

TRY IT ON

WHAT FITS MY GRIEF?

The Grieving of Joseph

Some features to help you determine if you want to **TRY ON** the grief because the circumstances are similar to your own:

- Abusive mistreatment
- Removal from family/home
- Mistaken identity
- Expressed regret
- Distrust of intentions

Some feelings to help you determine if you want to **TRY ON** the grief because the emotions are similar to your own:

- Traumatized
- Triggered
- Skeptical
- Regretful
- Longing
- Homesick

A summary about what happened.

When his brothers re-entered his life, Joseph remembered how they dismissed his dreams, hated him, tried to steal his inheritance, stripped him, intended to kill him, and sold him as a slave. Away from home and family, Joseph was forced into high demands, physical abuse, false accusations, a prison sentence, and saving the world. Since his brothers did not recognize him, Joseph did not assume they were the same or had changed but instead interrogated them through an interpreter. They claimed his father, Jacob, and closest brother, Benjamin, were still alive. Joseph gave them a chance to prove this by offering them food in exchange for bringing Benjamin to him. While discussing this, they expressed regret for ignoring their brother's cry for help, which Joseph overheard not knowing whether they were talking about him or Benjamin. Joseph turned away and wept. After they left, he waited a long time, not knowing if they would return. When they eventually returned with Benjamin, Joseph felt the pain of the many years away from the ones he loved. Overwhelmed, Joseph left them, went to his inner bedroom, and wept loudly. He then washed his face and braced himself for what would come next.



Some of the actions of Joseph that you can *TRY ON* to see if any fit you well:

- **Interrogate with interpreters** - When you do not know what has happened because you were not there to experience it, ask questions. Invite someone you trust to mediate the conversation. An interpreter can help you process what you are hearing, keep you protected, and ask questions that will help you know how to proceed. An interpreter can offer you support and remove the pressure to know what to say or what questions to ask.
- **Express disbelief** - Do not accept everything you hear especially if you have been hurt by people in the past. If you have suspicions, communicate that you do not believe what another person is telling you. Expressing doubts can protect you from being deceived again and can bring the truth into the open.
- **Test for truth** - Avoid assumptions about what could be true - whether others have changed or not. Consider what action or statement could help you to determine what is true. Give others the opportunity to prove true what they say. Look for situations that might reveal the motivations and desires behind the actions. Ask the Spirit to reveal the truth.
- **Leave to weep** - Weeping puts you in a vulnerable state, and sometimes others may take advantage of the opportunity to bring you more harm. Turn away if you doubt their intentions, and return to them when you are ready. Take as much time as you need to get yourself ready.
- **Get alone** - Some grief is too much to share. Find a solitary place like an inner room, bedroom, or closet. Get yourself as comfortable as you can, and let the tears or cries erupt out of you. Don't worry if others hear you or talk about you while you are gone. Take the time to be alone and care for yourself by expressing your emotions privately.
- **Take time to wash** - Do not feel pressured by the demands or desires of others. Take the time to recover from expressing your emotions. Taking a bath, showering, or even just washing your face can enable you to shift from expressing your emotions openly to matching the emotions of a group or situation. Take the time to get rid of the signs of weeping or raging. Changing your appearance can help you get yourself ready to face what is coming.

Some of the phrases of Joseph that you can **TRY ON** to see if any feel right for you:

- Where are you coming from?
- I don't know if I believe you.
- I have not forgotten what happened.
- Prove what you say is true.
- I fear God.
- Are those I care about safe?
- Let's see how they respond.

Some ideas you can **TRY ON** with a child:

- **Seek confirmation** - If your child is doubting what someone else is saying, invite your child to investigate with you. Model for the child how to avoid assumptions and instead seek confirmation from reliable sources. Set a plan together about how to approach witnesses or obtain proof.
- **Find interpreters** - When your child is struggling to communicate with you or someone else, ask your child who could serve as an interpreter for your child. If your child chooses you, brainstorm together what your child would like to say and then attempt to translate that to get the result your child wants. Sometimes trained experts can help when difficulties regarding clear communication arise. Affirm to your child that you will be with your child to help with communication.
- **Give space** - If your child is wanting to withdraw, affirm the desire your child has to be alone. If your child is wanting to cry, tell your child that it is natural to want to cry alone. Set the boundaries with your child so that your child has the support but also the freedom that is needed. Be sure to check on your child periodically so that the child is not left alone for too long or feels abandoned by you.
- **Get a new look** - Help your child to get ready for interactions that your child may not want to have. If there is a group gathering or

funeral, discuss with your child what would make that situation easier to face. Give some examples if your child does not have any ideas, such as:

- Take a bath
- Find new clothes
- Put on makeup
- Change your hair
- Put on jewelry
- Find a hat

A summary of what happens next:

Joseph tested his brothers to see if they would abandon Benjamin like they did to him. When one of his brothers, Judah, expressed a desire to protect his father from further heartache and give himself to set Benjamin free, Joseph finally knew that his brothers had changed. Judah had been the one who came up with the plan to sell Joseph, but now Judah was willing to sacrifice himself. Joseph wept loudly. He revealed himself to his brothers. He embraced Benjamin. He told his brothers that his dream would be to have them relocate next to him and live together. They told their father what happened, and Joseph was reunited with his father. He forgave his brothers and told them that God had taken what was evil and brought out of it something good.

Where to find the *Grieving of Joseph*:

Genesis 42-43 within the larger story of Genesis 37-50