're watching a game show, which competitor are you most likely to root against?
 - The rude one.
 - The one who's winning.
 - The one who cheats.
- Why is it so hard to watch certain people find success or happiness?

SAY . . .

If it's hard to root for someone on TV who annoys us, it's infinitely more difficult to root for someone who has hurt us in real life. Let's wrap up this series by talking about the complicated and difficult work of restoration — and not revenge.

SO WHAT? *Why does it matter?*

VIDEO | Session 4

Play the video for this session.

DISCUSSION

- Why do you think seeking revenge is so tempting?
- Have you ever sought revenge or had someone seek revenge against you? What did you learn from that experience?
- What options did Joseph have when his brothers showed up in need of his help? Which option would you have chosen?
- How do you think Joseph came to the decision of choosing restoration instead of seeking revenge?
- How did forgiveness impact the relationship between Joseph and his brothers?
- What steps do we need to take if we want to see a relationship truly restored? How can we help each other do the work of restoration?

PRAYER

REFLECTION | First Step

Restoring a broken or damaged relationship requires one party to take the first step. If you feel wronged by someone you're in a relationship with, consider reaching out this week to begin making things right.



SESSION 4

VIDEO SCRIPTS



THE BIBLE

Genesis 45:1–8, 50:19–21; Luke 6:37–38

THE BIG IDEA

God's justice restores what is broken.

HOST 1: Hi, I'm ____.

HOST 2: And I'm _____. Welcome to the final session of our series, Made Right. In this series, we've been talking about how God's idea of "justice" has a lot to do with wrongs getting made right — and what to do when we're the ones who've been wronged.

HOST 1: We've already talked about how, when we've been wronged, we can still choose to love, we can hold onto hope, and we can live a life of integrity. But there's one big (and kind of obvious) idea we haven't talked about quite yet. If we're going to talk about being wronged, we have to also talk about forgiveness.

HOST 2: Forgiveness probably feels like the ideal, final stage in any situation where we have been hurt or treated unjustly. But forgiveness is not as simple as it sounds.

HOST 2: When it comes to forgiveness, there are a lot of valid questions to ask. Like, how does forgiveness actually work? Is it more of a choice or more of a feeling? How do you know when you've done it? And what if you're really having a hard time doing it?

HOST 1: And sometimes (usually in cases of deep hurt, trauma, or abuse), there are even more complicated questions. Like, is it actually necessary to forgive? What happens if I don't? And what if the person who hurt me isn't sorry or repentant at all?

HOST 2: During this series, we've been following the story of Joseph and his family. It's a story of people both carrying out and suffering great injustice. It started small, with a little bit of unjust favoritism from Joseph's dad Jacob. But this escalated into Joseph being kidnapped, nearly murdered, and sold into slavery in Egypt by his own brothers.

HOST 1: In Egypt, we saw that Joseph's integrity and God's favor gave Joseph a lot of success and influence in Egypt, even while he was enslaved. That is, until he was thrown in prison after his slave master's wife assaulted him and then lied about him. I don't know about you, but if I were Joseph, my list of "unforgivable people" would be pretty long at this point.

HOST 2: In all, Joseph spent 12 years in that prison for a crime he didn't commit. But during that time, Joseph didn't grow angry or bitter. Instead, he stayed hopeful, stayed faithful, and continued looking for ways to be used by God. As a result, the pharaoh of Egypt took notice of Joseph's God-given ability to interpret dreams, released him from prison, and gave him authority to help him rule.

HOST 1: And now that we all have whiplash from that sudden turn of events, here's where we'll pick Joseph's story up again. Joseph is now 30 years old, the second most powerful man in the nation of Egypt, and he has not seen or heard from his family since they sold him into slavery 13 years earlier.

HOST 2: Joseph's primary job became to help the nation prepare for a massive famine that had the potential to put everyone's lives at risk — a famine they only knew about because God had revealed it to Joseph in a dream. Egypt was thriving under Joseph's planning and leadership . . . but, little did he know, his non-Egyptian family was on the verge of starving to death.

HOST 1: So when they heard about a new leader in Egypt who had tons of food available during a devastating famine, they set out on a journey to get some. But remember, to Joseph's family, he was long gone. Their father still thought Joseph was dead because that's what his sons told him, and Joseph's brothers probably assumed he was too. So, of course, they had absolutely no reason at all to assume the Egyptian leader they were going to meet might actually be the boy they once sold into slavery.

HOST 2: When the brothers arrived, they stood before Joseph but still didn't recognize him. Joseph definitely recognized them though. I can't imagine what it must have been like for Joseph to suddenly flash back to the trauma he once experienced at the hands of his own brothers. Let's try to get a sense of how Joseph was dealing with his past suddenly resurfacing.

HOST 1: The book of Genesis tells us, **"Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, 'Have everyone leave my presence!' So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers. And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and Pharaoh's household heard about it. Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am Joseph! Is my father still living?' But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence,"** Genesis 45:1–3 (NIV).

HOST 2: "Terrified" is the right word. These brothers had nearly murdered him, sold him into slavery with no concern for his life, and continued to live their own lives as if he were dead. Instantly, they realized the tables had turned — Joseph had all the power and they were in danger.

HOST 1: Joseph could have had them killed, and nobody would have blamed him.

HOST 2: He could have had them sold to the slave master who once owned him, and nobody would have blamed him.

HOST 1: Joseph could have had them thrown in the prison where he spent 12 years of his life, and it would have been a just punishment.

HOST 2: He could have denied them their request for food and sent them home to starve. But Joseph did something nobody (especially not his brothers) could have seen coming. Joseph said: **"Do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you . . . God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt"** Genesis 45:5–9 (NIV).

HOST 1: Joseph forgave his family when he had every reason not to. Yes, he had been wronged. But rather than seeking vengeance, he vowed to make a wrong thing right by choosing to ensure his family was safe and well-fed. He even invited them to move to Egypt to be near him.

HOST 2: Joseph's brothers honored Joseph's request to get his whole family to Egypt, and they lived there peacefully for 17 years before their father, Jacob, died of old age.

HOST 1: When Jacob died, the brothers again panicked and thought maybe Joseph only kept them alive long enough to not grieve their father. To protect themselves, they invented a story about Jacob's last words to try to trick Joseph into not killing them. But look how Joseph responded: **"Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children! And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them,"** Genesis 50:19–21 (NIV).

HOST 2: Joseph closed this painful story by declaring he wasn't anyone's judge and that God would ultimately balance the scales of justice.

HOST 1: Long after Joseph lived, Jesus arrived on the scene with a vision of God's justice that would have been familiar to Joseph. **"Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you"** Luke 6:37–38 (NIV).

HOST 2: Jesus has always pushed his followers to choose forgiveness — even toward our enemies. Instead of hating those who've hurt us, we should pray for them. Instead of taking revenge on them, we're called to show them love and generosity.

HOST 1: Joseph knew forgiving his brothers wouldn't erase what they had done to him, but it would begin the healing process for him personally — and maybe for his family too.

HOST 2: Joseph's story is such a beautiful example of God's restorative justice. It's a justice that doesn't seek to simply punish out of revenge. Instead, God's justice seeks to **restore what was broken.**

HOST 1: Revenge will never make a wrong thing right. It will only create more wrongs. It's an endless cycle of payback with no winners. But when love and forgiveness disrupts the cycle, that's when justice can happen. That's when restoration is possible.

HOST 2: Yes, when someone uses their power to harm others, there should be consequences (and often there are) – that's part of how wrongs get made right. But vengeance, bitterness, and unforgiveness don't have to be part of the equation. In God's vision of justice, forgiveness lives alongside those consequences.

HOST 1: God's vision of justice is so much more beautiful (and difficult) than retribution. God's justice is about repentance. Making things right requires the people who have done harm to change their ways, but it also allows them to do so by choice.

HOST 2: God's justice is about reconciliation. Making wrong things right often involves the rebuilding of relationships broken by someone's decision to harm. But reconciliation isn't always possible or wise – when we've hurt someone, we can't force them to want to be in a relationship with us again.

HOST 2: And when someone refuses to stop hurting us, we can't continue to put ourselves in harm's way. Reconciliation is not always an option, but when it is, this can be a huge part of making what was wrong, right.

HOST 1: And God's justice is ultimately about repairing. It's not about quickly moving on or ignoring the harm people cause. God's justice doesn't ignore the things that are broken. It works to repair them instead. Justice doesn't sweep things under the rug, nor does it seek a quick solution to a complicated problem.

HOST 2: I wonder what needs restoration in your life or relationships. I wonder what wrongs need to be made right. I wonder where you need to let go of unforgiveness so you can reach for restoration instead. Because **God's justice restores what is broken.**



MARKETING

CHECKLIST



BEFORE THE SERIES

✓ TO DO

	Customize your Group Leader Hub web pages for this series.
	Customize and send the Group Leader Email for this series. Then text them a link to the email.
	Review the suggested Social Media Posts and Captions for this series.
	Post the Title Graphic on social media with this caption: We're starting a new series this week about choosing love, hope, integrity, and restoration in the face of injustice. It's called Made Right and we can't wait to see you there!

AFTER SESSION 1

✓ TO DO

	Post a short clip from the Teaching Video for Session 1 on social media.
	Post the Big Idea Graphic for Session 1 on social media with this caption: In session one of Made Right, we saw how injustice can grow in an environment that lacks love, but justice is love in action.
	Customize and send the Group Leader Email for this series. Then text them a link to the email.

AFTER SESSION 2

✓ **TO DO**

	Post a short clip from the Teaching Video for Session 2 on social media.
	Post the Big Idea Graphic for Session 2 on social media with this caption: In session two of Made Right, we saw how Joseph's story of suffering reveals that when there is injustice, we can hold on to hope.
	Customize and send the Group Leader Email for this series. Then text them a link to the email.

AFTER SESSION 3

✓ **TO DO**

	Post a short clip from the Teaching Video for Session 3 on social media.
	Post the Big Idea Graphic for Session 3 on social media with this caption: In session three of Made Right, Joseph's experience of being falsely accused of a crime revealed how true integrity can withstand injustice.
	Customize and send the Group Leader Email for this series. Then text them a link to the email.

AFTER SESSION 4

✓ **TO DO**

	Post a short clip from the Teaching Video for Session 4 on social media.
	Post the Big Idea Graphic for Session 4 on social media with this caption: In session four of Made Right, the story of Joseph reconciling with his brothers reveals that God's justice restores what is broken.
	Get ready for the next series!

SOCIAL MEDIA

POSTS & CAPTIONS



Need some help deciding what to post on social media before and during this series? Here's our suggestion: each session, share the media we've provided in your Graphics and Videos folder using the captions below.



BEFORE THE SERIES

BUMPER VIDEO

We're starting a new series this week about choosing love, hope, integrity, and restoration in the face of injustice. It's called Made Right and we can't wait to see you there!

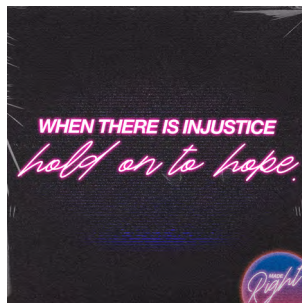
AFTER SESSION 1



BIG IDEA (SESSION 1)

In session one of Made Right, we saw how injustice can grow in an environment that lacks love, but **justice is love in action.**

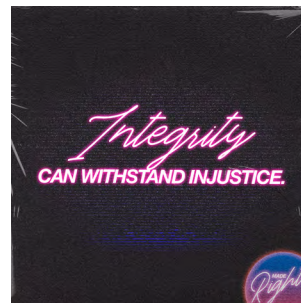
AFTER SESSION 2



BIG IDEA (SESSION 2)

In session two of Made Right, we saw how Joseph's story of suffering reveals that **when there is injustice, we can hold on to hope.**

AFTER SESSION 3



BIG IDEA (SESSION 3)

In session three of Made Right, Joseph's experience of being falsely accused of a crime revealed how true **integrity can withstand injustice.**

AFTER SESSION 4



BIG IDEA (SESSION 4)

In session four of Made Right, the story of Joseph reconciling with his brothers reveals that **God's justice restores what is broken.**

What We're Teaching



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