



From Ordinary to Extraordinary

Gen 39, 41; Mark 12:29-31; Col 3:17; Php 1:9-11, 2:13

OPEN

What were the highlights of your last two days?

Would you rate your last week at ordinary or extraordinary? Why?

DISCUSS

Have you ever noticed how much time can be captured in one or two short verses? Moses was a shepherd for 40 years and only a few verses talk about it. Imagine that...everyday with sheep for 40 years! Talk about long, ordinary days. In Gen 39 and 41, we find Joseph in prison after being falsely accused by Potiphar's wife. Read Gen 39:20-21 and 41:1.

Bible Note: Joseph was 17 when he came into service of Potiphar as his household slave and 30 years old when he leaves prison. For 13 years he was a slave and in prison (likely in prison for more than 2 years as verse 41:1 says).

- What do you think the days would have been like in prison...even if you were given responsibilities by the warden (39:22-23)?
- Why do you think Joseph found favor with Potiphar and the jail warden—resulting in “promotions” or being entrusted with responsibilities?
- Read Col 3:17. How do you see Joseph living this kind of life? As you think about your own life, does this verse seem comforting, convicting, and/or motivating? Explain.

Do you feel our culture values ordinary days? Do you value them? What makes one day ordinary and another extraordinary?

Read Mark 12:29-34.

- This was no ordinary question posed to Jesus. It was a question of the Law and the Law defined the people of God and how they were to live every day. What command does Jesus give as the most important (in fact saying EVERYTHING hangs on it)?
- The man in the story "gets it" Jesus says in vs. 32-34. How does Jesus encourage the man?
- What does it mean to live in the Kingdom of God today?
- Is anything ordinary in the Kingdom of God when one is following Jesus by loving God and loving others? Explain.
- How would you connect Col 3:17 and Mark 12:29-31?
- What could you imagine changing in the places or with the people at home, work, your neighborhood (or any other place) because you put these verses in to action?

We must train ourselves to follow Jesus well. We train ourselves to be faithful disciples taking steps of faith...we do not simply wish or try to be Christians. One training practice that helps us stay in tune with God throughout our days is the *practice of the examen*. Discuss with the group what would you would have to do to actually do this practice several times this next week (or daily).

- Create regular space to be still and quiet
- Examen your day or week by asking questions like:
 - Where did I sense God's love and leading and where did I seem distant from God?
 - Where did I practice the fruit of the Spirit and where did I not?
 - Where did I walk in step with God and where was I not in step?
- Respond to your reflections with prayers of gratitude, confession, and/or commitment.

NEXT STEPS

- Read the whole story of Joseph (Genesis 37-50) each week during this series.
- Practice the Examen several times this week. Reflect on what you begin noticing about your days and yourself. Report back to the group about your experience and what you see transforming in your life.