

Group Guide 4 — The Lord's Purpose Prevails

God Is Sovereign • Let Go Control

ICE BREAKERS AT THE TABLE

Step 1 — Pick This Week's Table Host. The host reads the questions (or calls on others) and keeps the conversation moving. Host reminder: don't rush. Give people time to think.

Opening Questions

- What is something you really don't like being out of control of?
- Are you more of a planner or a go-with-the-flow person?
- On a scale of 1–10, how hard is it for you to let go when things are uncertain?

TEACHING (LED BY TEACHER)

Big Idea: God is not reacting to life. He is ruling over it — and that is freedom, not a threat.

Teaching Summary: When life feels uncertain, we grip tighter — managing outcomes, predicting results, trying to fix everything — and slowly we start trusting ourselves more than God. This week calls us back to the truth that God is sovereign. He has the right, power, and authority to rule over everything. Nothing catches Him off guard. We make plans, but the Lord's purpose prevails. That means we don't get the final say — and that is exactly where trust, surrender, and peace begin.

TABLE STUDY GUIDE

Scripture Focus

Proverbs 19:21 • Genesis 50:20

Step 1: Read It Slowly

Have one person read Proverbs 19:21. Have another read Genesis 50:20.

Take Note: What Do You Notice?

- What does Proverbs 19:21 say about our plans and God's purpose?
- In Genesis 50:20, how many intentions are at work in the same event?
- What stands out most to you as you listen?

Step 2: Take a Closer Look

Joseph's brothers genuinely chose evil, and yet Joseph says, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good." One event, two intentions. God's good purpose ran straight through their sinful choices — without God being the author of their sin.

Discuss Together

- How can our choices be real and God still be fully in control? Why don't we have to pick one?
- Why is it good news that we don't get the final say or control outcomes?
- Joseph's good ending came after years of pain. How does that shape what we expect from God's sovereignty?

Step 3: Make It Personal

Be Honest

- Where are you trying to control something right now?
- Where have you been stressed instead of surrendered — acting like everything depends on you?
- What is hardest for you to release to God?

Step 4: Reframe the Way We Think

Table Reflection

- “You are responsible for obedience; God is responsible for results.” Which have you been carrying that isn't yours?
- What would change if you truly trusted God with the area you most want to control?
- Where might God be working for good in a chapter of your life that doesn't make sense yet?

GOING DEEPER: A CLOSER LOOK AT THE TEXT

Optional — for groups that want to dig further. Use this alongside the questions above; the table host can take as much or as little as time and the group's appetite allow.

Break Down the Verse

Genesis 50:20 (NIV)

“You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.”

One Hebrew verb, *chashab* (“intended, planned, wove”), is used for BOTH the brothers and God in the very same sentence. The same event has two authors at once: real human evil and real divine purpose — not God merely cleaning up a mess afterward, but weaving it the whole time. Joseph does not say, “You meant evil, and it happened to work out.” He says God meant it for good.

Proverbs 19:21 holds the other side: “Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails.” Sovereignty doesn't erase our planning; it overrules the final outcome. Our plans are real; God's purpose is final.

Wrestle With It

Provocative Questions

- How do you hold both truths at once — that the brothers were genuinely guilty AND God genuinely intended it — without softening either one?
- Is it comforting or unsettling that God can “intend for good” the very things that wounded you? Why might it be both?
- Joseph could only say this decades later. Are there things you cannot yet call “good” — and is it okay to not be there yet?

WRAP-UP QUESTION

As you think about this week:

- Fill in the blank: “God, I release _____ to You.”
- What is one thing you've been carrying that you can give back to God this week?
- What does faithful stewardship look like for you, while trusting God with the outcome?

CLOSING PRAYER (OPTIONAL)

Invite someone to pray, asking God to help the room release what they've been holding onto and to give peace where people have been trying to control everything.

God, help me release what I've been holding onto. Remind me that You are in control. Give me peace where I've been trying to control everything.