Notice the wonderful irony that dreams were the means that God used to get Joseph out of his pit, since dreams got him there in the first place.

*Genesis 37:20 (ESV)* “Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits. Then we will say that a fierce animal has devoured him, and we will see what will become of his dreams.”

*Genesis 40:1 (ESV)* Some time after this, the cupbearer of the king of Egypt and his baker committed an offense against their lord the king of Egypt.

That’s ironic as well. These men were in prison because of their real sin against their master, while Joseph, who had refused to sin against God and his master (39:9), was in prison for his righteousness.

Temptations we face when we go through suffering:

1. The temptation to stop caring about others.
2. The temptation to lose faith in God.

What is the explanation for Joseph’s faith, hope, and persistent love under such challenging circumstances? The only explanation is the awareness of God’s blessing upon him and presence with him, even in the midst of trials.

*Genesis 40:14 (ESV)* Only remember me, when it is well with you, and please do me the kindness to mention me to Pharaoh, and so get me out of this house.

*Hesed* is a theologically rich concept that combines the notions of loyalty and love. The most precious use of the word *hesed* in the Old Testament is as a description of what God does. Having entered a covenant relationship with his people, God bound himself to act toward them in certain ways, and he is completely faithful to his commitment.

*Genesis 40:15 (ESV)* For I was indeed stolen out of the land of the Hebrews, and here also I have done nothing that they should put me into the pit.

*Romans 5:3-5 (ESV)* Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.
Bearing fruit while enduring suffering: Genesis 41

In chapter 41 of Genesis, we see Joseph exhibiting the same qualities in prosperity that he learned during his long period of painful endurance in the pit.

Joseph gave the credit to God:

**Genesis 41:16 (ESV)** Joseph answered Pharaoh, “It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer.”

**Genesis 41:32 (ESV)** And the doubling of Pharaoh’s dream means that the thing is fixed by God, and God will shortly bring it about.

**Genesis 41:38 (ESV)** And Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find a man like this, in whom is the Spirit of God?”

Forgetful and Fruitful:

**Genesis 41:51-52 (ESV)** 51 Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh. “For,” he said, “God has made me forget all my hardship and all my father's house.” 52 The name of the second he called Ephraim, “For God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.”

What Joseph did by naming his son Manasseh was to reshape the significance of the past by putting it into the context of what God was doing in his life.

How does this reshaping of our painful memories happen? The name that Joseph gives to his second son, Ephraim, is a clue. Joseph explains, “God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.”