The Garden Life Church | SERIES: FEAR OF GOD | Sunday, November 8, 2026

Fear God, Not Your Feelings

Scripture References (ESV)
Genesis 42:6-18, 24, 25-28 | Genesis 50:15, 19-20 | Romans 8:28-30

Genesis 42:6-18
6 Now Joseph was governor over the land. He was the one who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed themselves before him with their faces to the ground.
7 Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he treated them like strangers and spoke roughly to them. “Where do you come from?” he said. They said, “From the land of Canaan, to buy food.”
8 And Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him.
9 And Joseph remembered the dreams that he had dreamed of them. And he said to them, “You are spies; you have come to see the nakedness of the land.”
10 They said to him, “No, my lord, your servants have come to buy food.
11 We are all sons of one man. We are honest men. Your servants have never been spies.”
12 He said to them, “No, it is the nakedness of the land that you have come to see.”
13 And they said, “We, your servants, are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan, and behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is no more.”
14 But Joseph said to them, “It is as I said to you. You are spies.
15 By this you shall be tested: by the life of Pharaoh, you shall not go from this place unless your youngest brother comes here.
16 Send one of you, and let him bring your brother, while you remain confined, that your words may be tested, whether there is truth in you. Or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies.”
17 And he put them all together in custody for three days.
18 On the third day Joseph said to them, “Do this and you will live, for I fear God:

Key Truths >> Your hurt is valid. | Your trauma is valid. | Your feelings or emotions are real. <<

However, they are not sovereign, nor are they eternal. How you feel today is not how you will always feel, and what you are experiencing today will not be the sum total of your life.

- I prophetically declare over everyone under the sound of my voice that you will not be driven by your feelings or emotions; rather, you will live a life founded on the word of God, driven by the spirit of God, and yield it to the will of God. What you feel may affect you, but it will not reorient you.

Submit Your Emotions to God

As a people endeavoring to fear God, just as we submit our actions and behaviors to God, we must also submit our emotions to Him.

- When we submit our real, raw emotions to God, He sanctifies them; however, when we don't, those unsanctified emotions become internalized. Even if they are inaccurate, they become part of our narrative, and if left unchallenged, they become part of our identity.
- I am challenging you today to come out of agreement with every unsanctified feeling and emotion that has taken residence in your psyche and is presently trying to weave itself into the very fabric of your identity.
- I rebuke every false narrative that has become common and repetitive for you.

The Question We Must Answer

In our text of focus today, we see Joseph wrestling with the same challenge many of us face every day: Will I respond according to what has happened to me and my emotions concerning it, or according to the fear of God?

Let's survey the Scripture and learn from its truth…

- Joseph’s Story
  - Years earlier, Joseph's brothers had betrayed him, stripped him of his coat, thrown him into a pit, and sold him into slavery. He was separated from his family, falsely accused, imprisoned, and forgotten. Yet God had preserved him and elevated him to a position of authority in Egypt. Now a famine has spread throughout the region, and Joseph's brothers travel to Egypt to purchase grain. They come before the very brother they betrayed, but they do not recognize him.

- The Fulfillment of the Dream
  - Genesis 42:6 says Joseph's brothers bowed before him with their faces to the ground. The dream Joseph had received years earlier was now being fulfilled. But this moment is more than the fulfillment of a prophetic dream. It is an emotional confrontation between a man who has experienced tremendous injustice and the people responsible for it.

- Joseph’s Internal Conflict
  - Joseph recognizes his brothers. They do not recognize Joseph. And Joseph now has something he did not have when he was seventeen years old: power. He has authority. He has resources. He can determine their circumstances. He has the opportunity to confront the people who wounded him. And this is where the text becomes particularly interesting.
  - Joseph must navigate the tension between what he remembers, what he feels, what he knows, and what God is doing.

Process Your Emotions

The test Joseph gave his brothers to retrieve Benjamin was his way of processing what was happening. I am not saying this is the only way to process your emotions; I'm just acknowledging that it was his. Your way may not be conventional, and it may not be, but it needs to be done. “I'm good,” “It’s cool,” “I'm not mad,” and “It doesn't matter” are not acceptable responses.

- **Genesis 42:24** says that Joseph left them and took time to weep. Grieving what happened is necessary if you're going to move beyond it.

Respond with Integrity and Compassion

Genesis 42:25-28
25 And Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain, and to replace every man's money in his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. This was done for them.
26 Then they loaded their donkeys with their grain and departed.
27 And as one of them opened his sack to give his donkey fodder at the lodging place, he saw his money in the mouth of his sack.
28 He said to his brothers, “My money has been put back; here it is in the mouth of my sack!” At this their hearts failed them, and they turned trembling to one another, saying, “What is this that God has done to us?”

Joseph certainly could have responded vengefully to his brothers. Most would agree that he was well within his rights to pay them back for what they did. However, he did not respond as they did; he responded according to who he was and his responsibility. Not only did he give them grain, but he returned the fees they paid. When we respond with integrity and compassion, we create space for remorse, resolution, and possible reconciliation.

Seek the Divine Imperative

The divine imperative can be described as the Providence of God that runs parallel to humanity's timeline and inserts itself at particular moments to ensure justice and righteousness prevail.

- The Test After the Victory
  - **Genesis 50:15**
    15 When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, “It may be that Joseph

will hate us and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him."

- Joseph Saw Something Greater
  - **Genesis: 50:19-20**
    19 But Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God?
    20 As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

- Observation
  - This is not to suggest that God divinely intended for Joseph's brothers to harm him in the ways that they did, but it is to say that despite their evil efforts, God's Providence prevailed.

- The Same Applies to Us
  - While I cannot speak to all the nuances of everything you all have suffered in this room, and I'm sure the suffering has been great:
    - I encourage you to seek the divine imperative.
    - Know that Romans 8:28 is not just a cliché.
    - It is a Divine promise for all those who fear God.

  - **Romans 8:28-30**
    28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.
    29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.
    30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

We will not be driven by our feelings. We will be driven by the fear of God, and we will see his world manifested in our lives.

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