



## God's Goodness Devotion

**[Please provide:** paper and pencil to complete the charting activity contained in the devotion]

*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 (Genesis 50:20).*

There was certainly evil there, on that hill outside Jerusalem, so many years ago. There were evil intentions indeed. On that hill was Jesus, Savior, Love incarnate, with His arms stretched from nail to nail. Vigilant soldiers were stationed below the cross as they awaited Jesus' death. Enemies of Jesus were there, hatred seething, conquest knocking at their demented internals. Satan waited to inhale the nightmarish victory stench of Jesus' dead body that he could only hope for in his dreams.

A last breath inhaled and exasperated. A heart-broken mother Mary. Jesus' blood-encrusted, lifeless body. A morose silence. There was certainly evil there, on that hill outside Jerusalem, so many years ago.

God was also there, in the middle of it all! With God in the middle, evil bolted, boulders moved, angels perched, Roman guards collapsed, Marys and friends and followers arrived, the once-dead but now-resurrected and living-again Jesus thrived, and the forever transformed world awakened. Peer in closely and you'll see the wily foe snarling in completed defeat. What was meant as evil was used by God for good—for our eternal good!

While this Holy Week and Easter event was gloriously the greatest, it indubitably wasn't the first time God would bring a good outcome from evil intentions. The Bible tells us how this happened again and again in the life of Joseph.

"You meant evil against me," Joseph said as he confronted his brothers from his elevated position in Egypt. Joseph's brothers were evil. In a jealous fit they tossed him into a pit and then towed him out again only to market him off as an Egyptian slave. How could their death-lies about Joseph, "proven" by the coat of many colors that they had bloodied and presented to their father Jacob as false evidence, be anything but pure evil on their part?

Evil? Consider Joseph, illicitly indicted from Potiphar's house to a surly, slimy prison. Unremembered by former fellow cell residents after aiding them by revealing the gist of their dreams. Joseph seemed hemmed in with evil. Immersed in it. Evil was everywhere!

But there, in the midst of evil, Joseph's merciful and gracious God was also present, and where He enters in, well, you know what happens to evil! As St. Paul reminds us in Romans 8:28: *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*

From the pit of a prison, Joseph the dreamer is elevated to Pharaoh's palace. That's good! Joseph not only reminisces with his brothers, he is reunited with them, as God operates His

grace through a series of awe-raising reorienting events (Genesis 45–50). That’s also good! Joseph delivers his family from certain famine and harsh death in Canaan by summoning his brothers and father and their people and their stuff to the land of Goshen and to amazing prosperity and God-assured life. The brothers may have intended only evil against Joseph, but with God in the middle of the muddle, He meant it for good, which for Joseph and his clan, for thousands of people including us, through Jesus and His salvation of all, is very, very good!

Are there other outstanding instances of God transforming evil and disappointment and anger to good in God’s Word? Absolutely! The pages of the Bible archive the accounts of His mercy and love and deliverance just waiting for our discovery.

Does God get in the middle of anger and crippling disappointment and life-destroying evil yet today? Does God get in the messes and the muddles of our lives and the lives of our contemporaries as well?

To answer those queries, take a sheet of paper and chart it into three columns. Head the left-hand column, “Evil.” Head the middle column, “God.” Head the right-hand column, “Good.” Then fill in the areas as you answer these questions: What evils, reasons for anger or disappointment have you gone through or are you now facing? What intervention has God delivered or will soon use to deliver you from these evils? What good from God have you experienced by His grace or can you, in fulfillment of His promises, expect?

With His love and grace for us through Christ Jesus, we can be assured that from what others mean for evil, God can and does bring about good.

**Closing Prayer:** Saving God, we thank You that You promise to be with us always, in the middle and the muddle of our lives, even and especially when we are faced with evil and disappointment and anger. Rescue us, according to Your amazing promises and power proclaimed to us in Your Word. With so many before us and with us now whom You have liberated from the evil forces around us, we give You glory and honor and praise. We look forward with great anticipation to the day when finally You will release us and all believers from sin’s temporary grip to the glorious complete freedom and life Jesus won for us in heaven. In His Name, which sets us free, we pray. Amen.

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*Written by Rev. Larry A. Miller, East Helena, Montana*  
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