

## *Discover 2019*

27<sup>th</sup> Nov 6 pm to 30<sup>th</sup> Nov 1 pm

<i>Day 1 - 27<sup>th</sup> November - Wednesday</i>	
<i>Time</i>	<i>Session Title</i>
6:00 PM - 8:30 PM	01- Dysfunctional family
8:30 PM	<i>Dinner</i>

<i>Day 2 - 28<sup>th</sup> November - Thursday</i>	
<i>Time</i>	<i>Session Title</i>
6:00 AM - 7:00 AM	02- Morning Devotion – Significance of Insignificance
7:00 AM - 9:00 AM	<i>Breakfast</i>
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM	03- Betrayal
11:20 AM - 1:00 PM	04- False Accusation
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM	<i>Lunch</i>
3:00 PM - 4:30 PM	05- Interactive Session
4:30 PM - 6:00 PM	<i>Break</i>
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM	06- Self-Discipline
8:00 PM	<i>Dinner</i>

<i>Day 3 - 29<sup>th</sup> November - Friday</i>	
<i>Time</i>	<i>Session Title</i>
6:00 AM - 7:00 AM	07- Morning Devotion – Walking with God
7:00 AM - 9:00 AM	<i>Breakfast</i>
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM	08- Patience

11:20 AM - 1:00 PM	09- Forgiveness
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM	<i>Lunch</i>
3:00 PM - 4:30 PM	Interactive session – Q&A
4:30 PM - 6:00 PM	<i>Break</i>
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM	10- Promotion and Diligence
8:00 PM	Dinner

<b><i>Day 4 - 30<sup>th</sup> November - Saturday</i></b>	
<b><i>Time</i></b>	<b><i>Session Title</i></b>
6:00 AM - 7:00 AM	11- Morning Devotion – All things work for good
7:00 AM - 9:00 AM	<i>Breakfast</i>
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM	12- Be faithful
11:20AM – 1:00 PM	Prayer and farewell

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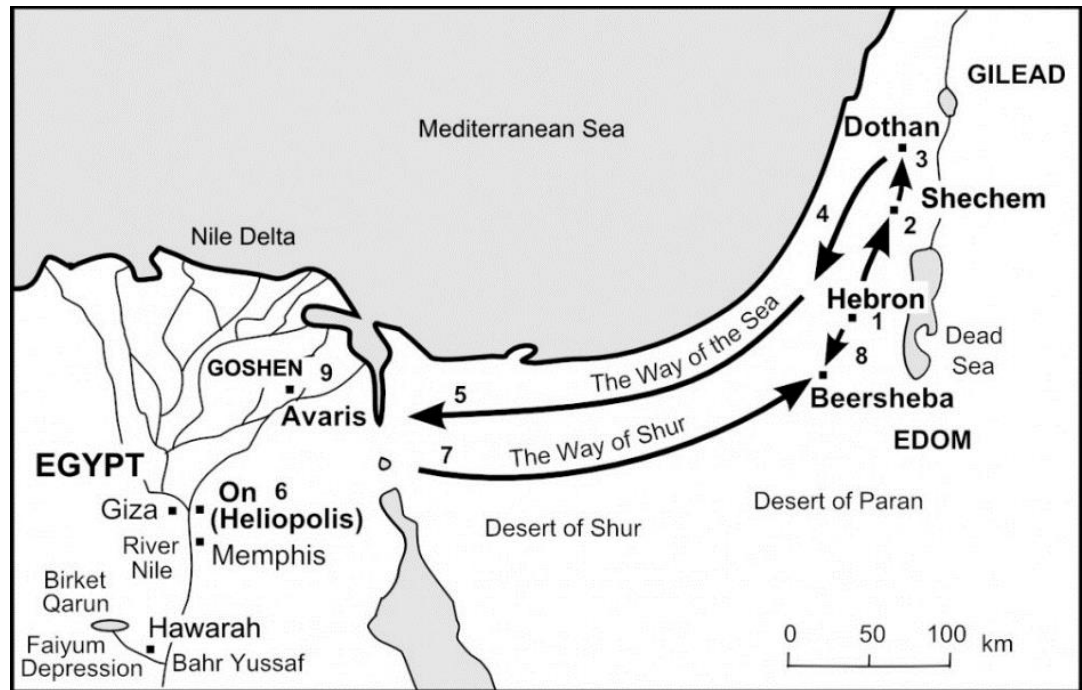
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## Discover 2019

### Life of Joseph



- Joseph means 'God increases'
- Joseph was born 1916 B.C
- He was 17 when he was sold into Egypt. Genesis 37:2 1899 B.C
- Joseph was in prison at least 2 years Genesis 41:1.
- Joseph lived in Potiphar's house 11 years
- He was 30 when he was made overseer. Genesis 41:46
- Joseph was 37 years old end the plenty years
- Joseph Marries Asenath
- Asenath means 'gift of the sun-god'
- Manasseh and Ephraim were born
- Manasseh 'God has made me forget all my hardship and all my father's house'
- Ephraim 'God has made me fruitful in the land of my misfortunes'.

- He was 39 when his brothers first came to Egypt (second year of the famine, or nine years after being made overseer)
  - He was probably 41 or so when the brothers came a second time and Jacob comes to Egypt
  - Joseph was 56 years old when Jacob dies when he was 130 years old Genesis 47:28.
  - Joseph was 110 when he died. Genesis 50:26. 1806 B.C
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## *1. Dysfunctional Family*



Old Testament has many known and interesting stories even a Non-Christian knows about. One such great story is the life of Joseph.

For every Christian, there is one life which exemplifies the life of a disciple of Jesus Christ and that is the life of Joseph. He lived such an exemplary life style so that we can learn and role model his life.

Next three days we are going to look in-depth about his life, in comparison with Jesus, so that we can learn from his life.

We will study to see how we can see the Unseen Hand of God in the life of Joseph and Jesus. By doing so we will find our life too!

We see the hand of God in the life of Joseph, which demonstrates how God's goodness is active in the lives of his people.

We encounter the whole of human reality such as love, hate, jealousy, humility, temptation, betrayal, and best of all, good triumphing over evil.

In the Old Testament we see many characters in "God's Story" that foreshadow or bear resemblance to our Lord Jesus Christ. In some respects, Jesus can be a combination and perfection of these earlier heroes of faith.

This foreshadowing of Christ can enhance our appreciation for the Messiah, The Saviour.

We are called to be disciples of Jesus. That is, we are to be learners of his ways.

*Hebrews 4:15, For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.*

Jesus was tempted just as we are, but he neither sinned nor failed.

Looking at the various characters of the Bible we can see how others met the challenges of life. Hopefully we can be encouraged by their successes and warned of possible pitfalls by their failures.

We can also develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of God by seeing His hand in both the ups and downs. When we turn the spotlight on a certain character or set of characters, we always must keep in mind that they are not the story!

They are only characters in God's story.

God is the writer of the Story of Redemption and He is also the main character.

Unlike the main character of many stories, God is often working behind the scenes.

These three days we are going to discover God in the life of Joseph. Similarly, we will also discover the unseen hand of God in the lives of people and in doing so we will see the same in our own life!

So, keeping this in mind we will walk into the story of Joseph!

*1. Joseph's story is the longest in Genesis.*

*2. The life of Joseph is the greatest and clearest picture of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament.*

In the book of Genesis, there are eight main characters who illustrate how faith functions in our relationship with God. The most important account is of Abraham, who rises as the Pike's Peak of faith in the OT. But Joseph's story equals Abraham's in the number of chapters (14 each) and is actually 25% longer than the record of the great "father of the faithful." It's obvious that the Holy Spirit doesn't want us to miss the message.

Across the centuries, theologians have noted the parallels between Joseph and Jesus. Theologians find no less than 101 such connections between them.

Both were,

✓ innocent,

- ✓ chosen,
- ✓ beloved by their father,
- ✓ sent by their fathers to see about their brothers,
- ✓ sold as slaves.
- ✓ cast between two criminals,
- ✓ pronouncing the salvation of one and
- ✓ the death of the other.

Joseph forgave those who sought his ruin, just as Jesus did.

In the lives of both Joseph and Christ, it was the wicked plot of those who should have been the most likely to accept them that ultimately lead to the salvation of all who would come.

### ***Dysfunctional Family.***

Great- Grandfather – **Abraham**

Grand Father – **Isaac**

Father – **Jacob**

#### ***Genesis 25:19-26,***

*This is the genealogy of Isaac, Abraham's son. Abraham begot Isaac. <sup>20</sup> Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah as wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan Aram, the sister of Laban the Syrian. <sup>21</sup> Now Isaac pleaded with the Lord for his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord granted his plea, and Rebekah his wife conceived. <sup>22</sup> But the children struggled together within her; and she said, "If all is well, why am I like this?" So she went to inquire of the Lord. <sup>23</sup> And the Lord said to her: "Two nations are in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; One people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger." <sup>24</sup> So when her days were fulfilled for her to give birth, indeed there were twins in her womb. <sup>25</sup> And the first came out red. He was like a hairy garment all over; so they called his name Esau. <sup>26</sup> Afterward his brother came out, and his hand took hold of Esau's heel; so his name was called Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.*

#### ***Great Grand Father and Promise of God***

***Genesis 15:4-6,*** *And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir." <sup>5</sup> Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall*

*your descendants be.”<sup>6</sup> And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.*

God Made a promise to Abraham that his promised child will be a blessing and he will have multitude of children.

### ***Grand Father knew the Promise of God to his Father.***

***Genesis 26:3-5,*** *Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. <sup>4</sup>And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; <sup>5</sup> because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.”*

God did speak to Joseph’s Grand Father, Isaac, that he will be a blessing and his descendants will be innumerable because of Abraham.

### ***Jacob, Father of Joseph knew the Promise***

***Genesis 28:13-15,*** *And behold, the Lord stood above it and said: “I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. <sup>14</sup>Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. <sup>15</sup>Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you.”*

God originally promised Abraham and then passed on the same promise to his son, Isaac and then God did promise Jacob that God will bless him.

Though he tricked his father, who was blind with the help of his mother, still God promised to bless him since he had promised his forefathers.

God met Jacob at Bethel and made this promise.

But how did Jacob create a family?

### ***Genesis 29:15-28,***

Jacob meets Rachel and her father, Laban.

Jacob works for 7 and half years to marry Rachel. After his wedding night he realized that he was tricked by Laban, his father in law, by getting him married to Leah, Rachel’s sister.

*V 20, Seven years seemed to be few days for Jacob.*

After the bridal week, Laban gave Rachel to Jacob.

Jacob once again had to work for another 7 and half years to marry Rachel.

First son Reuben was born to Leah

***Genesis 29:32**, So Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben; for she said, "The Lord has surely looked on my affliction. Now therefore, my husband will love me.*

Second son Simeon was born to Leah

***Genesis 29:33**, Then she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Because the Lord has heard that I am unloved, He has therefore given me this son also." And she called his name Simeon.*

Third son Levi was born

***Genesis 29:34**, She conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Now this time my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." Therefore his name was called Levi.*

Fourth son Judah was born to Leah

***Genesis 29:35**, And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Now I will praise the Lord." Therefore she called his name Judah. Then she stopped bearing.*

Fifth son Dan was born to Bilhah, maid of Rachel

***Genesis 30:3-6**, So she said, "Here is my maid Bilhah; go in to her, and she will bear a child on my knees, that I also may have children by her." <sup>4</sup> Then she gave him Bilhah her maid as wife, and Jacob went in to her. <sup>5</sup> And Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son. <sup>6</sup> Then Rachel said, "God has judged my case; and He has also heard my voice and given me a son." Therefore she called his name Dan.*

Sixth son Naphtali was born to Bilhah, maid of Rachel

***Genesis 30:7-8**, And Rachel's maid Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. <sup>8</sup> Then Rachel said, "With great wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister, and indeed I have prevailed." So she called his name Naphtali.*

Seventh son Gad was born to Zilpah, maid of Leah

***Genesis 30:10-11**, And Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a son. <sup>11</sup> Then Leah said, "A troop comes!" So she called his name Gad.*

Eight son Asher was born to Zilpah, maid of Leah

*Genesis 30:12-13, And Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. <sup>13</sup> Then Leah said, "I am happy, for the daughters will call me blessed." So she called his name Asher.*

Ninth son Issachar born to Leah

*Genesis 30:17-18, And God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. <sup>18</sup> Leah said, "God has given me my wages, because I have given my maid to my husband." So she called his name Issachar.*

Tenth son Zebulun born to Leah

*Genesis 30:19-20, Then Leah conceived again and bore Jacob a sixth son. <sup>20</sup> And Leah said, "God has endowed me with a good endowment; now my husband will dwell with me, because I have borne him six sons." So she called his name Zebulun.*

Dinah, daughter born to Leah

*Genesis 30:21, Afterward she bore a daughter, and called her name Dinah.*

Eleventh son Joseph born to Rachel

*Genesis 30:22-24, Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb. <sup>23</sup> And she conceived and bore a son, and said, "God has taken away my reproach." <sup>24</sup> So she called his name Joseph, and said, "The Lord shall add to me another son."*

Twelfth son Benjamin was born to Rachel

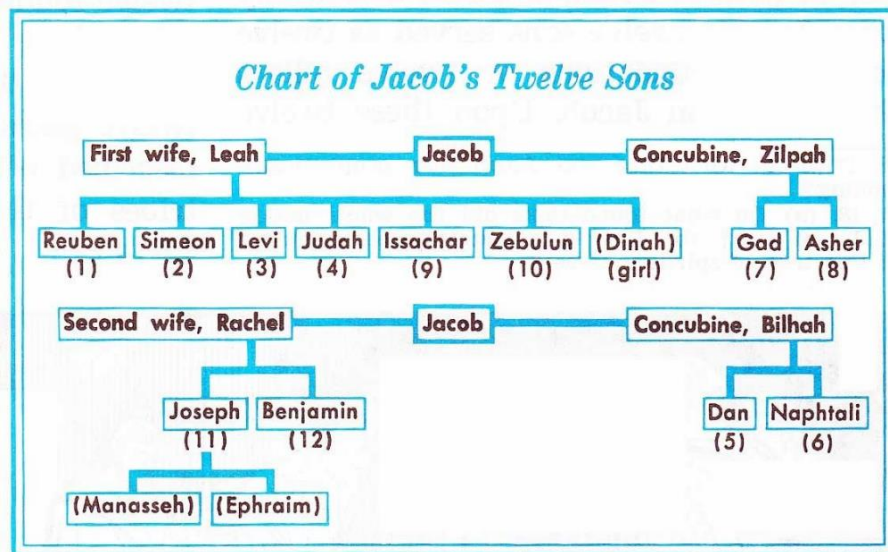
*Genesis 35:16-18, Then they journeyed from Bethel. And when there was but a little distance to go to Ephrath, Rachel laboured in childbirth, and she had hard labour. <sup>17</sup> Now it came to pass, when she was in hard labour, that the midwife said to her, "Do not fear; you will have this son also." <sup>18</sup> And so it was, as her soul was departing (for she died), that she called his name Ben-Oni; but his father called him Benjamin.*

Ruben, the first son, was born when Jacob was around 65 years old.

Joseph was born when Jacob was around 91 years old.

So definitely there must have been at least 26 years difference.

The cultural expectations for women to provide heirs in those days was too much, Rachel's barrenness distressed her.



She solicited the aid of her maid in a childbearing war with her sister. The maid, or “substitute mother”, gave birth while literally sitting on the wife’s knees. This symbolized that the wife was the one providing the son and heir to her husband. One son born by this substitute system was **Naphtali**, whose name literally means “*wrestled with my sister.*”

So much of rivalry between the two wives.

Let us look at one incident that took place.

*Genesis 30:14-18, One day during the wheat harvest Reuben found some mandrakes in the field and brought them home to his mother Leah. Rachel asked Leah, “Could I please have some of your son’s mandrakes?”*

*15 Leah said, “Wasn’t it enough that you got my husband away from me? And now you also want my son’s mandrakes?”*

*Rachel said, “All right. I’ll let him sleep with you tonight in exchange for your son’s love-apples.”*

*16-18 When Jacob came home that evening from the fields, Leah was there to meet him: “Sleep with me tonight; I’ve bartered my son’s mandrakes for a night with you.” So he slept with her that night.*

Picture of a Mandrake fruit



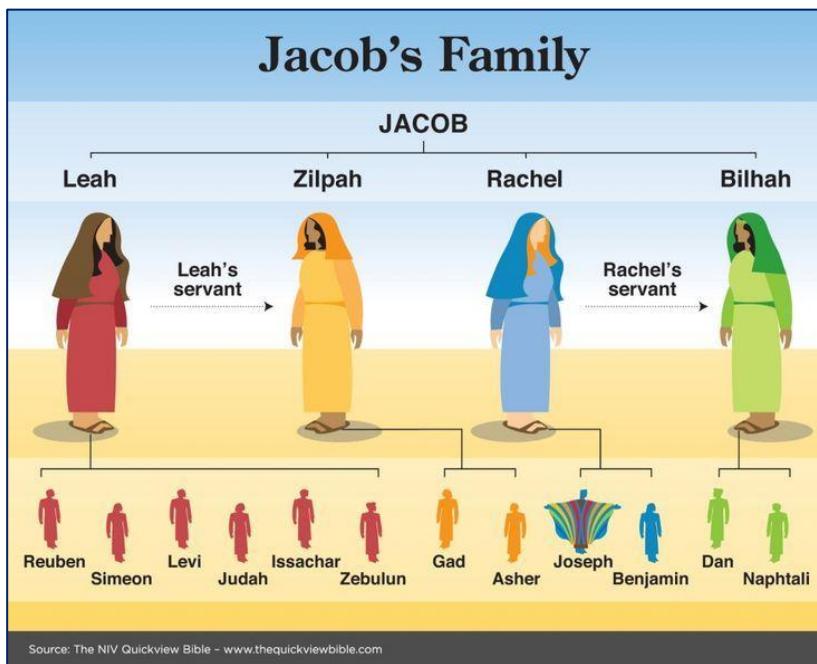
Can you imagine a wife using her son's Mandrakes to sleep with her husband with another wife?

How the sibling's relationship would have been?

Just for a moment imagine from the point of Joseph, if all his half-brothers got together how it would have been?

He had three stepmothers, ten step-brothers, one brother, and a step sister--all living in the home at the same time.

Look at the family picture!



## Conclusion

Isaac and Rebecca play favorites with their twin boys, whose sibling rivalry becomes one of the worst in history (**Genesis 25**).

Esau has no discernment. He sells his birthright for soup (**Genesis 25**), grieves his parents by marrying Canaanite women (**Genesis 26**), and nurses a 20-year murderous grudge against his conniving younger brother.

Jacob (said conniver) manipulates and deceives his brother out of his birthright (**Genesis 25**) and blessing (**Genesis 27**).

Uncle Laban deceives nephew Jacob by somehow smuggling Leah in as Jacob's bride instead of Rachel (Genesis 29). This results in Jacob marrying sisters — a horrible situation (**Leviticus 18:18**). This births another nasty sibling rivalry where the sisters' competition for children (including giving their servants to Jacob as concubines) produce the twelve patriarchs of Israel (**Genesis 30**).

Jacob's daughter, Dinah, is raped by the pagan, Shechem, who then wants to marry her. Simeon and Levi respond by massacring all the men of Shechem's town (**Genesis 34**).

Jacob's oldest son, Reuben, can't resist his incestuous desires and sleeps with one of his father's concubines, the mother of some of his brothers (**Genesis 35**).

Ten of Jacob's sons contemplate to kill one of his own brothers and ended up selling brother Joseph into slavery. Then they lie about it to their father for 22 years until Joseph exposes them (**Genesis 37, 45**).

Judah, as a widower, frequented prostitutes. This occurred frequently enough that his daughter-in-law, Tamar, whom he had dishonored, knew that if she disguised herself as one, he'd sleep with her. He did and got her pregnant (**Genesis 38**).

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*Why is the Bible loud on sinfully dysfunctional families and quiet on harmonious families?*

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Most families aren't harmonious. Humanity is not harmonious. We are alienated from God and each other.

So put,

- Alienated,
- Selfish sinners together in a home,
- Sharing possessions,
- Sharing the most intimate aspects of life,
- Different personalities,
- Wide range of interests,
- Unequal distribution of power,
- Unequal abilities, and
- Different opportunities.

## **What will be the result?**

Mess

A messed up family which is full of sins.

Take heart, but there's a deeper purpose at work in this mess.

The Bible's main theme is God's gracious plan to redeem the needy sinners.

It teaches and gives us an understanding of what God wants most for us to do. He wants us to

- become aware of our sinfulness
- our powerlessness to save ourselves,
- believe and love his Son and the gospel he preached, and
- graciously love one another.

And it turns out that the family is an ideal place for all of these to occur.

## **What we often fail to remember?**

Sin must be seen, and powerlessness must be experienced before we really turn to Jesus and embrace his gospel.

Offenses must be committed if gracious love is to be demonstrated. So, if we're praying for our family members to experience these things, we should expect trouble.

Family harmony is a good desire and something to work toward. But in God's plan, it may not be what is most needed.

What may be most needed is for our family to be a crucible of grace, a place where the heat of pressure forces sin to surface providing opportunities for the gospel to be understood and applied.

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*When this happens, the messes become mercies.*

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If your family is not the epitome of harmony, take heart. God specializes in redeeming messes. See yours as an opportunity for God's grace to become visible to your loved ones and pray hard that God will make it happen.

We will learn from this conference the following:

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## *Joseph experienced the powerful truth of Romans 8:28*

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It is a picture of the providence of God, working in all things for the good of those who love Him and are the called according to His purpose.

What we will see as we walk through the details of his life is how God used small things, that on the surface looked insignificant, to order circumstances in such a way that Joseph is raised to a position through which millions of people will be saved from starvation.

What looked like simple aspects are taken by God and used to turn the tables over and over.

- a) Joseph's colorful coat
- b) Passing slave traders.
- c) Bought by Potiphar.
- d) Potiphar's wife.
- e) Prison Guard
- f) Sharing a Prison cell with Cup-bearer and baker of the King.

When things are happening, we seldom realize that a series of effect is being created, the full ramifications which we cannot see. But God is at work, often when we are least aware of it.

### *Joseph shows us faithfulness to God, no matter what.*

The Bible cuts to the chase immediately by depicting the tension in this home. But as it usually is in dysfunctional families, this little picture here is just the tip of the iceberg. Joseph's family was so unbelievable that if it was made into a soap opera, no one would believe it.

His father, Jacob, though generally godly, embraced the polygamy that was common in the day, which opened the door to jealousy, insecurity and almost constant conflict among his wives.

Jacob was also a passive parent, whose lack of involvement and leadership brought incredible pain and confusion to his family.

Joseph's brothers took turns being brutal, conniving, and openly immoral.

### ***God Makes Himself Known to the Humble Who Hunger for God***

Genesis 32 reports the time when Jacob hastily divided his family and flocks and sent them on ahead. It must have been a scary time for Joseph, who was only a young boy. Dad was staying behind alone at the Jabbok River to pray and ready himself to face the sins of his past. Reports were that the long-angry Esau, his father's brother, was bearing down on his location with 400 soldiers.

The next morning, Joseph saw his father limp into the camp to lead his family to meet Esau.

"Papa, what's wrong? Why are you limping, Papa?" he must have asked. And he must have heard of how his father wrestled with the Angel of the Lord all night, and how when he finally submitted to God, he was blessed and got a new name from the Lord Himself.

Joseph's father had been touched by the Lord Himself and was changed for the rest of his life. Joseph understood the lesson fleshed out in his own father's experience that God is real!

He blesses those who realize their own brokenness and guilt and long for God more than anything else. Imagine the imprint this made on this young man!

### ***God is at Work Around You All the Time***

Genesis 35 tells of another spiritual marker when Joseph was 13 years old.

His father took the whole family to Bethel, where he pointed to the very spot where he had his first personal encounter to God. Years before, running for his life, Jacob laid down and slept on the ground, where he dreamed about a great ladder which came down from heaven and touched earth, with angels ascending and descending. God was letting Jacob know that more was going on than he could see or calculate.

Joseph heard his father speak of the covenant relationship that began between God and himself back then. Later, their father called them also to enter that covenant.

Could this have been the turning point for Joseph?

Joseph stood on that hallowed ground and saw the passion in his father's eyes when he gave their lives over to God with fresh surrender?

### ***God has a Specific Purpose He Has Designed You to Fulfill***

Shortly after the Bethel experience, there were three deaths that shook the family.

First, Deborah died and was buried under an oak tree at Bethel. Deborah had been the nurse to Joseph's grandmother, Rebekah, who had died years before. With her passing, the whole story of Isaac and Rebekah's godly life was retold again.

Second, Joseph's own mother died. Rachel died giving birth to Benjamin. This loss brought home the fragility of life and the importance of making the most of it.

The third blow to the family came shortly after this when Isaac, Joseph's grandpa, died and was buried where Abraham, Sarah, and Rebekah had been buried. Again, the unique role Isaac played in God's purposes was brought up.

Though Joseph's current family was a dysfunctional mess, the legacy of those who had gone before him was unmistakable. Joseph stood in the long shadow of the godly.

What purpose might God have prepared for Joseph as he chose to follow in the footsteps of these faithful servants of the Lord?

These spiritual markers, combined with the lessons Joseph picked up in his early years, helped him break the cycle of dysfunction and become one of the heroes of faith.

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## *2. Devotion - Significance of Insignificance*

All the ground checks for **United Flight 232** were complete and cleared. Two hundred and ninety-eight passengers were nestled into their seats, hearing the familiar speech about seatbelts and exits. **Capt. Al Haynes**, a 35-year veteran pilot for United Airlines brought the DC-10 into position for another routine flight—layover in Chicago, final destination, Philadelphia.

Minutes later, the plane comfortably leveled off at 37,000. The flight attendants were already servicing the passengers, most of whom were reading, working, napping. From all appearances, everything looked normal, predictable, stable.

But at exactly one hour and seven minutes after takeoff, to quote many of the survivors, all hell broke loose. The number-two engine, mounted high on the tail, suddenly made a resounding “boom.” The flight panel immediately showed that the engine had failed, its hydraulic system ceasing to function. That normally would concern the captain but not alarm him because every DC-10 is equipped with three independent hydraulic systems so that a failure of one would not disable the plane.

Truth be told, over the entire plane, there existed only one small vulnerable spot to these three independent hydraulic systems, a four-foot square space located toward the tail section where all three hydraulic systems converge. The odds of anything going wrong in that small target area were calculated at 1 to 10 to the 23rd power, or a billion to one. It had simply never happened.

But on July 19, 1989, the odds were against those aboard Flight 232. At 3:09pm, the pilot and crew experienced total hydraulic failure. Ailerons, rudders, flaps, elevators—no longer functioned. Controlling the plane became a living nightmare! What is more, the brakes were not working, nor the on-ground steering, so if they managed to land, they didn’t know how to bring the plane to any kind of controlled stop.

Over the course of the next several minutes, the captain and crew assessed that they could turn right slightly and direct the plane by varying the thrust of the remaining engines. They turned toward a small airport in Sioux City, Iowa, and managed to delicately maneuver the crippled craft toward the ground. The right wing touched the ground first, which sent the plane cart wheeling over the ground and bursting into flames. But when it was all over, 187 lives were saved; 111 people died.

When the National Transportation Safety Board presented the findings from their investigation of the cause of the disaster, they pointed to the fan disk in engine

number-two, which exploded, sending shrapnel ripping through the tail section of the plane, severing the hydraulic lines in that isolated four-foot section.

But the investigation didn't stop there. Because the fan disk for a jet engine is so specialized, there were extensive paper trails that lead investigators back to the ingot of titanium from which it was made and the forging process. It was determined that the process, performed years before, led to the fatal crash of Flight 232. You see, when parts for jet aircraft are forged, molten titanium is subjected to hammering force and intense pressure that is almost unimaginable. No less than 50,000 tons of pressure is exerted on the liquid metal, and the purpose is to eradicate any trace of gas bubbles that might be trapped inside.

In the report that was issued, it was found that the processes used at the time left a tiny amount of nitrogen in the particular piece of titanium from which the fan disk was made. Microscopic pockets were formed inside the titanium that would eventually lead to metal fatigue and the disintegration of the fan disk. It took 15,503 take-off and landing cycles before that happened, but the minute, almost invisible flaws present in the formation of that fan disk eventually became a deadly defect.



What's the moral of the story?

Flaws in the formative stages even small ones can lead to disaster later.

How many times has this played its way out in families?

One of the common dynamics in dysfunctional families is the children grow up and repeat the same patterns they saw in dad and mom.

Everybody loves a hero.

We like to watch sports heroes, movie heroes, book heroes, but not everybody is a hero.

What about the insignificant people in the Bible?

*Can your life count?*

*Can your life matter?*



Do you find yourself saying, I do not even know if I have done anything and now, I am old, and I do not think my life has counted for very much?

I was a good mother or good father.

I was a good neighbor.

I tried to help people.

I do love Jesus.

I know Him but I do not know if my life had very much significance.

For generations man has looked upward toward the heavens and have marveled. Not a few ancient cultures considered the moon to be divine. Many believed that the stars represented divinized ancestors. The night sky has always been a source of myths and wonder.

David also looked up into that night sky and marveled at the mighty hand of the One True God. That night sky caused him to reflect on his own existence and he is struck by his relative insignificance. He marvels that God would even give pause to consider such a little creature as man since He created such massive and distant objects.

*Psalms 8:3-5, When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained, <sup>4</sup>What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him? <sup>5</sup>For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honour.*

That feeling is entirely understandable, and for many people, extremely uncomfortable. We do not like being reminded that we are insignificant and small. We like to think of ourselves as something significant, important, and meaningful.

But all it takes is one look back up into the heavens to bring us back down to earth.

We are small.

We are insignificant.

We do not deserve the time or the attention of the most holy Creator of the universe.

But God has considered our state and granted us glory and honour even though we do not deserve it. We have been given the opportunity to rule over the earth and all that lives in it.

*Psalms 8:6-8, You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, <sup>7</sup>All sheep and oxen— Even the beasts of the field, <sup>8</sup>The birds of the air, And the fish of the sea That pass through the paths of the seas.*

David felt almost insignificant when he considered the vastness of creation.

David is saying that our relationship with God lifts us out of insignificance in a vast creation into a unique relationship with the creator of it all.

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*We should all feel meaningless without God and full of significance in our relationship with him.*

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*Luke 12:6-7, "Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. <sup>7</sup>But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.*

We are worth more than many sparrows. But beyond that, God has numbered the very hairs of our heads. God is interested in every tiny detail of our lives.

That is a closeness of care that most people don't recognize But I sincerely hope that you will come to know in your experience with God.

The disciples were obviously dismissive of the little children, deeming them wasting the time of Jesus.

*Mark 10:13-16, Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought them. <sup>14</sup> But when Jesus saw it, He was greatly displeased and said to them, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. <sup>15</sup> Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it." <sup>16</sup> And He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them.*

People have different way in dismissive of others.

For some,

it will be people of a difference race,

It will be of age either old or young,

It will be different gender,

It will be different denominations et.,

Groupism is the difficult one Christians to deal with are those who actively promote what the Bible teaches is sin.

*II Corinthians 5:16-17, Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. <sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*

We look on people from the outside and judge them according to their attributes, abilities, possessions, etc. If we could see them from a heavenly view, we would see the sacred value of each one.

Let me give you few Characters whom you may have thought insignificant.

### ***Servant Girl at Naaman***

Naaman suffered from leprosy. Leprosy causes painful and disfiguring skin sores. Naaman's leprosy, though, had not hampered his abilities as an excellent leader and respected commander of a Syrian army.

During one of his campaigns, Naaman's army had captured a young Hebrew girl, who had been given to Naaman's wife as a servant. Although this girl had been taken from her family to become a slave among strangers, she remembered what she had learned among the Hebrews about God's faithfulness.

She cared about her captors, and when she learned about Naaman's disease, she remembered the miracles the Hebrew prophet Elisha had done in the Lord's name.

*2 Kings 5:3, Then she said to her mistress, "If only my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria! For he would heal him of his leprosy."*

When Naaman heard about Elisha, he asked for permission to go to Israel to get help.

Naaman washed seven times in the Jordan River according to the word spoken by the Prophet Elisha and was healed. As a result, Naaman believed in God and thanked Elisha for his kind help.

## ***Ehud***

The story of Ehud comes right out of Judges chapter 3 but would fit in nicely to the plot of a James Bond movie.

Israel was under the oppressive rule of Eglon the king of Moab and cried out to the Lord for deliverance. The Moabites were idol worshipers who did evil in the sight of the Lord. God sent Ehud and his cubit-long (about a foot and a half) sword to assassinate the king and liberate God's people from his rule.

Ehud must have been a smooth talker, because when he told the servants of the king that he had a "secret message" for him.

*Judges 3:19, But he himself turned back from the stone images that were at Gilgal, and said, "I have a secret message for you, O king." He said, "Keep silence!" And all who attended him went out from him.*

The soldiers left Ehud all alone with the king.

Ehud's "secret message" was the sword that he brought.

The "special delivery" was a stab to the belly of the grossly overweight king which killed him!

Then Ehud quietly locked the doors to the roof to keep the guards out and made a quick getaway.

When Ehud returned to the people of Israel, he led Israel in conquering their enemies the Moabites.

## ***Elishama***

The thing that makes Elishama interesting is not actually because he is interesting. In fact, we do not know a lot about Elishama, who was a scribe/secretary mentioned by name briefly in scripture.

*Jeremiah 36:12, he then went down to the king's house, into the scribe's chamber; and there all the princes were sitting—Elishama the scribe, Delaiah the son of Shemaiah, Elnathan the son of Achbor, Gemariah the son of Shaphan, Zedekiah the son of Hananiah, and all the princes.*

What makes this obscure Bible character interesting is the extra-biblical evidence that we have for him — and in turn, the historical reliability of Scripture.

In 1986 outside of Jerusalem a clay seal was found that says “Elishama, servant of the king,” proving that he was indeed a scribe in the exact time setting and situation that Scripture describes. That is true evidence that all of scripture is God-breathed, even down to the tiniest detail and seemingly insignificant person!

## ***Sycamore tree for Zacchaeus***

God knew Zacchaeus is going to be short, so God planted a sycamore tree and safely guarded until the tree grow up.

*Luke 19:4, So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way.*

## ***Donkey no one climbed on it***

Jesus was entering Jerusalem in His last week as a Triumphal Entry.

*Matthew 21:2-7, saying to them, “Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me. <sup>3</sup> And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord has need of them,’ and immediately he will send them.” <sup>4</sup> All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: <sup>5</sup> “Tell the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, your King is coming to you, Lowly, and sitting on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.’ ” <sup>6</sup> So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. <sup>7</sup> They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set Him on them.*

Does the donkey know it is significance?

Does the donkey know that it is fulfilling the Prophetic word what God spoke hundreds of years before?

## *Insignificant things around Joseph*

Let us look number of things happened in the life of Joseph.

- a) Joseph's colourful coat
- b) Passing slave traders.
- c) Bought by Potiphar.
- d) Potiphar's wife.
- e) Prison Guard
- f) Sharing a Prison cell with the Cup-bearer and the baker of the King.

## *Conclusion*

When you do some kind of a service that meets the needs of God's people, it causes them to thank God because they know it came from the heart of God to them.

*2 Corinthians 9:12-14, So two good things will result from this ministry of giving—the needs of the believers in Jerusalem will be met, and they will joyfully express their thanks to God. <sup>13</sup> As a result of your ministry, they will give glory to God. For your generosity to them and to all believers will prove that you are obedient to the Good News of Christ. <sup>14</sup> And they will pray for you with deep affection because of the overflowing grace God has given to you.*

It does not matter how much?

*Philippians 2:13, for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.*

Sometimes people say, could it be God or is it just me.

I want to do it.

Yes, it is God because God put the desire inside of you.

Is that true for everybody?

Probably not!

There are too many people out there doing what they want to do, and they have not given God the time of day.

People who love the Lord and want to be used in the Kingdom of God and look at what the desires.

What is your heart desire?

What is your talent?

What desire God had put in your heart?

Do you feel you are insignificant?

*Jeremiah 1:5, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations."*

*Ephesians 2:10, For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

### **Pointers**

<b>God values us equally, not by usefulness</b>	Genesis 1:27 <i>So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.</i>
<b>God does not judge us by wealth</b>	Luke 21:3-4 <i><sup>3</sup> So He said, "Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; <sup>4</sup> for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings <sup>l</sup>for God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had."</i>
<b>God does not judge us by race</b>	Isaiah, 49:5-6, Acts 10:34-35, Galatians 3:28 <i><sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.</i>
<b>God does not judge us by age</b>	Mark 10:13-16 <i><sup>13</sup> Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought them. <sup>14</sup> But when Jesus saw it, He was greatly displeased and said to them, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. <sup>15</sup> Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it." <sup>16</sup> And He took</i>

	<i>them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them.</i>
<b>God does not judge by abilities</b>	<p>1 Corinthians 1:26-29</p> <p><i>26 For [k]you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many [l]noble, are called. 27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28 and the [m]base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence. 30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption— 31 that, as it is written, “He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.”</i></p>
<b>God does not even judge our value by our sin</b>	

The declining value of humanity

Our culture values individuals by usefulness.

*Our true value*

**We believe a lie when we devalue ourselves.**

Zephaniah 3:17, Psalm 139:13-16

Ephesians 2:4-10, Luke 12:6-7

Psalm 8:1-9

1 John 3:1

Isaiah 49:15-16

**We live a lie when we devalue others.**



### *3. Betrayal*

Just imagine the following scenario,

- You shared a secret with your best friend, only to learn that your friend shared it to someone.
- Everyone was talking about an awesome wedding or a party they went to, and you realized you were the only one not invited.
- Someone took credit for your idea in the office and got the promotion you deserved.



**Genesis 37:1-36,**

Joseph is one of the most striking types of Jesus in the Old Testament. In Jewish thought, the Messiah was pictured as the son of David, but also as the son of Joseph. As the son of David, he would rule upon David's throne bringing glory to Israel and peace to the world. Yet they also pictured him as the son of Joseph – someone who would suffer at the hands of his brothers before being exalted.

So, let's look at some of the clearer pictures in Joseph's life that have their fulfilment in the life of the true Messiah, Jesus Christ.

#### ***JEALOUSY***

**Definition:** jealousy is resenting God's goodness in others' lives and ignoring God's goodness in mine.

Jealousy is a killer.

**Job 5:20**, *In famine He shall redeem you from death, And in war from the power of the sword.*

Jealousy will not only kill your relationships, but it will kill you.

Why were Joseph's brothers jealous of him?

Joseph was his dad's favorite son.

**Genesis 37:3-4**, *Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of many colours. <sup>4</sup> But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.*

So, one day he gave Joseph a special gift a beautiful robe. In those days, everyone had a robe. The robe would be used for warmth, to carry belongings on a trip, to sit on, or even to use as collateral in a loan.

### **Joseph's robe was different.**

It was longer. It wasn't the sort of robe that one would wear to work. It was probably the type of robe worn by Royalty. Joseph's father was telling him, in essence, "You don't have to work like the rest of your brothers. You're better than they are."

### **Greater than His brothers**

**Genesis 37:5-8**, *Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more. <sup>6</sup> So he said to them, "Please hear this dream which I have dreamed: <sup>7</sup> There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf." <sup>8</sup> And his brothers said to him, "Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.*

Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him more.

If that wasn't enough, Joseph had two dreams.

- ✓ In one dream, Joseph and his brothers were out tying up bundles of grain. Joseph's bundle stood up, and the rest of the bundles gathered around and bowed before it.
- ✓ In the second dream, the sun, moon, and eleven stars bowed before Joseph. It didn't take a genius to figure this out. Joseph was predicting that he would rule over his brothers and even his parents.

Joseph's brothers became incredibly jealous.

Jealousy led to a Grudge.

*Matthew 27:18, For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy.*

*Mark 15:10, For he knew that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy.*

## **Grudge**

A grudge is when you feel persistently mad at another person.

We think grudges are minor.

But Jesus said in Mark 7 that grudges are vile and make us unacceptable to God.

Grudges often lead to murder.

*Ephesians 4:31, Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice*

Even from an early stage Joseph was different. Genesis 37:3 tells us that Joseph was Jacob's most loved son. And from the dreams he had it was clear that he would one-day rule over his brothers and for this they hated him. Jesus encountered the same reaction both from those in his hometown as well as from his actual brothers. After trying to teach and minister in His hometown He was met with the following response.

*Matthew 13:55-57, Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? <sup>56</sup> And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?" <sup>57</sup> So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house."*

While the nation's leaders called Jesus possessed, even some of those in His own family wouldn't acknowledge Him.

*John 7:5, For even His brothers did not believe in Him.*

His own brothers were asking for more signs because even His own brothers did not believe in him.'

## **Conspired to kill Him**

*Genesis 37:18-20, Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him. <sup>19</sup> Then they said to one another, "Look, this dreamer is coming! <sup>20</sup> Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some*

*pit; and we shall say, 'Some wild beast has devoured him.' We shall see what will become of his dreams!"*

Jealousy led to a grudge, and that grudge led to ACTION.

*Mark 7:21-23, For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,*

*<sup>22</sup> thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. <sup>23</sup> All these evil things come from within and defile a man."*

What we think about eventually will be acted on.

What's in your heart will eventually come out in action.

When Joseph's brothers saw him coming, they recognized him in the distance and made plans to kill him. "Here comes that dreamer!" they exclaimed. "Come on, let's kill him and throw him into a deep pit. We can tell our father that a wild animal has eaten him. Then we'll see what becomes of all his dreams!"

Joseph's brothers began to plan a course of action. They were premeditating murder.

What they hated most were the dreams that elevated Joseph above themselves.

They also hated the fact that their father Jacob dearly loved Joseph and their jealousy and anger led to a plan to destroy him.

In like manner the leaders of Israel hated Jesus because He didn't submit Himself to their rule but showed through word and deed that He was above them. His claims to be from heaven, to be greater than Abraham, or to be the one of whom Moses wrote, met with venomous reactions and culminated in a plot to take His life.

*Matthew 26:3-4, Then the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, <sup>4</sup> and plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill Him. <sup>5</sup> But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people."*

## ***Rationalization***

Jealousy led to a grudge,

Grudge led to action, and

Action led to Rationalization.

we are all experts at rationalization!

Do you ever try to discipline yourself into only having one piece of cake?

We cut it into two pieces, so we won't eat too much. And then we eat both pieces.

Rationalization is the way that we justify our actions to ourselves through lying.

Judah, Joseph's brother, said, "Let's sell Joseph to those Ishmaelite traders. Let's not be responsible for his death; after all, he is our brother!"

Judah thought he was doing Joseph a favour. He thought that by selling him for the price of a disabled slave, he was being nice.

I love what he said: "After all, he is our brother!"

What a way to treat a brother!

They had rationalized their course of action, so that their course of action not only appeared to be right to them, but almost generous. They had deceived themselves.

*John 11:47-51, Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. <sup>48</sup> If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation." <sup>49</sup> And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, <sup>50</sup> nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish." <sup>51</sup> Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation,*

Betrayed for measly silver coins

*Genesis 37:26-28, So Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? <sup>27</sup> Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh." And his brothers listened. <sup>28</sup> Then Midianite traders passed by; so the brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.*

The anger and jealousy reached its peak and Joseph was sold and betrayed for 20 measly pieces of silver!

Note carefully who it was that lead the betrayal, It was Judah! This is translated from the Hebrew name 'Yehuda', and it is the same name which can be translated Judas!

No surprises then that Jesus, like Joseph, would be betrayed by one of those closest to him, this time for a great total of 30 silver pieces!

*Matthew 26:14-16, Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests <sup>15</sup> and said, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?" And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. <sup>16</sup> So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.*

This was of course, a fulfillment of the great prophecy in Zechariah where God himself is priced at 30 pieces of silver!

*Zechariah 11:13, And the Lord said to me, "Throw it to the potter"—that princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord for the potter.*

While Joseph didn't understand it, God had other plans and used this betrayal not only to exalt Joseph but also used it to save both, the Gentiles and Joseph's own Jewish family. I'm sure you see the picture of Jesus!

The first step to surviving betrayal is to reflect on why it happened. Most broken relationships are very predictable. Identifying the cause of that breakdown is the first step in responding properly to it.

There's one last step.

- ✓ Jealousy led to a grudge,
- ✓ Grudge led to action, and
- ✓ Action led to Rationalization.
- ✓ Rationalization leads to Betrayal
- ✓ Betrayal leads to Cover-Up

## **COVER-UP**

*Genesis 37:31-32, So they took Joseph's tunic, killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the tunic in the blood. <sup>32</sup> Then they sent the tunic of many colours, and they brought it to their father and said, "We have found this. Do you know whether it is your son's tunic or not?"*

## **Application**

Why should I reflect on why it happened?

1. You will be tempted to mirror it. If someone hates you, you're liable to hate him or her back. If someone holds a grudge against you, you're likely to hold a grudge against them. Recognizing the pattern will help you to avoid it. Jesus said, "Love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven"

*Matthew 5:44-45, But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, <sup>45</sup> that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.*

2. We need to recognize the cause of the betrayal is because it helps us deal with the hurt. The problem wasn't really with Joseph. If Joseph had spent all his time wondering what he had done wrong, he would have been wasting his time. Diagnosing the problem meant that he didn't have to spend time fixing it on his end. The problem really wasn't with him.

When you're betrayed or when someone lets you down, take some time to look at what happened. If they're treating you unfairly, then make sure that you don't fall into the same pattern.

Examine why the problem happened in the first place.

Reflect on circumstances which triggers behavior of self & others involved.

Look back and make a list of the different ways God has worked in and through your life in recent years.

### ***1. Forgive yourself.***

Identify a failure or shortcoming from the past that still produces guilt in your life. Choose to let go of that failure and trust in God's ability to work for your good.

Acknowledge our Feelings

When betrayed, it is normal to feel and express a range of emotions such as:

- Denial
- Anger
- Sadness
- Fear
- Hopelessness

These emotions may come in overwhelming waves, but with God's help we can make progress toward wholeness.

Unhealthy responses will only complicate our lives and delay recovery.

Healthy responses to the pain of betrayal include:

Praying and reading God's Word

Talking with a trusted friend

Journaling about our feelings

Exercising and self-care



## ***2. Forgive others.***

Identify a betrayal that continues to impact your life. Take a step this week to move toward forgiveness and healing in that relationship.

During betrayal, forgiveness may be unimaginable. We may feel like forgiveness would mean letting the person get away with their disloyal actions.

But, consider the consequences of holding in such damaging emotions such as:

- Anger
- Fear
- Resentment
- Bitterness

Medical doctors tell us these emotions can result in:

- Cancer
- Depression
- High blood pressure
- Weight gain

Forgiveness sets us free.

*Mark 11:25, "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses."*

Our forgiveness of another's betrayal is a requirement for us to receive God's forgiveness.

We have all fallen short of God's perfect standard and sinned. If anyone has a right to hold a grudge, it is God. Yet he forgives us through Jesus Christ and expects us to do the same for our own good.

### ***Forgiving self and Others:***

Is a decision based on our will, not our feelings.

Provides an opportunity to rebuild trust as it is earned.

Forgiveness is always healthy and required by God. Rebuilding trust depends on the renewed trustworthiness of the betrayer.

Give forgiveness freely and generously.

### ***Ways to Pray***

If you have been hurt by a friend, pour out your heart to him in prayer for wisdom, forgiveness and reconciliation.

*Psalm 62:8, Trust in Him at all times, you people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. Selah*

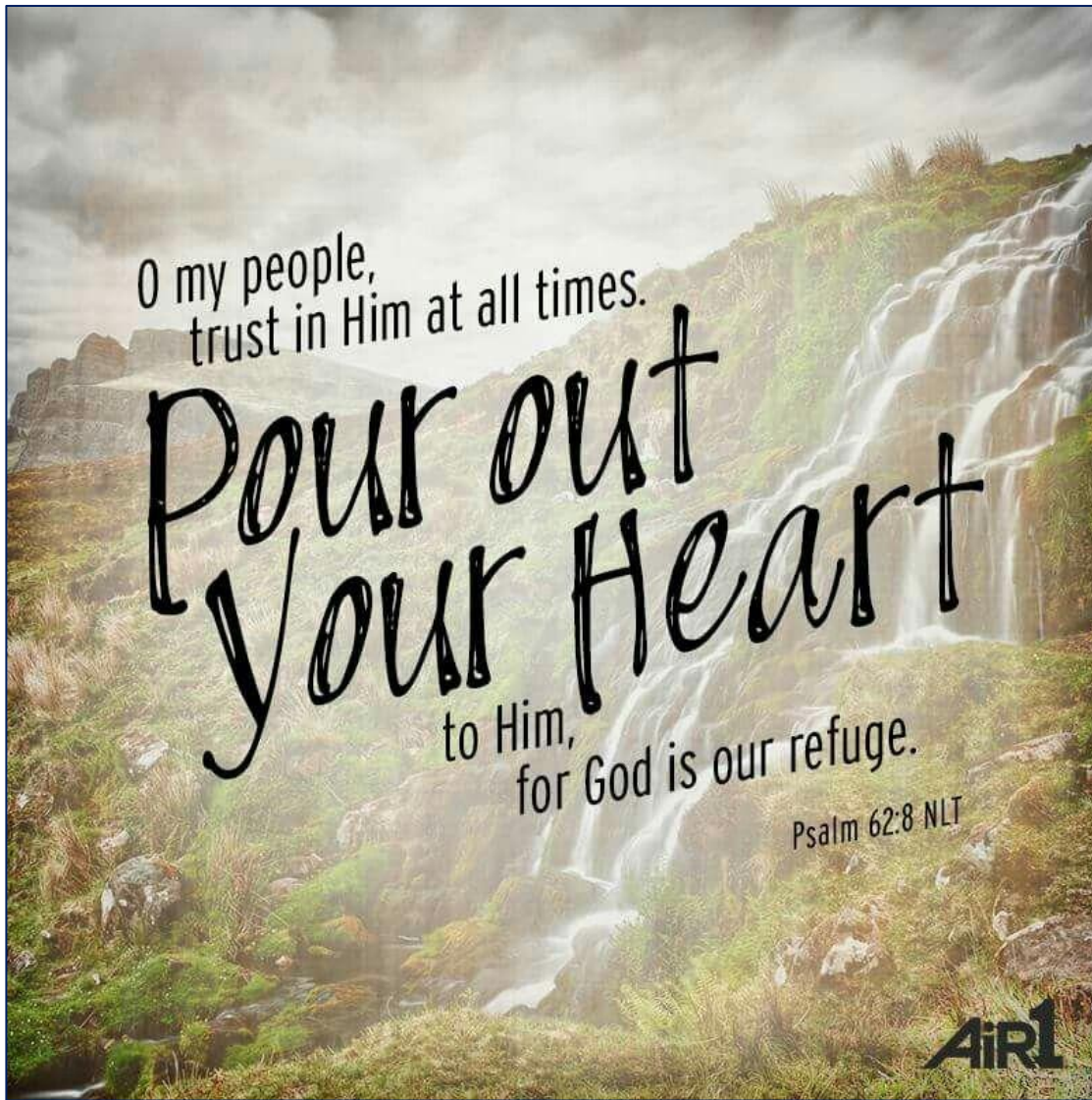
Pray for God to search your wounded heart.

*Psalm 139:23-24, Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; <sup>24</sup>And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.*

Were you hurt because your sin was exposed?

Were you overly sensitive to something that was said?

Were you tired?



Is your hurt by a pattern from a loved one or friend or a first-time offense?

Pray for the grace to think about what is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent, praiseworthy in yourself and in your friend (**Philippians 4:8**).

Pray for discernment: does God want you to overlook or address the offense?

If you must address the offense, pray that you would be honest and gracious with your friend about the way you were hurt, and that your friend would respond with humility.

Pray that you would love your friend at all times, even the difficult ones, and that you would be able to "live in harmony with one another" (**Romans 12:16**).

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## *4. False Accusation*

Ms. Gray 19, was involved in a minor collision in the western Sydney suburb of Bankstown in November 2018.

Ms. Gray managed to drive her car to a BP service station where Mr Kenan Basic, 36 pulled up a short time later and offered to help.

She drove away but then broke down again and realised Mr Basic had behind her and again helped her to fix.

Mr Basic, a Bosnian refugee whose father had been killed in the country's civil war, had a pensioner mother. "I always help people you know, all my life." Mr Basic

Ms Gray called her boyfriend, "yelling", who used a second phone to call police. Liverpool Police quickly found a distressed Ms Gray and took her to the local police station. She provided a statement detailing the entire ordeal and signed it.

Mr. Basic was arrested the next day, on November 23, and willingly told police he had helped the teenager fix her car before following her to Milperra Rd in Liverpool to make sure she didn't break down again.

Mr. Basic was thrown into a maximum-security jail for a week and charged with two counts of acts of indecency, one count of inciting a person over the age of 16 to commit an act of indecency and one count of stalking and intimidation with intending to cause fear or physical harm.

He was fired from his job and is going through a divorce as a result of the accusation.

But when the investigators trawled through CCTV footage of the section of the road where Ms. Gray claimed she was groped but were unable to find anything.

Police then questioned her again to discover if she was telling the truth, but she said she had "no reason to lie" about the assault.

The next day they asked her again if she'd lied and she admitted to making the whole thing up.

All charges against Mr Basic were dropped and he was released.

She told police she "just wanted (Mr Basic) to go to jail" when she was found out.

A good Samaritan was held Police for helping a woman who was in distress only find accused of sexual assault, prisoned, lost his job, and went through such ordeal. Finally got cleared.

When someone is falsely accused it involves agonising pain emotionally and physically. The very people whom you have helped, loved and cared for accuses you then it has devastating effect upon you.

Personally, I have experienced this, and I can assure you that its one of the most challenging things anyone can go through in their life.

Today we will look the Word of God how we can go through this and overcome victoriously.

### ***Definition***

Accusation: “A charge of wrongdoing” (Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary)

In the context of this teaching, our primary focus will be issues surrounding false accusations.



### ***Joseph and False accusation***

Joseph was falsely accused by Potiphar’s wife.

**Genesis 39:7-9 & 12-19,**

*and Potiphar’s wife soon began to look at him lustfully. “Come and sleep with me,” she demanded.*

*<sup>8</sup> But Joseph refused. "Look," he told her, "my master trusts me with everything in his entire household. <sup>9</sup> No one here has more authority than I do. He has held back nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How could I do such a wicked thing? It would be a great sin against God."*

*<sup>12</sup> She came and grabbed him by his cloak, demanding, "Come on, sleep with me!" Joseph tore himself away, but he left his cloak in her hand as he ran from the house.*

*<sup>13</sup> When she saw that she was holding his cloak and he had fled, <sup>14</sup> she called out to her servants. Soon all the men came running. "Look!" she said. "My husband has brought this Hebrew slave here to make fools of us! He came into my room to rape me, but I screamed. <sup>15</sup> When he heard me scream, he ran outside and got away, but he left his cloak behind with me."*

*<sup>16</sup> She kept the cloak with her until her husband came home. <sup>17</sup> Then she told him her story. "That Hebrew slave you've brought into our house tried to come in and fool around with me," she said. <sup>18</sup> "But when I screamed, he ran outside, leaving his cloak with me!" <sup>19</sup> Potiphar was furious when he heard his wife's story about how Joseph had treated her. (NLT)*

Joseph was very attractive and handsome.

Joseph had raised to the most trusted person in Potiphar Household.

Potiphar did not bother about any affairs of the house.

Everyday activity of the home was looked after by Joseph.

Joseph was sold into slavery when he was 30 years old.

Joseph stayed in Potiphar's home for 11 years.

When Potiphar's wife could not achieve what she wanted she took a bold step of accusing Joseph.

***Result:***

***Genesis 39:19-20**, Potiphar was furious when he heard his wife's story about how Joseph had treated her. <sup>20</sup> So he took Joseph and threw him into the prison where the king's prisoners were held, and there he remained. (NLT)*

Joseph was put in prison.

### **Response:**

There is no evidence at all in the scriptures Joseph trying to prove his innocence. He lived with the results and was blessed with God's favour.

*Genesis 39:21-23, But the Lord was with Joseph in the prison and showed him his faithful love. And the Lord made Joseph a favourite with the prison warden. <sup>22</sup> Before long, the warden put Joseph in charge of all the other prisoners and over everything that happened in the prison. <sup>23</sup> The warden had no more worries, because Joseph took care of everything. The Lord was with him and caused everything he did to succeed. (NLT)*

Joseph did not open his mouth at all.

Joseph was not sulking or running a pity party for himself.

### **Observations**

A false accusation can get us in difficult situations. We must trust that God is in control.

Later, Joseph recognized how God used this unjust experience to serve God's plan to elevate Joseph to a place of authority which led to the physical salvation of the nation and his family.

### **Jesus Christ**

- Jesus was constantly accused throughout his earthly ministry by the religious leaders.
- They accused him of casting out demons by the power of Satan.
- They accused him of breaking the Sabbath on several occasions.
- The final accusations came at his various trials and while he was on the cross as recorded in various Gospels.

### **Result**

Jesus bore numerous accusations because he was willing to resist the status quo of the religious community and establish God's Kingdom.

### **Response**

- On some occasions Jesus spoke and
- Others he remained silent.

Do you know Jesus was asked approximately 183 questions? He answered most of them by questioning them back. He answered only 3 questions directly.

Apparently, Jesus asked 337 questions. Someone has compiled all the questions and there was a book available.

**Matthew** –109 Questions

**Mark** – 68 Questions

**Luke** –107 Questions

**John** – 55 Questions

*Isaiah 53:7, "He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth"*



***Observations:***

Jesus was discerning as to when he should respond to accusations and when he should be quiet.

He was not motivated in his ministry by the fear of man.

He was in total submission to the will of his Father.

This meant hardships, misunderstanding from his own immediate family, the Jewish community and the ultimate rejection of being placed on a cross.

- ✓ If we are serious about the work of the Kingdom, we will face accusation.
- ✓ Accusation can come from those closest to us.
- ✓ When keeping quiet in the context of false accusation, we must do it in a heart of love and not with a negative attitude as a way of fighting back.
- ✓ There are times to speak up and times to be quiet.

## **Hannah**

Hannah in her desperate cry to God for a child, was accused of being drunk by Eli the priest.

*I Samuel 1:9-17, So Hannah arose after they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the tabernacle of the Lord. <sup>10</sup> And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed to the Lord and wept in anguish. <sup>11</sup> Then she made a vow and said, "O Lord of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head."*

*<sup>12</sup> And it happened, as she continued praying before the Lord, that Eli watched her mouth. <sup>13</sup> Now Hannah spoke in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli thought she was drunk. <sup>14</sup> So Eli said to her, "How long will you be drunk? Put your wine away from you!" <sup>15</sup> But Hannah answered and said, "No, my lord, I am a woman of sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor intoxicating drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. <sup>16</sup> Do not consider your maidservant a wicked woman, for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief I have spoken until now." <sup>17</sup> Then Eli answered and said, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition which you have asked of Him."*

## **Result**

Hannah bore the insult from a man of God who should have been her comfort, or at least tried to discover the source of her grief.

## **Response**

Hannah clarified her situation and was then blessed by Eli.

## **Observations**

- Times our best intentions can be perceived as being something totally different.

- Our reaching out to a person can be perceived as interfering in their business.
- Our expression of worship or prayer may be perceived as an attempt of wanting to be seen by others.

## **Nehemiah**

Attempting to fulfill the vision to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, was besieged by accusations and threats (**Nehemiah 1-6**). We will look at some examples:

### **1. Regional leaders accused Nehemiah of rebellion.**

***Nehemiah 2:19-20**, But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official, and Geshem the Arab heard of it, they laughed at us and despised us, and said, “What is this thing that you are doing? Will you rebel against the king? <sup>20</sup> So I answered them, and said to them, “The God of heaven Himself will prosper us; therefore we His servants will arise and build, but you have no heritage or right or memorial in Jerusalem.”*

### **2. Regional leaders were very angry and ridiculed the Jews. They spoke defeat on the project.**

***Nehemiah 4:1-5**, But it so happened, when Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, that he was furious and very indignant, and mocked the Jews. <sup>2</sup> And he spoke before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, “What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they fortify themselves? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they complete it in a day? Will they revive the stones from the heaps of rubbish—stones that are burned?”*

*<sup>3</sup> Now Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him, and he said, “Whatever they build, if even a fox goes up on it, he will break down their stone wall.” <sup>4</sup> Hear, O our God, for we are despised; turn their reproach on their own heads, and give them as plunder to a land of captivity! <sup>5</sup> Do not cover their iniquity, and do not let their sin be blotted out from before You; for they have provoked You to anger before the builders.*

### **3. Regional leaders plotted to fight and stir up trouble.**

***Nehemiah 4:7-9**, Now it happened, when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites heard that the walls of Jerusalem were being restored and the <sup>[a]</sup>gaps were beginning to be closed, that they became very angry, <sup>8</sup> and all of them conspired together to come and attack Jerusalem and create*

confusion. <sup>9</sup> Nevertheless we made our prayer to our God, and because of them we set a watch against them day and night.

#### 4. Regional leaders use intimidation

**Nehemiah 6:1-14,**

##### **Result:**

Nehemiah faced numerous and serious threats and accusations from a hostile community.

##### **Responses**

In facing what he did, Nehemiah responded in the following ways:

The God of heaven will give us response.

*Nehemiah 2:20, So I answered them, and said to them, "The God of heaven Himself will prosper us; therefore we His servants will arise and build, but you have no heritage or right or memorial in Jerusalem."*

Here his response was a prayer.

*Nehemiah 4:4, Hear, O our God, for we are despised; turn their reproach on their own heads, and give them as plunder to a land of captivity!*

They prayed to God and made a practical solution by posting guards day and night.

*Nehemiah 4:9, <sup>9</sup> Nevertheless we made our prayer to our God, and because of them we set a watch against them day and night.*

He also spoke words of encouragement.

*Nehemiah 6:14, My God, remember Tobiah and Sanballat, according to these their works, and the prophetess Noadiah and the rest of the prophets who would have made me afraid.*

He prayed a brief prayer to God.

##### **Observations**

Nehemiah faced each accusation in a different way.

Sometimes he responded directly to the person and other times he prayed to God and encouraged the people.

In no case did the accusations slow him down. Rather, it made him more determined to finish the task.

Let accusations be a time of putting our focus on God rather than on the accuser.

- ✓ God brings hope.
- ✓ Satan brings confusion and fear.

Speaking out fervent and faith filled prayers are a good way to experience a breakthrough in times of false accusation.

Like Nehemiah, we must carefully discern what is the motive behind the accusation.

Is it to threaten, intimidate, or harass?

Satan works through people to defeat us.

1. False accusation can be a killer of vision!

Nehemiah did not allow this to happen. There is no indication that he got discouraged.

2. It's important to know the strategy of Satan who tries to discourage us from fulfilling our God-given vision. NEVER GIVE UP!



### ***Apostle Paul***

The apostle Paul was besieged by false accusations in the course of his ministry as an ambassador for Jesus Christ. Here are some of the references:

1. *Acts 13:44-48, On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. <sup>45</sup> But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul. <sup>46</sup> Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you*

*reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. <sup>47</sup> For so the Lord has commanded us: 'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles,*

*That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.' " <sup>48</sup> Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.*

At Pisidian Antioch, the Jews, who were filled with jealousy when they saw how crowds were listening to Paul and Barnabas, talked abusively against what Paul was saying.

*2. Acts 14:1-3, Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed. <sup>2</sup> But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren. <sup>3</sup> Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.*

At Iconium, "The Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers."

*3. Acts 14:19-20, Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. <sup>20</sup> However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.*

At Lystra, the Jews influenced the crowd against Paul and Barnabas, stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city thinking he was dead.

*Acts 16:19-34,*

At Philippi, because a slave girl was delivered from a demon, her owners who made money off her accused Paul and Silas of throwing the city in an uproar and advocating customs unlawful to Romans.

#### **Few more examples:**

In Thessalonica (Acts 17:5-9)

In Berea (Acts 17:10-15)

In Athens (Acts 17:18-21)

In Corinth (Acts 18:5-6, 12-13)

In Ephesus (Acts 19:9, 27-28)

In Jerusalem and succeeding trials (Acts 21:27-28; 22:22; 23:5-9; 29:7)

### ***Result***

Paul faced almost constant accusations in nearly every city he went. He paid the price of beatings, stoning, imprisonment, and rejection by the Jewish leaders, people, and government officials.

### ***Response***

Paul, in the face of accusation, would often defend his position as a believer. Sometimes he would simply move on to a new territory.

### ***Observations***

Paul never drew back in discouragement because of accusation. Like Nehemiah, it seemed to motivate him onward. He was a man with a Divine mission. His mandate was to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. He also manifested a dynamic faith in God. He never once questioned why God let these terrible things happen to him.

To really break through into new regions or places held in control by Satan, will most likely stir up opposition and accusation.

A positive faith in God, believing that He is in control of every situation, enables us to face accusation.

Being clear about our call and secure in our identity in Christ, will enable us to overcome accusations, no matter how severe they are.

False accusation can be a killer of vision! Paul did not allow accusation to kill his vision.

Satan works through people and circumstance to stir up accusation against us. Remember that Satan has been defeated at Calvary!

You are an overcomer in Christ Jesus!

### ***Conclusion***

From the Bible, we can see that every great leader face criticism and major accusation.

We do not have many examples of leaders who got discouraged when faced with this.

There was such a strong sense of call in what they were doing and an uncompromising faith in God that they were able to endure.

Rather than feeling intimidated by such strength of confidence in God, it should be a motivation to move us forward in our journey of faith, no matter what kind of offenses, criticisms or accusation comes against us.

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## 5. Work session

In the last lesson on Betrayal we have seen that we need to

1. **Forgive yourself.**
2. **Forgive others.**

I hope you all prayed very sincerely for the forgiveness to God and others.

Now we will look at how we can apply it on working within us.

### **Dream and Desires**

When God places a dream, desire, and visions sometimes it may be very difficult for us to understand at that point in time in our lives. But God has a plan and purpose, so He choose to reveal to us.

What is your dream? Vision?

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If you had dream or vision, were you able to understand the meaning of it? If not, please do take time to pray?

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What is your call?

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Prophetic Word by your Spiritual Family?

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Do you believe that God, who put that dream/ Desire/ Vision will be able to bring it to pass?

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Are you discouraged or encouraged now?

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***Making it known of your Vision***

Joseph has a dream for the first time.

*Genesis 37:5-7, Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more. <sup>6</sup>So he said to them, "Please hear this dream which I have dreamed: <sup>7</sup>There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf."*

Joseph has yet another dream,

*Genesis 37:9, Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me."*

Though Jacob heard this publicly rebuked him, he kept it in his mind.

*Genesis 37:10, So he told it to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?"*

Jacob, father of Joseph kept the dream in his mind.

*Genesis 37:11, And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind.*

### ***Jesus and His Mother Mary***

First time Angel appeared to Mary and told these things.

*Luke 1:31-33, And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. <sup>33</sup> And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."*

Second time we see the Shepherds worshipped Him.

*Luke 2:18, And all those who heard it marvelled at those things which were told them by the shepherds.*

Mary mother of Jesus, who was a virgin at that time, pondered in her heart.

*Luke 2:19, But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.*

Third time when Jesus was presented at the temple, Simeon blesses him.

*Luke 2:29-32, "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; <sup>30</sup> For my eyes have seen Your salvation <sup>31</sup> Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, <sup>32</sup> A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel."*

Again Anna, Prophetess, blesses Jesus.

*Luke 2:38, And coming in that instant she gave thanks to <sup>l</sup>the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.*

Finally, when Jesus disappeared in the Temple.

*Luke 2:51, Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart.*

## *Common in Joseph and Jesus*

### *1. Divine Strength*

We can see from both their lives that its humanly NOT possible to fulfill the dreams and visions.

So, what we learn from this is that we will NOT be able to fulfill dreams by our own effort or achieve the vision through our intelligence.

Recognize that the dream/ Vision/ Prophetic Word came from God. Now take a moment to write it down in your own words about your vision.

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You should be able to recognize that there is a huge gap between where you are and where you need to go!

*Philippians 2:13, for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.*

Remember its God who brought you to this earth.

God who had put the desires in your heart!

It is God's name at stake and His Glory is at stake.

So it is God's responsibility to strengthen you to do!

Let us take time to pray for the Holy Spirit to strengthen you.

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### *2. Mission*

When we have got vision then that needs to be broken down into mission.

Make some practical achievable goals.

(Breaking the bigger vision into smaller steps)

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Setting up goals for this 2020. (**From Thanksgiving 2019 to Thanksgiving 2020**)

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Personal discipline is a must for every Christian.

Reading the Word of God, Prayer, Fasting etc.,

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### ***3. Sharing your vision***

Joseph brothers did not believe in

*Genesis 37:8, And his brothers said to him, "Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.*

*Genesis 37:11, And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind.*

Jesus brothers did not believe in

*John 7:5, For even His brothers did not believe in Him.*

When you share your vision, loved ones at home may not understand and accept your call.

Don't lose heart!

Who do you think that you can share your vision with?

With whom you have already shared your vision?

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Find a spiritual brother who believes in you and pray with him.

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*Acts 4:23, And being let go, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them.*

Do you believe in the vision/ dream/ desire of your loved one? It may be your spouse, children, parent, brother, sister, etc.

Who you can encourage?

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What practical help you can do help them to be encouraged and achieve their call.

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#### ***4. Being Faithful to what God has entrusted to you.***

##### **Father sent to look for brothers**

*Genesis 37:13-17, And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers feeding the flock in Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." So he said to him, "Here I am."*

*<sup>14</sup> Then he said to him, "Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me." So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron, and he went to Shechem.*

*<sup>15</sup> Now a certain man found him, and there he was, wandering in the field. And the man asked him, saying, "What are you seeking?"*

*16 So he said, "I am seeking my brothers. Please tell me where they are feeding their flocks." 17 And the man said, "They have departed from here, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.' " So Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan.*

***John 6:38**, For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.*

***Luke 22:42**, saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."*

***John 17:4**, I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.*

Both Jesus and Joseph were faithful in their call and in their purpose. Nothing distracted them.

How would you term yourself?

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The areas you need to be faithful?

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Great news is that you can restart today!

Start being faithful in small things then surely you will be faithful in all things.

***Luke 16:10**, He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.*

We tend to do bigger and greater things, but everything starts from small things. Set goals now.

Personally, I would stress that first and foremost your faithfulness should be in 1. Time and 2. Money

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## **5. Rejection**

Both Joseph and Jesus were rejected and despised by their loved ones. How would you handle them?

### **Strengthen yourself in the Lord.**

*1 Samuel 30:6, Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.*

### **Remember you are child of God and nothing can separate you from His love.**

*Romans 8:38-39, For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, <sup>39</sup> nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

### **Forgive those who wronged you.**

*Matthew 18:22, Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.*

God will forgive them when they repent so you better learn to forgive them.

### **Seek Peace**

*Romans 12:18, If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.*

### **Pray fervently**

*Matthew 5:44, But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,*

## 6. Be Silent

### Both Joseph and Jesus were silent during the persecution

Joseph was silent in Gotham

*Genesis 37:23-24, So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the tunic of many colours that was on him. <sup>24</sup> Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit was empty; there was no water in it.*

Jesus was silent throughout His persecution.

*Matthew 26:62-63, And the high priest arose and said to Him, "Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?" <sup>63</sup> But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, "I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!"*

*Matthew 27:13-14, Then Pilate said to Him, "Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?" <sup>14</sup> But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marvelled greatly.*

*Isaiah 53:7, He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.*

Can you keep your mouth shut?

*Psalms 141:3, Lord, place a guard at my mouth, a sentry at the door of my lips. (GNT)*

Most of your problem will be gone when you say NOTHING!

Can you practice saying NOTHING??

Finally,

*Philippians 4:13, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*

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## 6. Self-Discipline

People who make a lasting impact have usually developed great self-discipline. For example, a sportsman who can't control his diet and drinking won't last long in his professional sport. Indiscipline will never let them reach their full potential.

The same is true spiritually.

Most of the men who make an impact for Jesus are self-disciplined.



### Example:

**William Wilberforce** (abolishing the African Slave trade)

**Hudson Taylor** (China inland Missions)

Their lives were marked by their self-disciplined in their daily devotion to prayer, bible study and personal morality. God's seems to increase the spiritual gifting of those with the self-discipline to use it.

Self-discipline is very much an important part of maturity. One of the basic characteristics of infancy is a lack of self-control. Not only do babies need diapers, they must be carried because they lack the necessary control and muscle coordination to sit up much less walk or run. If a baby is healthy and normal, in time they will develop more and more self-control, a sure sign of growth and maturity.

It is no surprise, therefore, to find self-discipline is very highly valued in Scripture.

We are looking into the life Joseph for our conference.

Self-discipline more necessary for Christians in facing sexual temptation. One of the finest examples of such moral self-discipline is Joseph.

Four times in Genesis 39<sup>th</sup> Chapter, we read that God was with Joseph.

*Genesis 39:2, The Lord was with Joseph,*

*Genesis 39:3, And his master saw that the Lord was with him*

*Genesis 39:21, But the Lord was with Joseph*

*Genesis 39:23, because the Lord was with him*

Note twice it was in Potiphar's house and twice in the prison. All these occasions Joseph was successful and honoured by the respective head.

In Joseph's life there is a repeated pattern of exaltation, followed by humiliation then exultation.

The future of Joseph and the salvation of Israel would now depend on how Joseph resisted the temptation of Potiphar's wife just as the salvation of all Christians was dependent upon the resistance of Jesus to Satan's temptations to avoid the cross.

Joseph was under the same pressures we face today to sin.

- He was a handsome man, with sexual needs and no obvious prospects of having a wife as he was a slave.
- He was far from home and no one was ever likely to find out what he did.
- He had been sold into slavery by his brothers so why should it matter anyway.

*Genesis 39:1-6, Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there. <sup>2</sup>The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. <sup>3</sup>And his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord made all he did to prosper in his hand. <sup>4</sup>So Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority. <sup>5</sup>So it was, from the time that he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was on all that he had in the house and in the field. <sup>6</sup>Thus he left all that he had in Joseph's hand, and he did not know what he had except for the bread which he ate. Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance.*

I don't know what Joseph's early responsibilities were when he first began at Potiphar's house, but they may have been intensely physical, because Joseph was well built.

He was also a good-looking guy. And because of this, Joseph's master's wife notices him, and begins to proposition him.

"Come to bed with me!" she says to him.

But Joseph consistently refuses her.

He says, my master has such trust in me, he doesn't concern himself with anything in the house and he has put everything he owns in my care.

He has kept nothing of his from me, except you, because you are his wife.

### **How could I possibly do such a terrible sin against God?**

Joseph had recognized the sustained benefits of honouring his master. He also had an obligation to him and the ingratitude of abusing the trust shown in him by his master.

Lives are shattered by divorce. Joseph recognized that Potiphar would be wronged, and it helped him refuse temptation. Joseph refused to sin against God!

He knew God had blessed him with this position and that he could not expect the blessing to continue if he rebelled against God. Neither can we. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?

But in spite of his refusals, she persists. Day, after day, after day she continues to proposition him. But Joseph continues to refuse to go to bed with her, or even to be with her.

This seduction or temptation was not for one day or few days. Joseph served in Potiphar's home for 11 long years.

When the temptress came to Joseph, his defenses were ready.

Sexual favours were normally expected by Egyptian slaves. So, in the culture no shame or guilt was attached to it. It could even be dangerous to refuse. Potiphar's wife was a powerful woman. It would not be wise to upset or offend her. She was seductive and no doubt sex with her would have been exciting. Joseph resisted her seduction with self-discipline, he refused.

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*Self- discipline has the ability to say no!*

---

Joseph was well aware of his boundaries and privileges. He had considered the damage that would follow from Sexual misbehaviour.

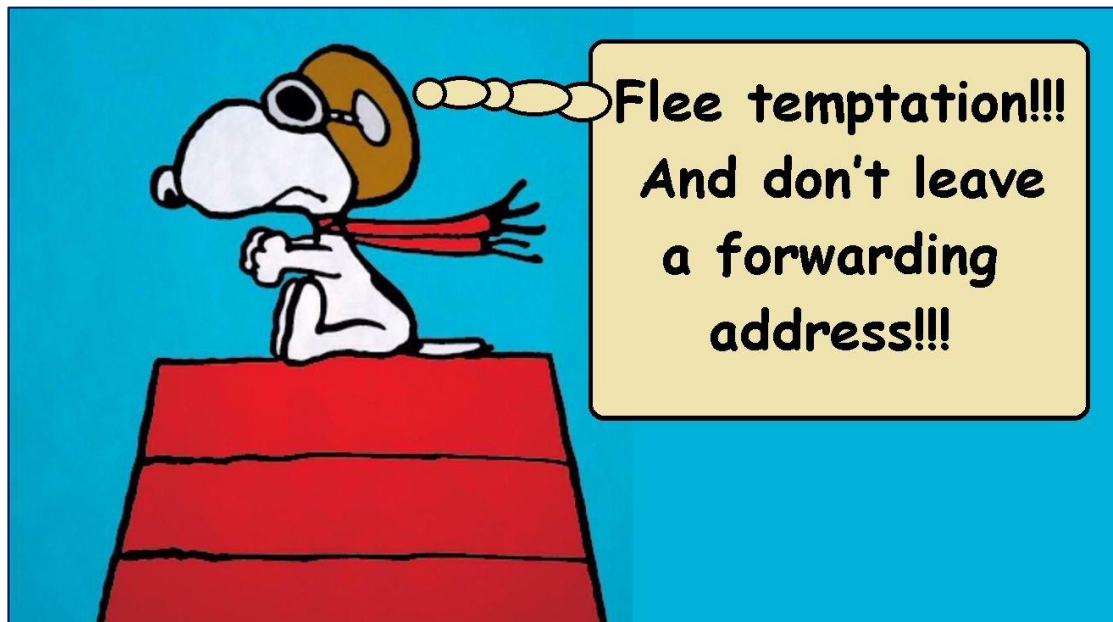
*Genesis 39:10, So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her.*

One day though, he goes into the house to do his work, and the place is empty. None of the other servants are around. Potiphar's wife is the only one there. She grabs him by his cloak and says, "Come to bed with me!" But he escapes out of his cloak, leaving it in her hand, and runs out of the house.

When she realizes Joseph left his cloak in her hand when he fled, she calls in her servants and says, Look! This Hebrew is making a joke of us! He came in here to have his way with me, but I screamed. When he heard me scream, he left his cloak laying here beside me and ran.

we need to avoid the source of temptation, which will be different for each of us. Many people operate on the edge of trouble to see how close they can get. Playing with sin is as stupid as playing with a black mamba. We need to flee from it otherwise we will get bitten. That's what snakes do, that's what sin does.

***Never overestimate our capacity to resist sin.***



*Genesis 39:11-12, But it happened about this time, when Joseph went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house was inside, <sup>12</sup> that she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside.*

- ✓ Avoidance was Joseph's first strategic response, and
- ✓ running away was his fallback.

Sometimes the only option is to run. Get out now. Get away fast.

Paul taught the Corinthian Church flee from sexual immorality. We need to learn from Joseph to flee certain situations, people, places, and other things if we feel we could fall into sexual immorality.

She keeps his cloak next to her until Potiphar comes home, and she tells him her story. That Hebrew slave guy you brought us came into my room to force himself on me. But fortunately, I screamed, and as soon as I did, he left his cloak beside me and ran. This is how your slave has treated me!

After Potiphar hears the story he's outraged. He takes Joseph and has him locked up in the prison where the king's prisoners are kept.

Mrs Potiphar's false testimony threw Joseph into prison. Sometimes doing the right godly thing is costly.

But God was waiting for him there and God continued to bless him and prepare him for greater things. He was so successful that the prison warden put him in charge of everything there. Even if we suffer from the ungodly, we will be blessed by God, in this life or the next.

Eventually Joseph was promoted to the top man in Egypt below Pharaoh and more importantly saviour of God's people. God is looking for those people who are self-disciplined and self-controlled.

Just as Joseph had to resist temptation to seek pleasure for himself, Jesus had to do the same throughout His life.

### *Who's Seducing You?*

Potiphar's wife was relentless in her efforts to seduce Joseph. But the question for you today is, who's seducing you? Or more accurately, who or what is seducing you?

I think it's important to see what we can learn from Joseph's example concerning relationships with the opposite sex.

The key words in this passage of scripture are Joseph's words about God.

*Genesis 39:9, There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"*



What's most important here is the issue of fidelity, but not Joseph's fidelity to Potiphar, or Potiphar's wife's infidelity, but Joseph's fidelity to his God.

Through the incessant relentless daily seduction, Joseph maintained God as the ultimate in his life.

It could be a person of the opposite sex, trying to seduce you, as Potiphar's wife did to Joseph.

Or it could be your career, or

sports, or video games, or a hobby, or social networks, or TV, or food, or shopping.

You know What is interesting?

Potiphar's wife wasn't faithful to Potiphar, nor was she faithful to the truth when she falsely accused Joseph.

It is the same with whoever, or whatever from that list in the last paragraph, is seducing you.

It promises fulfilment but, like Potiphar's wife, its absence of fidelity to the truth. In the end fulfilment comes only when you devote yourself to God.

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*Fulfilment only comes when God is first in your life.*

---

What consumes your thinking?

Where do you invest your time?

Where do you invest your money?

Who or what has your heart?

Is it God?

Or someone, or something else?



Joseph kept God foremost in his life, through rejection by his family, through his misfortune of being sold into slavery, through Potiphar's wife's attempts at seduction, through wrong accusation, and through imprisonment.

Joseph kept God as his ultimate.

**Which brings us back to the question.**

- ❖ Who or what is seducing you?
- ❖ Who or what is tempting you to make them first in your life?
- ❖ Who or what desires to take God's place as the ultimate in your life?

The Apostle Paul wrote about men ought to be self-controlled.

*Titus 2:2, Teach the older men to exercise self-control, to be worthy of respect, and to live wisely. They must have sound faith and be filled with love and patience.*

*1 Timothy 3:2, So a church leader must be a man whose life is above reproach. He must be faithful to his wife. He must exercise self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation. He must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must be able to teach.*

*Titus 1:8, but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled,*

Joseph learnt that, wherever he was, through ups and downs, God was always with him. We too must learn that through the good and bad times God is always with us.

Whether or not we understand what God is doing, He has His purposes in everything that happens to us.

The Son of God exalted in glory before, became a man to be humiliated on the cross, but then rising to be exalted to rule all.

God's way is to exalt His humbled but faithful servants.

But critical to Joseph's qualifications to be Israel's saviour was his early resistance to the temptation of Potiphar's wife, just as Jesus' resistance to the temptations of Satan at the beginning of His ministry.

Joseph had to learn self-discipline if he was ever to be entrusted with greater responsibility. He had to learn to govern himself before he would be ready to govern the world.

Jesus died to redeem people who want to do good. He doesn't want us to remain in immorality. His grace and kindness motivate us to say no! We live in a society today that isn't playing by God's rules. We need to be ready to protect ourselves and our loved ones.

We need to prepare our defensive convictions long before temptation arises.

Many examples you can see from your own life.

The Bible clearly teaches that sexual pleasure is for marriage. Outside of marriage it is wrong and an offense to God. Paul wrote what motivates us to say no as Christians.

*Titus 2:11-14, For the grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people. <sup>12</sup> And we are instructed to turn from godless living and sinful pleasures. We should live in this evil world with wisdom, righteousness, and devotion to God, <sup>13</sup> while we look forward with hope to that wonderful day when the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be revealed. <sup>14</sup> He gave his life to free us from every kind of sin, to cleanse us, and to make us his very own people, totally committed to doing good deeds.(NLT)*

### **Personal Study Questions**

- ✓ How are people hurt by sexual immorality?
- ✓ How does God's grace motivate us to sexual self-discipline?
- ✓ How can we personally avoid sexual temptation?

- ✓ When do we need to run away from temptation?

## *Joseph's 5 Steps to Avoid Temptation*

Joseph, a young man, in the prime of his life and possessing all the desires young men in the prime of their life possess, somehow avoids this temptation from Potiphar's wife.

How did he do that?

### *1. Responsibility*

*Genesis 39: 9, Joseph says the words, "How then could I do ..."*

"How then could I..." Joseph said.

He took responsibility for his own behaviour.

How many might have said, "Well what could I do? I'm just a slave and she's the boss's wife. Really, I couldn't refuse, could I?"

Or,

"What would you expect someone my age to do, with hormones raging? How could I help it?"

No, Joseph didn't go there. He took responsibility for his own actions.

### *2. Recognize Sin*

*Genesis 39:9, There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"*

Joseph recognizes what Potiphar's wife wants as something wicked and terrible.

Joseph sees it for what it is, sin.

The Bible is God's word for humanity. He loves us enough to define sin in His scriptures and to warn us away from it. He does so not because God is against pleasure, but because He knows in the long run, sin is disastrous for you.

God is trying to spare you from heartache and pain you will experience in the end, though you may experience pleasure in the short term.

Today there's a huge push in our culture to discount what the Bible says about sin as old-fashioned and irrelevant.

There are websites where women are offering their virginity for sum of money, in some cases it's an open auction. Many sins that were previously recognized as bad behaviour have already been brought a long way toward a perception, they are trivial, or even a perception those who commit a given sin are victims.

Take the example of LGBT, what inroads they have made into society?

Joseph didn't discount what Potiphar's wife asked him to do. He saw it for what it was a sin do, should you and me.

### ***3. Respond to God***

*Genesis 39:9, There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"*

Joseph recognizes, if he gratifies his desires, he will sin against God.

Joseph has a deep relationship with God and so it grieved Joseph to sin against Him.

He can't bear to sin because he can't bear to disappoint the God he loves. Yes, he was loyal to his earthly master Potiphar, but in the end, it's God who Joseph was most concerned about.

Living your life loving God and concerned about God and what He thinks is one of the great keys to living the abundant life God has in mind for you.

*John 15:11, "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.*

*Matthew 22:37, <sup>37</sup>Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'*

### ***4. Refuse to be Present***

*Genesis 39:10, So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her.*

Joseph not only refused to go to bed with Potiphar's wife, but he refused to even be with her.

I wonder how many marriages would still be intact if both the husband and the wife decided to simply avoid putting themselves in situations that might lead to temptation.

What a small price to pay if it results in you keeping your family intact.

What a heavy price to pay if you break your family apart.

Today divorce is so acceptable, our culture has endorsed it so strongly, most are so calm about it.

Five years after divorce more than 1/3 of children experience depression. Kids from divorced families are less successful in life than children from intact families, especially in their careers and their relationships. Majority of children from divorced families say they want their original family back together.

After a divorce, custody usually goes to the mother. About half of all single mothers live below the poverty line on average for six years. For African American single mothers, it's even worse, 2/3 are still single and in poverty 10 years after their divorce.

No one talks about these things. You never see these findings in the news.

Joseph was a slave and didn't have control of his own life to the degree you do. Yet he did his best to avoid putting himself in situations where he might be tempted. You can do the same.

## **6. Run**

*Genesis 39:12, that she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside.*

When Joseph was unavoidably confronted with temptation, he fled. He left. He split immediately.

When she grabbed his robe,

- He didn't stop and use the moment to teach Potiphar's wife about his faith.
- He didn't hesitate and share with her that he's flattered but must decline,
- He did not reason with her that it's nothing personal,
- He did not give any reason how it might be different under different circumstances.
- He didn't spend one moment on one word of conversation.
- He didn't go back for his coat.

He ran out of from there! Right away!!

Next time you are confronted with temptation *RUN*, immediately.

## *Warning*

### *Two failures, and Two different outcomes!*

*Why David recovered, and Samson did not?*

Joseph was a major difference, he was able to avoid temptation without support from believing friends. This is profoundly rare. We can see the more usual pattern for humanity in scripture when we look at two other men of God who experienced temptation.

Both Samson and David fell into temptation but only one of them recovered from its consequences.

Why?

More was written about Samson than most other men in the Bible yet not one friend is named in all the pages devoted to Samson's life.

He was a loner.

In contrast, David's list of friends is a long one. And we see that he had certain friends like Jonathan who were especially close. (**1 Samuel 18:1-5**)

We see David was open to being held accountable, for instance when he subjected himself to correction by his friend Nathan. (**2 Samuel 12:1-14**)

To rid yourself of a temptation, like porn or alcohol or some other selfish pursuit, do whatever you have to do to find friends—men who have overcome the same temptation you are battling against.

Sit down with each of these men one at a time and tell them your story without pretence. If you become open and vulnerable, you will be surprised at how many friends you attract. Going all alone as Samson did will almost certainly produce the same result that Samson experienced. You will become a prisoner. You will find yourself living life blindly walking in circles.

Instead, invest in friends like David did. Develop close friendships the way David did. Become a man who is wide open to being held accountable the way David did.

Invest in brotherly friends the same way David did and you will find the same results that David did. He confessed his sin. He repented. Never fell into sexual temptation again.

Joseph was an Example.

## ***7. Devotion - Walking with God***

### ***Holding on to unseen Hand of God***

*Judges 6:13, Gideon said to Him, "O my lord, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, 'Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?' But now the Lord has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites."*



By His Spirit, God is alive and active in His church.

You and me are part of the body of Christ.

Nevertheless, if you think that walking with Jesus means an endless series of miracles, burning bushes, still, small voices, warm fuzzies, and sensations of peace that pass all understanding, then you are going to be disappointed.

Many of the greatest (and most honest) saints have confessed that they had to walk through many valleys with no sense of God's presence, sometimes nearly going deaf from the heavenly silence.

#### **An Ancient, Recurring Story**

The greatest saints in the Bible often felt the absence of God. No less than the prophet Isaiah himself cried out in despair.

**Isaiah 64:1-12**, God, if only you would tear open  
the heavenly realm and come down!  
How the mountains would tremble  
in your awesome presence!

2 In the same way that fire sets kindling to blaze  
and causes water to boil,  
let the fire of your presence come down.  
Reveal to your enemies your mighty name  
and cause the nations to tremble before you!

3 When you did amazing wonders we didn't expect,  
you came down,  
and mountains shuddered in your presence!

4 These amazing things had never been heard of before;  
you did things never dreamed of!  
No one perceived your greatness.  
No eye has ever seen a God like you,  
who intervenes for those  
who wait and long for you!

5 Those who delight in doing what is right—  
you go out to meet them with kindness.  
They remember you and cherish your ways.  
You showed your anger  
when we sinned again and again,  
yet we can be saved.

### **Sin Is Our Problem**

6 We have all become contaminated with sin,  
and you see our self-righteousness as nothing better  
than a menstrual rag.  
We are all like fallen leaves,  
and our sins sweep us away like the wind.

7 No one calls on your name  
or presses in to lay hold of you,  
for you have hidden your face from us.

*You have let us be ruined by our own sins.*

***The Master Potter***

*8 Yet still, Yahweh, you are our Father.*

*We are like clay and you are our Potter.*

*Each one of us is the creative, artistic work of your hands.*

*9 Yahweh, don't be angry with us!*

*Don't remember our sins again forever!*

*Please look at us; we are your people.*

*10 Your sacred cities are abandoned like a desert;*

*Zion is a wasteland; Jerusalem sits in ruins.*

*11 Our holy temple, our source of pride,*

*where our ancestors sang your praise,*

*has been consumed by fire.*

*All that we held dear has been destroyed.*

*12 Now, Yahweh, after all this, are you still unmoved?*

*Will you continue to stand silently by  
and afflict us so severely? (**Passion Translation**)*

You have hidden your face from us. Why?

God where are your dramatic, awe-inspiring works in my day?

Isaiah had heard of "times past" when God would "rend the heavens and come down," when people "quaked in God's presence."

But where was that God now, Isaiah asked?

He cries out in dismay!

The psalmist Asaph says

***Psalms 74:9***, "*We are given no signs from God; no prophets are left, and none of us knows how long this will be*"

The experience of feeling like God is absent or silent, you see, is anything but new.

So why does God leave us feeling that way sometimes?

What are we to do during those times?

When God calls someone to follow Him, He frequently sends them through times in the "wilderness."

## *Empty Space*

Right after God first put a vision into Moses to see Israel led out of slavery, He exiled him into the wilderness for forty years to herd sheep.

Only after a long, silent, four decades, did God finally appear to him in the burning bush with the command to go.

Can you imagine how despairing that could have been?

“God, where are you?”

Moses must have questioned God during those forty silent years?

Consider the life of David. We did see his life in the last year’s conference.

After being anointed as future king of Israel by Samuel, what was David’s next move?

Did he

- go straight to the palace to try on robes?
- immediately confront Goliath?
- get billed as one of the “sexiest men alive” in Israelites Today magazine?

None of the above.

**1 Samuel 16** tells us he went straight back to the pasture to tend the sheep.

When David encounters Goliath, he’s in between sheep-care and crackers-and-cheese runs for his brothers (1 Samuel 17:15).

Samuel had anointed David as king in 1 Samuel 16:13. This means David went from being named “future king” and “man after God’s own heart” by the most famous prophet alive to “field hand shovelling sheep dung” and “Cheese It boy” for his big brothers.

Right after the conclusion of the last verse in David’s anointing (**1 Samuel 16:13**), our Bible has a Empty Space!

God moves on to something else happening at a different place in Israel.

In that Empty Space is where David went back to the pasture. The space between the call of God and the fulfilment of the dream.



Nothing is written there, for David or for us, and I'm sure it felt terribly confusing for David.

As we are looking at the life of Joseph, we see the same pattern here as well.

God spoke to Joseph in Dream.

Obedient to his father to go and look for his big brothers' meal.

Sold into slavery.

Accused falsely.

Sent to prison.

Forgotten by the king's butler.

Left alone in the prison for whole two years!

Are you in an Empty Space right now?

Empty or White spaces are typically the hardest parts of life to endure!

- ✓ The white space is space of silence!
- ✓ The white space is space of singleness!
- ✓ The white space is space of sickness!
- ✓ The white space of finishing out a prison sentence.

- ✓ The white space of unfulfilled promises and unmet expectations.

How many times must have Joseph endured this while he was sold by his brothers into slavery, falsely accused of adultery with his master's wife, overlooked for parole by the magistrates could have called out to God, "Where are you?"

But do you see him calling that way?

No.

Jesus called Paul to be his apostle on the Damascus Road, Paul wandered in the desert for three years and suffered obscurity for another fourteen years.

*Galatians 1:17-19, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. <sup>18</sup> Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days. <sup>19</sup> But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.*

*Galatians 2:1, Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me.*

Paul endured seventeen years in the background before he was appointed by the Church as a missionary!

*Acts 13:2, As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."*

After Mary became pregnant with the Messiah, God waited for several months to tell her fiancé, Joseph, about the miraculous conception.

### **Why did God wait?**

During that delay, Joseph (naturally) assumed she had cheated on him (I mean, what else could you assume?). This means that for several months, Mary had to go through the humiliation of pregnancy alone with everyone, even her beloved fiancé, assuming she was a cheater.

God chose to do it that way.

Why? Why did He wait so long to tell Joseph?

Why the "white space"?

Why does God sometimes leave us feeling alone, deserted, humiliated, abandoned like we are in darkness. Sometimes we feel as if God doesn't care as though He's abandoned us altogether?

Why is the only sound we hear at those times the echo of a door slammed in our faces?

I don't know the full answer, but I know that part of it has to do with the fact that He wants us to walk by faith, not by sight.

Walking by faith means sometimes pressing on when we can't feel or see Him.

### *Seeing the invisible.*

**2 Kings 6:8-23,**

#### *A God Who Sees*

*V 12, but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king the very words you speak in your bedroom".*

Where does Elisha get his information from?

Is he under the bed?!

As a prophet he hears it from God. God hears the very words spoken in the king's bedroom.

The God we worship is a God,

- who hears,
- who sees,
- who knows, and
- who is aware.

When Israel was oppressed in Egypt God made this statement to Moses.

*Exodus 3:7, "The Lord said – indeed I have seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering."*

Hannah finds herself childless in a world where that seemed to be the only thing that mattered. She's distraught, her mascara's running, her hair's a mess, she struggles to even whisper her prayers. But God answers her prayer for a child. And she names him Samuel meaning "God hears." Every time a prayer is answered remind yourself of this truth: God hears.

Jesus shows us God's watchful, hearing heart. In a bustling crowd he feels a woman touching him for healing (**Luke 8:45**). He's aware, he knows, he hears, he sees.

John 11, Jesus is at Lazarus tomb, about to raise him from death. He prays, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me.” Just as Jesus knew the Father heard him, we can too, because as Christians we pray all our prayers “in Christ”.

Jesus knew that about God.

Do you?

God even knows your words before you speak them.

*Psalm 139:4, For there is not a word on my tongue, But behold, O Lord, You know it altogether.*

Your thoughts before you think them. What we think in secret He knows and can reveal if he chooses.

God opening our eyes to see is an act of mercy.

### *A God Who Helps His People See*



#### *a) Let your Spiritual eyes be open*

Apostle Paul prayed for every saint in the Epistle of Ephesians.

*Ephesians 1:17-23, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, <sup>18</sup> the eyes of*

*your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,<sup>19</sup> and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power<sup>20</sup> which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,<sup>21</sup> far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.*

*<sup>22</sup> And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church,<sup>23</sup> which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*

Eyes of your heart be enlightened.

Elisha prayed that the eyes of the servant be opened.

***2 Kings 6:17**, And Elisha prayed, and said, "Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." Then the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.*

Pray that God will open your spiritual eyes so that you will be able to see not just physically but spiritually as well.

### **Eyes to see beyond yourself to the needs of others**

God gives the gift of the Prophets to His people. They are sometimes called "seers" because they see things God shows them.

God gave Elisha in this passage supernatural knowledge of the King of Aram's whereabouts and plans. Whilst Old and New Testament prophets are different, they both reflect Jesus, the ultimate Prophet.

***Hebrews 1:1-2**, God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,<sup>2</sup> has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;*

Some observations of Elisha which are also true for prophetic:

The correct response for Elisha is to use God's gift to serve a king without that gift.

Elisha saw what was good for Israel and the King and he encouraged the king to take different routes, comforted that God wanted to save his life. He strengthened Israel.

Bring your gift, submit it to godly leadership in the church, and share what you see.

The enemy will try to isolate you and prevent your gift operating. Elisha got surrounded. Deep relationship with God is vital to weather such experiences.

## ***b) Eyes to see beyond fear to trust in God***

*2 Kings 6:15-16, "When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. 'Oh no, my lord! What shall we do?' the servant asked."*

This servant finds himself in an "oh no" situation. An army with horses and chariots has surrounded them!

You might call him a Realist! But he was actually ignorant of greater reality.

"Don't be afraid,' the prophet answered.

'Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.' And Elisha prayed, 'Open his eyes, Lord, so that he may see.'

*2 Kings 6:17, Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all round Elisha."*

We don't know if Elisha could see them, but he knew of horses and fiery chariots all around.

Eyes of faith understand the nearness of God's presence. Eyes of faith trust even when they don't see.

In the Gospels, Jesus' disciple Thomas missed church one week and missed Jesus resurrected appearance! In response to Thomas' subsequent doubt, Jesus said in

*John 20:29, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed"*

## ***c) Eyes to see beyond judgment to a God of grace***

*2 Kings 6:20-22, So it was, when they had come to Samaria, that Elisha said, "Lord, open the eyes of these men, that they may see." And the Lord opened their eyes, and they saw; and there they were, inside Samaria! <sup>21</sup> Now when the king of Israel saw them, he said to Elisha, "My father, shall I kill them? Shall I kill them?"*

*<sup>22</sup> But he answered, "You shall not kill them. Would you kill those whom you have taken captive with your sword and your bow? Set food and water before them, that they may eat and drink and go to their master."*

When the king of Israel saw them, he asked Elisha, 'Shall I kill them, my father? Shall I kill them?'

'Do not kill them,' Elisha answered.

'Would you kill those you have captured with your own sword or bow? Set food and water before them so that they may eat and drink and then go back to their master.'

So, he prepared a great feast for them, and after they had finished eating and drinking, he sent them away.

*2 Kings 6:23, Then he prepared a great feast for them; and after they ate and drank, he sent them away and they went to their master. So the bands of Syrian raiders came no more into the land of Israel.*

Elisha leads them into the heart of Samaria.

Their eyes are opened.

The horror!

They're trapped!

The King says "Justice! Kill them!"

But Elisha stands in the way and says, "let's show grace."

**Grace is always more powerful than justice.**

God wants to open your eyes today to his grace.

Many people have a view of God that God is fault-finding. The truth is so much harder to hear. Our sins are much bigger than we could ever imagine. But wonderfully his grace is bigger still and much more powerful than we could ever imagine.

God forgives,

God reconciles,

God heals, and

God loves.

Don't settle for a view of God as just the Judge. He's a Father who loves you. Let God open your eyes to His grace.

***Ponder during this conference:***

God sees.

We tend to default to a view that God isn't very interested in the details of our lives. Do you agree?

How does this story show us he is? Are there other examples in Scripture you can think of?

God answers in His own way and time: “Yes”, “Not yet”, or “I have something better in mind”.

This story would have been much simpler if God had sorted the enemy king out at the start! What does this story teach us about God’s methods in answering our prayers?

### *The prophetic.*

The enemy in the story tried to silence the prophetic voice of Elisha. How does the enemy do that in the church at large today?

How can we ensure we encourage and nurture the gift of prophecy?

Elisha lived not just by what his five senses informed him, but by what God showed him. How as Christians can we see the world, our lives, and our battles with correct vision?

How does God show us things?

### *Seeing grace.*

The enemy ultimately received grace in the story. How does knowing God’s grace give us confidence in our relationship with him?

Another reason God often leads us through dark, silent valleys is that He wants to purify our hearts. Why do we want to be close to God?

Is it because of what He gives us, or is it simply because we want Him?

What is more valuable to us: God or His blessings?

Sometimes God withholds everything from us except His promises in order to make us ask ourselves, “Is this — His promise — enough for me?”

You can never know that Jesus is all that you need, you see, until He’s all that you have.

Can you walk by faith in God’s promises alone, even when you can’t see or feel anything?

## 8. Patience

The reality of suffering, the reality of the fact that we are called to suffer.

*Acts 14:22, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."*



God never promised the slides and we just slide right into the Kingdom without any trouble or without any tribulation. In fact, we are promised just the opposite.

More than ever we need one characteristic that will allow us to get through these severe trials. And this one characteristic is essential for us to endure trials that are promised to come or trials that are already upon us.

Singular characteristic is **patience**.

The word 'Patience' means "Cheerful Endurance or Hopeful Endurance"

Patience is essentially waiting to get what you want or waiting to get what has been promised to you. But, since you're waiting to get what you want, whether it's a promise somebody has made to pay you or the promise of the Kingdom of God.

Since you want it, we would prefer it sooner than later and therein lays the problem. This is especially true in trials. We want the trial to be over sooner rather than later.

Let us look at an example of a colossal lack of patience.

Saul had already been anointed king and Samuel was giving him instruction. Samuel is giving directions to this new king Saul.

*1 Samuel 10:8, You shall go down before me to Gilgal; and surely I will come down to you to offer burnt offerings and make sacrifices of peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait, till I come to you and show you what you should do."*

The implication is, "Since I have to show you what you should do, I don't want you to do anything until I get there." And he says, "I'll be seven days."

*1 Samuel 13:5-14, Then the Philistines gathered together to fight with Israel, [c]thirty thousand chariots and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the seashore in multitude. And they came up and encamped in Michmash, to the east of Beth Aven. <sup>6</sup> When the men of Israel saw that they were in danger (for the people were distressed), then the people hid in caves, in thickets, in rocks, in holes, and in pits. <sup>7</sup> And some of the Hebrews crossed over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he was still in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling. <sup>8</sup> Then he waited seven days, according to the time set by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him. <sup>9</sup> So Saul said, "Bring a burnt offering and peace offerings here to me." And he offered the burnt offering. <sup>10</sup> Now it happened, as soon as he had finished presenting the burnt offering, that Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might greet him.*

*<sup>11</sup> And Samuel said, "What have you done?"*

*Saul said, "When I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered together at Michmash, <sup>12</sup> then I said, 'The Philistines will now come down on me at Gilgal, and I have not made supplication to the Lord.' Therefore I felt compelled, and offered a burnt offering."*

*<sup>13</sup> And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which He commanded you. For now the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. <sup>14</sup> But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you."*

- These were tough times.
- They were scattering and hiding themselves because they were afraid.
- Samuel was not there. Seven days have passed, but Samuel said, "Don't you do anything until I get there to show you what to do."
- And in verse 9, here's the mistake Saul made as he began to take matters into his own hands. He began to do what seemed right at the moment.
- Saul's thinking everything is fine.
- He did what was right in his own eyes and he violated what Samuel told him to do and not to do.
- "If you had had patience, if you had waited, if you had trusted God and you had trusted Samuel and just waited it out,"
- He said, "Your lineage would be upon Israel forever,"
- Because he lacked patience.
- God had already picked David. It hadn't come to pass yet.
- I am sure at that point Saul wished he could have the time back. He wished he could do it differently, but he just lacked patience. It is quiet trusting in God.

Even though patience is hard to come by and the Philistines were there, and the people were leaving, and all of these things were going on, but what God requires in each one of us is patience!

But human nature says, "God, give me patience right now!" And that's an oxymoron because, if you want patience right now, you are not patient.

But that's what human nature wants God sprinkle "patience dust" over us and all of a sudden, we are patient.

- ✓ It is easy to be patient when things are unfolding according to our desires and according to our timetable.
- ✓ If things are unfolding according to our plan, then patience is kind of easy to come by.

But patience becomes challenging when life goes off the script that we have written for it and things take longer than we expect, or things unfold differently than we had planned. Then, patience is very challenging.

*Isaiah 55:8-9, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord. <sup>9</sup> "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.*

God has "script" for us!

The way God works and the way He thinks is very different from the way we do things and the way we think. Our expectations sometimes run counter to what God wants to do in our lives.

God's timetable is different than ours. When you think about it, time is irrelevant to God. Time makes no difference to God. But the fact is that our concept of time and God's concept of time are totally different.

So, there is perhaps no better example to illustrates the difference between God's way and man's way or God's time and man's time than the Story of Joseph.

As we are taking time for the past 2 days going through the Book of Genesis to look at this Story of Joseph.

Joseph is the only patriarch where not a single sin has been recorded. Obviously, we know he wasn't perfect. Christ is the only One who has lived on this earth that was perfect.

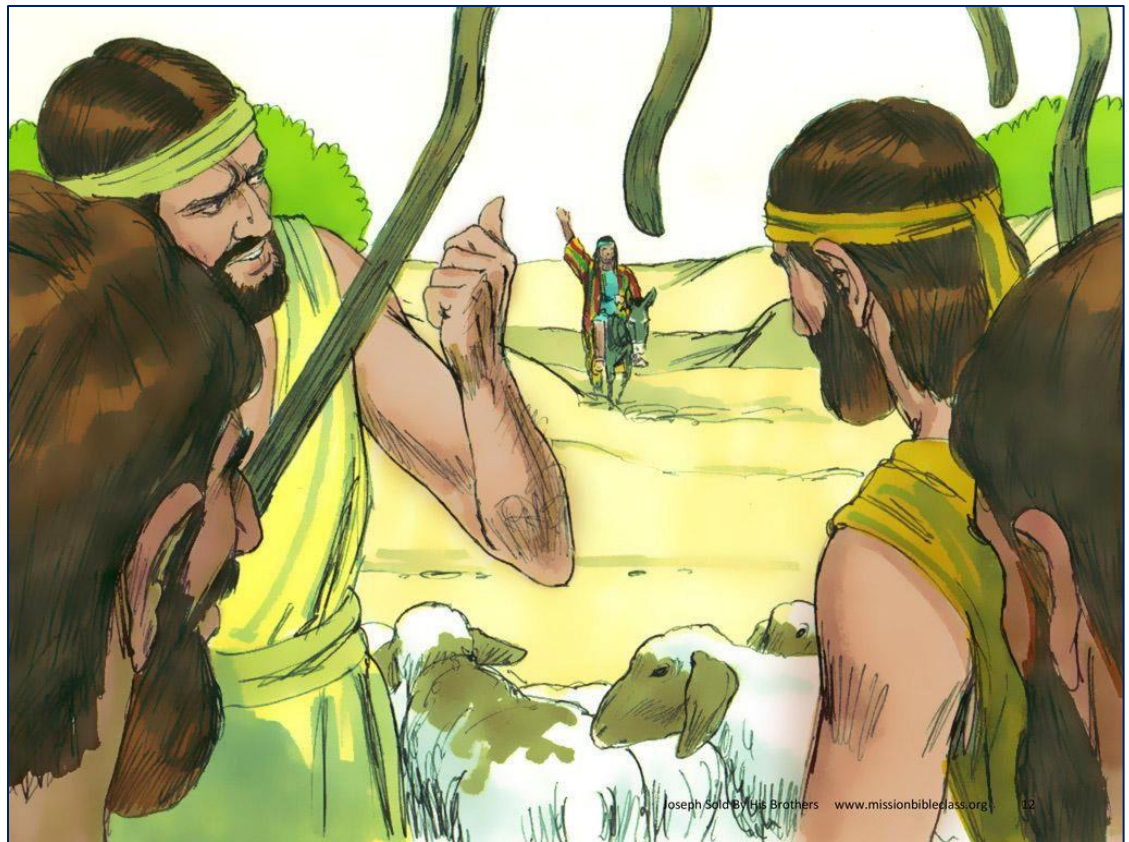
But Joseph was a man who followed God from his very youth, from a very young age as we're going to see. He was punished for following God over and over and over.

It would have been easy for Joseph to lose patience, but we're going to see that he did not.

Let's go to Genesis chapter 37. So, we're going to run through a few chapters of Genesis. I know most of us probably know the story by heart, but if you're like me until you go back and read it, there are some things that are easy to forget.

*Genesis 37:1-4, Now Jacob dwelt in the land where his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan. <sup>2</sup> This is the history of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brothers. And the lad was with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to his father.<sup>3</sup> Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of many colors. <sup>4</sup> But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.*

They made his life miserable!



**Genesis 37:11-14**, And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind. <sup>12</sup> Then his brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. <sup>13</sup> And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers feeding the flock in Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." So he said to him, "Here I am." <sup>14</sup> Then he said to him, "Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me." So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron, and he went to Shechem.

**Genesis 37:18-22**, Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him. <sup>19</sup> Then they said to one another, "Look, this dreamer is coming! <sup>20</sup> Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, 'Some wild beast has devoured him.' We shall see what will become of his dreams!"

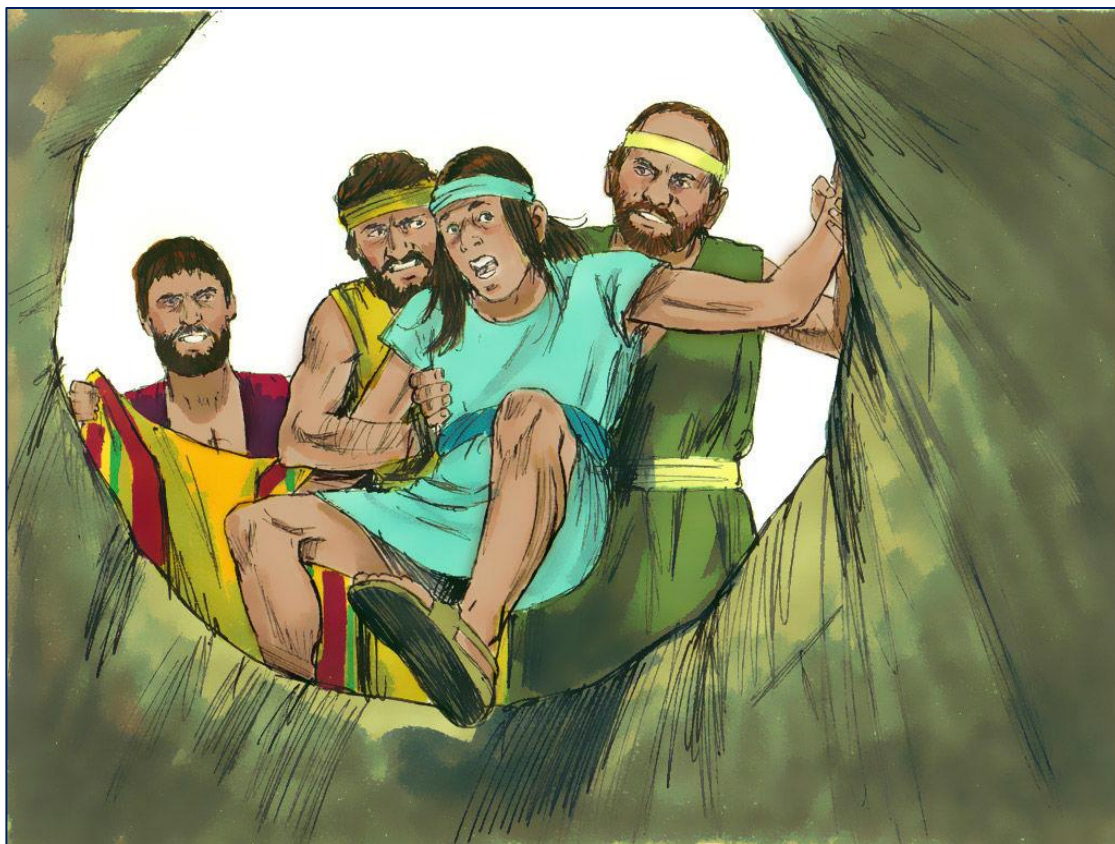
<sup>21</sup> But Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, "Let us not kill him." <sup>22</sup> And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit which is in the wilderness, and do not lay a hand on him"—that he might deliver him out of their hands, and bring him back to his father.

Now, if Joseph died, Reuben would be responsible because he was the firstborn. So, he had a little more concern than the rest of the brothers.

**Genesis 37:23-28**, So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the tunic of many colors that was on him. <sup>24</sup> Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit was empty; there was no water in it.

<sup>25</sup> And they sat down to eat a meal. Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry them down to Egypt. <sup>26</sup> So Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? <sup>27</sup> Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh." And his brothers listened. <sup>28</sup> Then Midianite traders passed by; so the brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

**Genesis 37:36**, Now the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard.



For a moment put yourself in Joseph's position right now.

How on earth was this fair?

All he was trying to do was obey his father. "I just did what Dad asked and look at this!" He says, "I'm now down in Egypt. I am a slave. I am being sold to a man of a high position, an officer in Pharaoh's court, captain of the guard.

What's going on here?"

*Genesis 39:1-7, Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there. <sup>2</sup> The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. <sup>3</sup> And his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord made all he did to prosper in his hand. <sup>4</sup> So Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority. <sup>5</sup> So it was, from the time that he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was on all that he had in the house and in the field. <sup>6</sup> Thus he left all that he had in Joseph's hand, and he did not know what he had except for the bread which he ate.*

*Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance.*

*<sup>7</sup> And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me."*

Now this is interesting because in Abraham's case and in Isaac's case, both of them had powerful men who wanted their wives. We don't have time to go into it, but Abraham and Isaac ran into powerful men and those men wanted their wives. In this case, the wife of a powerful man wants Joseph.

*Genesis 39:8-9, But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. <sup>9</sup> There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"*

Now remember, this is pre-Sinai, pre-Ten Commandments. But clearly the Ten Commandments are in effect because "Sin is the transgression of the Law." And the Law had to exist in order for sin to exist and Joseph knew that.

Joseph said, "How can I do this?"

Sin against this man who's been so good to me and given me everything?

You are not my wife. And I'm not going to do it."

*Genesis 39:10-14, So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her. <sup>11</sup> But it happened about this time, when Joseph went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house was inside, <sup>12</sup> that she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside. <sup>13</sup> And so it was, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and fled outside, <sup>14</sup> that she called to the men of her house and spoke to them, saying, "See, he has brought in to us a Hebrew to mock us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice.*

There were no witnesses there.

Blame the husband! She is blaming the husband right out of the shoot.

"He did this!"

Until Potiphar came home, she had the garment; she had a story all concocted.

Was his anger at Joseph or was his anger at her?

It doesn't say.

*Genesis 39:20, Then Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were confined. And he was there in the prison.*

Potiphar probably knew the nature of his wife. Otherwise, he would have had Joseph killed on the spot for doing that. But he probably had a suspicion that there was more to it than just what his wife was saying. So, to keep up appearances, obviously he had to do something about it. So, he put Joseph in jail but did not have him killed.

Again, put yourself in Joseph's position. In his mind, he had to think, "This is completely unfair! This is just not right." He says, "I tried to follow God's Law. In fact, I did follow God's Law, but look what it's got me first, I was sold into slavery; now, I'm in jail."

Now, do you think maybe he was running out of patience a little bit here because nothing is going right according to Joseph?

We are going to find out later that everything was happening just according to God's plan, but Joseph couldn't see it.

*Genesis 39:21-23, But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. <sup>22</sup> And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners who were in the prison; whatever they did there, it was his doing. <sup>23</sup> The keeper of the prison did not look into*

*anything that was under Joseph's authority, because the Lord was with him; and whatever he did, the Lord made it prosper.*

Once again Joseph is doing the job of the keeper of the prison. Now this must be encouraging because, once again, God didn't remove him from the prison, but God is showing him, "I am with you. I am causing you to prosper."

Joseph didn't understand what was going on, but it was probably encouraging to him.

The keeper just took a vacation, turned it over to Joseph and everything worked out just fine. He was very happy.

- ✓ So, Joseph first found favor with his father because his father could trust him.
- ✓ Then, he found favor with Potiphar. Potiphar turned the whole household over to Joseph.
- ✓ Now, the head jailer has done the same thing, turned everything over to Joseph.

Guess what?

Joseph is still in prison. He has no freedom and probably the conditions weren't very good.

Would your patience be running out right about now?

Probably!

*Genesis 40:1, It came to pass after these things that the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt offended their lord, the king of Egypt.*

Now, it appears what happened was that incident occurred on Pharaoh's birthday and it was an attempted assassination through poison. The butler was in charge of the wine and the baker was in charge of the food. So, one of the two of them was responsible. And so, Pharaoh had both of them thrown into prison.

*Genesis 40:2-4, And Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief butler and the chief baker. <sup>3</sup>So he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison, the place where Joseph was confined. <sup>4</sup>And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them; so they were in custody for a while.*

Now, the Hebrew word for *season* means from one season to the next. So, they were there at least for three months, from one season to the next, "in the ward."

Both the baker and the butler had dreams. And we won't take the time to go through those, but Joseph interpreted those dreams. And there was a positive outcome for the butler because we're going to see he was reinstated, but the cook wound up losing his life.

*Genesis 40:20-22, Now it came to pass on the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast for all his servants; and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants. <sup>21</sup> Then he restored the chief butler to his butlership again, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand. <sup>22</sup> But he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them.*

So, the butler had the wine cup because the butler was responsible for serving the wine to Pharaoh. Often the butler would taste the wine in case it was poisoned, and he would die rather than Pharaoh.

*Genesis 40:23, Yet the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.*

Once again, put yourself in Joseph's position.

Can you imagine the frustration?

Can you imagine interpreting the dream, having it come just to pass, this butler was now elevated to his former position?

Joseph, I am sure, was hanging his hope on the fact the butler remembering him and saying, "Oh, this man did me good," and somehow would pull some strings to get him out of prison. It didn't happen.

*Genesis 41:1, Then it came to pass, at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh had a dream; and behold, he stood by the river.*

Now two more years in prison!

How would we react to that?

Joseph has obeyed God. Yes, God has been with him. He has obeyed God, but he is still in this stinking hole of a prison.

*Genesis 41:9-13, Then the chief butler spoke to Pharaoh, saying: "I remember my faults this day. <sup>10</sup> When Pharaoh was angry with his servants, and put me in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, both me and the chief baker, <sup>11</sup> we each had a dream in one night, he and I. Each of us dreamed according to the interpretation of his own dream. <sup>12</sup> Now there was a young Hebrew man with us there, a servant of the captain of the guard. And we told him, and he interpreted our dreams for us; to each man he interpreted according to his own dream. <sup>13</sup> And it came to pass, just as he interpreted for us, so it happened. He restored me to my office, and he hanged him."*

So, now after two years, the butler remembers.

*Genesis 41:14, Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him quickly out of the dungeon; and he shaved, changed his clothing, and came to Pharaoh.*

They had to shave him because hair (facial hair, head hair) was an anathema to the Egyptians. So, he shaved himself, changed his garments. They probably gave him a bath and came unto Pharaoh.

*Genesis 41:15, And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that you can understand a dream, to interpret it."*

Let's just ponder here, once again, Joseph has been frustrated. The butler didn't remember. Now, here is his chance to get out of prison. Here's his chance to exalt himself, give himself all the credit in an effort to get out of prison. Don't you think we might pad our resume a little bit at this time so that we might look good in the Pharaoh's eyes and get ourselves out of prison?

*Genesis 41:16, So Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace."*

Joseph could say, "Here's a chance to make a name for myself and get out of this hole." But despite his frustration, Joseph gave God all the credit and he did not exalt himself.

Then he proceeded to interpret the dream, and this was the dream where he said, "Egypt would see seven years of plenty and, then, seven years of famine."

*Genesis 41:39-41, Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, there is no one as discerning and wise as you. <sup>40</sup> You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you." <sup>41</sup> And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt."*

Joseph was elevated again just like with Potiphar in his house and just like with the jailer.

*Genesis 41:46, Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt.*

Remember he was seventeen-years-old when he started. Humanly, you could say that he had wasted thirteen years. On a human level, after being sold and all that

happened to him, thirteen years had been a bust. He hadn't accomplished a thing. In fact, most of it has been pretty miserable.

### *Summary*

- ✓ Joseph is the only patriarch where no single sin has been recorded.
- ✓ Joseph is the only son that his father could trust. Yet, he was sold into slavery for it.
- ✓ Joseph found favor with Potiphar. He refused to sleep with Potiphar's wife and was thrown in jail for obeying God.
- ✓ Joseph found favor with the jailor but that that didn't help him a bit.
- ✓ Joseph interpreted a dream of the butler, but he was forgotten for two years.

Thirteen years for not doing a thing that was wrong!

### *Ask yourselves:*

Do you have that kind of patience?

Could I do that?

Could you do that for thirteen years of all that mess?

Have we ever said, "God, you've forgotten me," because we didn't get an answer five minutes ago?

Or have we ever taken matters into our own hands, as Saul did, and done something we shouldn't have done because we didn't have patience?

Why did God allow all of this to happen?

Why did God allow Joseph to go through this?

God does not see as we see. God does not see as man sees. God sees the entire picture. We see through tunnel vision, looking around like this and we don't see much.

God sees everything. We are consumed with ourselves:

- My problems,
- My trials,
- What's going on with me.
- I am hurt.

- I am in pain.
- I don't have any money.
- I am out of a job, and,
- My family on and on.

But God had a different agenda than Joseph did. God had a different timeline than Joseph did because God is outside human time. Human time is irrelevant to God.

So, unknow to Joseph, God had something far greater in mind than Joseph could see in a prison or in a pit. God was using Joseph to accomplish two things that he had no clue about.

1. Joseph was going to build the Nation of Israel.
2. Joseph was going to be a type of Christ.

### ***1. Building a Nation***

*Genesis 46:26-27, All the persons who went with Jacob to Egypt, who came from his body, besides Jacob's sons' wives, were sixty-six persons in all. <sup>27</sup> And the sons of Joseph who were born to him in Egypt were two persons. All the persons of the house of Jacob who went to Egypt were seventy.*

Remember Joseph revealed himself to his brothers, inquired of his dad, and because of the famine all of Jacob's family came back down to Egypt.

Now, these seventy were the *firstfruits* of what was going to be Israel. They were the *firstfruits* of a very select nation that would later number in the multiple millions. God was going to use Israel as an example to the rest of the world as long as Israel allowed that.

*Exodus 1:5-7, All those who were descendants of Jacob were seventy persons (for Joseph was in Egypt already). <sup>6</sup> And Joseph died, all his brothers, and all that generation. <sup>7</sup> But the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them.*

*Exodus 12:37-38, Then the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children. <sup>38</sup> A mixed multitude went up with them also, and flocks and herds—a great deal of livestock.*

So, there were six hundred thousand men of Israel. Not to mention the mixed multitude. When you add to the figure women and children, it was somewhere between two and three million people.

The *firstfruits* that came down to Egypt were seventy.

What it resulted now? Two to three million people heading back to Canaan, heading back to the Promised Land.

Think about this:

Jacob and his twelve sons had already lived in Canaan, the Promised Land. They were forced to leave. They had to go back down to Egypt. Only to turn around and go back through the Exodus back to Canaan again, back to the Promised Land. Now, to men this makes no sense.

We wouldn't plan it that way.

We wouldn't do it that way but remember **God does not see as we see.**

God sees far into future. God sees a far greater picture than we do.

Primary lesson here is this is why we must have patience. Because, when we get in a trial, we don't understand. We don't see.

But God sees the whole chessboard and He is moving the pieces around and we are totally oblivious to it. We're going through a trial. Sometimes we whine and complain to God, but the fact is that God knows, God sees, and as with Joseph, He is working out a plan. And one is to build a nation.

Joseph didn't have a clue when he was in prison, when he was going through all of this that this was what God had in mind. We got to apply that to ourselves when we are going through trials, when our children go through trials, or when someone in your family goes through trials. We don't have a clue what God is doing behind the scenes. We need to be patient.

## ***2. Joseph was going to become a type of Christ.***

We know Christ saves the Firstfruits. And, then, ultimately Christ will save the entire world the world alive to come as well as those who have ever lived. Joseph is a type of Christ and he did the same thing, obviously on a much smaller scale.

Joseph is now in front of his brothers.

They don't realize who he is.

They know he is second in command to Pharaoh.

They are thinking they are in a world of trouble because he led them to believe that they were.

*Genesis 45:1- 4, Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Make everyone go out from me!" So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers. <sup>2</sup>And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it.*

*<sup>3</sup>Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph; does my father still live?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence. <sup>4</sup>And Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near to me." So they came near. Then he said: "I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt.*

He told all the servants to get out.

The brothers were dismayed.

The Revised English Bible says, "They were dumbfounded at his presence."

They assumed Joseph was dead.

Joseph is beginning to see, this is in hindsight after he's been elevated. After he has been elevated, he's looking back.

The lesson here is:

**Sometimes we only see when we look back.**

*Genesis 45:5-8, But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. <sup>6</sup>For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. <sup>7</sup>And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. <sup>8</sup>So now it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.*

Rescuing the *firstfruits* of what was later to become the Nation of Israel. But he said, "God did it. I didn't understand it at the time, but I understand it now."

Joseph begins to see God's plan was so much greater and so different than what he had in mind.

God caused Joseph to deliver those who would give birth to physical Israel.

God was moving pieces on that chessboard and nobody had a clue.

- ❖ Jacob didn't have a clue.
- ❖ Joseph didn't have a clue.
- ❖ Pharaoh didn't have a clue.

❖ Joseph's brothers didn't have a clue.

But his brothers and those seventy became the *firstfruits* of Israel.

Joseph saved not only Israel's *firstfruits*, but the entire nation of Egypt from the famine. In that sense, he is like a type of Christ who will save the entire world ultimately.

Egypt was a type of the entire world because this was long before the Exodus. So, Egypt was saved as a nation because of what God was doing.

*Genesis 47:23-25, Then Joseph said to the people, "Indeed I have bought you and your land this day for Pharaoh. Look, here is seed for you, and you shall sow the land. <sup>24</sup>And it shall come to pass in the harvest that you shall give one-fifth to Pharaoh. Four-fifths shall be your own, as seed for the field and for your food, for those of your households and as food for your little ones." <sup>25</sup>So they said, "You have saved our lives; let us find favor in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants."*

God had a hand in this. God used Joseph in a very special way, which has never been repeated, to build a model nation of Israel. To save the *firstfruits*, and then the entire nation of Egypt.

Joseph is a type of Christ because Christ first will save the Firstfruits (us) and then Christ will save the entire world through the Millennium.

This was God's agenda.

This was God timeline.

Neither of which was apparent to Joseph. We need to remember that when we're going through trials because:

- ✓ *We don't see as God's sees.*
- ✓ *We don't understand as God understands.*
- ✓ *And God's agenda is far above ours.*

So, we need to take that into consideration when we enter a trial or are going through a trial.

What are the keys to having patience?

*Revelation 14:4, These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.*

That is symbolic of being defiled with the world, polluted from the world.

There is a group that say,

- ✓ We don't want our agenda.
- ✓ We don't want our will.
- ✓ We don't want our way.
- ✓ All we want to do is what Christ and the Father want us to do. we will follow wherever you lead us.

Now, this is the group we want to be part of.

How did they do that?

How did they become part of the group?

Answer:

*Revelation 14:12, Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.*

So, here is the patience of the Saints.

They do two things.

### **1. Obedience**

### **2. Faith.**

- ✓ "To obey;" keep the Commandments of God.
- ✓ "To perform watchfully;" examine yourself. Watch yourself while you are keeping the Commandments of God.
- ✓ "to observe." Meaning: To keep the faith of Jesus Christ, to observe His faith, what He did, to be obedient, to perform watchfully as we go through life and look at His example for us.

So, the people who were selected as Firstfruits obeyed and had faith, but notice it was all in the context of patience.

"Here is the **patience** of the Saints. Obey and have faith." To obey and have faith are in the context of having patience, which we must have.

### **1. Obedience**

*Acts 5:32, And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him."*

We know God gives the holy spirit to those who obey. Now, when we obey, God gives us more of His holy spirit. When we exercise His spirit, we get more of His holy spirit.

## **2. Faith**

What one of the fruits of God's spirit is?

It's Faith (**Galatians 5:22**).

So, Obedience and Faith go hand-in-hand.

*2 Corinthians 5:7, For we walk by faith, not by sight.*

We have to have faith because if we use human sight, We are going to go astray.

We will misunderstand God.

We will misunderstand God's Plan and His agenda.

Not by human physical sight should we walk. We should walk by faith.

Joseph didn't see that for a time. Patience is sometimes hard to come by. But if we can see as God sees, then patience becomes easier. When we see the big picture as God sees, then we can have patience.

In the beginning, Joseph didn't get the big picture. He didn't understand what was going on. The character he had, there is no evidence that he threw a fight or lost his temper or lacked patience because he patiently endured through this whole thing.

In the end, he saw what God was doing. He said to his brothers, "God sent me here. God did this. You didn't do it. God was doing it."

In these last days we have a much bigger picture than Joseph did. We have both the Old Testament and the New Testament. He didn't have that. We have 4000 years of human experience and history to look back on, since the days of Joseph to give us a bigger picture than righteous Joseph had.

So, Obedience and Faith are the keys to having patience because, when we obey, God gives us more of His spirit.

What is the fruit of having more of God's spirit?

It is Faith.

Faith gives us patience. Obedience and Faith give us patience.

So, let's begin to get a bigger picture as we get closer to the end here.

Are you getting frustrated in a trial?

I think if we're honest with ourselves, we had said, "Yes. There are times when we get frustrated. Frustrated because it's not working out as I expected it should. I am not where I want to be in my life, and I get frustrated about that."

Or we get frustrated because "Things aren't happening according to **my** timetable. They're not happening as fast as I want them to happen or they're not happening to the extent that I want them to happen. So, therefore, I'm getting frustrated."

We have all been there. We have all done that.

But we have to allow for the fact that "**Maybe God is teaching me something I can't see right now**" when we go through a trial. "Maybe, as with Joseph, God is making moves on the chessboard that I can't comprehend and that I can't see. And God is doing things far beyond my intelligence, far beyond my ability to perceive."

Joseph didn't know what God's will was for seventeen years until he finally saw what God was doing. But, to Joseph's credit, he remained patient during those seventeen years. God encouraged him. God was with him.

Let us take it to the time of Christ.

Shortly before Christ's death, his disciples started to get frustrated because they were saying, "When are You going to do the things you speak of?"

When are You going to come and kill all the Romans?

When are You going to come and exalt the Nation of Judah? When are You going to come and slay all Your enemies?

When are we going to be exalted and sit on your right hand and on Your left hand?"

They lacked vision. They did not see the things that God sees or that Christ saw.

*Luke 21:7, So they asked Him, saying, "Teacher, but when will these things be? And what sign will there be when these things are about to take place?"*

They were excited, but they wanted it now.

They wanted to see it with their own eyes.

They just assumed that since Christ was here, "this thing is going to happen right now."

Christ goes on to give them some signs, but what did Christ say at the end of this section of Scripture?

*Luke 21:19, By your patience possess your souls.*

Jesus said, "If you have patience, you get your life."

You obtain your life back.

You possess your life.

You control your life.

So, if we have patience, then we get control of ourselves. Because, if things aren't going the way we want according to the timeline we would like, sometimes we can go do stupid things. We can get wrong attitudes. We can get in a wrong spirit. We can open the door for Satan to come in.

"If you have patience, you possess your life."

Christ said that the key wasn't knowing *when*.

Jesus didn't tell them *when* or He did not even say *how*.

We don't know, as Joseph didn't know, we don't know what lessons God is teaching us in the middle of a trial.

We don't know how God plans to use any one of us as we go through life.

We don't know what His agenda is because we see through the tunnel vision.

- ✓ God has His purpose.

- ✓ God has His timeline.

Both of which are much greater than ours. We can't see it, generally only in hindsight.

The life of Joseph, what we have been going through this conference, was recorded for a reason.

Joseph was a righteous man.

Joseph had many trials for being righteous.

Joseph's righteousness brought on trials.

Humanly he lost seventeen years of his life. Yet, during those seventeen years God was training him.

first in Potiphar's house,

secondly in the King's jail and then,

ultimately, as the right-hand man of Pharaoh ruling the entire nation of Egypt.

Those seventeen years were a training. He couldn't see it and didn't understand it.

God used him to save not only his family, which were the *firstfruits* of the Nation of Israel, but all of Egypt, which is a type of the entire world at that time.

Humanly, he became a type of Christ and didn't have a clue, didn't know. But he persevered. He had patience. He endured. And looked where he wound up.

God has plans for us that we can't see. In this present day, we just don't know, but I'm pretty sure that God's plans are bigger than anything we could have in mind.

Let us pray for patience no matter what we face!

Above all, Joseph did, never give up!





## 9. Forgiveness



### **Matthew 18**

Jesus took an infant and held in His arms to be used as a living illustration, an analogy, of the childlikeness of the believer. And then he began to teach elements of our childlikeness.

We are to enter the kingdom like children.

We are to be protected like little children.

We are to be cared for like little children.

We are to be disciplined like children.

We are to be forgiven like children.

People can rather easily hold grudges against adults, but it's somewhat abnormal to hold them against children. We tend to forgive children rather readily. Adults we have difficulty forgiving.

Forgiveness is a great virtue.

Forgiveness is the key to the unity of the church.

Forgiveness is the key to love.

Forgiveness is the key to meaningful relationships.

*Proverbs 19:11, The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, And his glory is to overlook a transgression.*

*Ephesians 4:32, And be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.*

*Colossians 3:13, bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.*

We also with great respect remember the tender forgiveness and sensitivity that David exercised towards Saul. Saul, who had spent himself trying to murder David and when David could easily have thrust his sword through the sleeping Saul, he did not do that. He had a heart of forgiveness.

*1 Samuel 24:7, So David restrained his servants with these words, and did not allow them to rise against Saul. And Saul got up from the cave and went on his way.*

We find David again forgiving Nabal his evil for the sake of Abigail, his pleading wife. 1 Samuel 25.

Forgiveness is a glory of a man. You see an honourable man, and a man with real character, and you will see that man who can forgive.

It is the best of a man to forgive because it is the heart of God to forgive, and when man forgives, he radiates that which is true of the image of God.

Forgiveness is so basic to God's heart that it certainly should be basic to the heart of God's children.

We all need to learn to forgive because we all need to be forgiven and because God has forgiven us. It is the expression of His loving nature.

### ***The inquiry about forgiveness.***

*Matthew 18:21, "Then came Peter to him and said, Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?"*

Peter knows the tendency of men, he knew how many times he needed to be forgiven.

He is talking out of the context of his Jewish background, where there were certain hard lines drawn in relation to forgiveness.

How many times do we do this?

Then he adds "Seven times?"

Peter is waiting for congratulations from Jesus. For the Lord to say, "marvellous, Peter. You are so magnanimous."

Do you know why?

Jewish tradition says you forgive a person three times. That's the limit.

**Amos 1:3**, *Thus says the Lord: "For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, Because they have threshed Gilead with implements of iron.*

**Amos 1:6**, *Thus says the Lord: "For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, Because they took captive the whole captivity To deliver them up to Edom.*

**Amos 1:9**, *Thus says the Lord: "For three transgressions of Tyre, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, Because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, And did not remember the covenant of brotherhood.*

**Amos 1:11**, *Thus says the Lord: "For three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, Because he pursued his brother with the sword, And cast off all pity; His anger tore perpetually, And he kept his wrath forever.*

**Amos 1:13**, *Thus says the Lord: "For three transgressions of the people of Ammon, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, Because they ripped open the women with child in Gilead, That they might enlarge their territory.*

**Job 33:29**, *"Behold, God works all these things, Twice, in fact, three times with a man,*

Jews concluded that the three times you could be forgiven. When you did it the fourth time, you are under God's divine judgment.

So, when Peter said he thought seven times, he was really going beyond his own tradition and he was being generous.

**Matthew 18:22**, *Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.*

Jesus answers with number is so large that you just would lose count.

You don't keep a book and say, "All right, that's 491. You know, you're finished." Jesus just picks up on Peter's numeral and multiplies it by ten, and by seven again. He just plays with the number that Peter suggested, and he's really saying there's no limit to it.

**Genesis 4:24**, *If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, Then Lamech seventy-sevenfold."*

Where it talks about vengeance being brought 77 times. Lord Jesus says the forgiveness is seventy times seven.

So, whatever base there would be even for legitimate vengeance, there's an infinitely greater one for gracious forgiveness.

*Luke 17:4, And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him."*

No, forgive him seventy times seven if he sins seven times a day.

The point is, its unlimited forgiveness.

*James 2:13, For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.*

The disciple's prayer in **Matthew 6:12**, And forgive us our debts,  
As we forgive our debtors.

*Matthew 6:14-15, "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. <sup>15</sup> But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

This is a monumental statement about forgiveness. Because if you don't forgive, you don't receive forgiveness.

"Is Jesus talking to Christians?"

Yes.

This is a believer's prayer. If you're not a believer, you're not even in this prayer, because you can't say in verse 9, the very address of the prayer which is "Our Father."

*Mark 11:25-26, "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. <sup>26</sup> But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."*

When you forgive others, God forgives you. It means I can experience the fullness of fellowship.

and I take myself out of the place of chastening into the place

*Matthew 5:7, Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.*

If you want mercy when you sin from the Lord, then you better give mercy to other people.

You are like God when you when you forgive.

Everybody says, "I want to be godly."



Well, could I suggest to you that godliness may not be memorizing a thousand verses as much as it would be forgiving!

Godliness is forgiving, because you're very like God when you do that. That's the true spirituality.

*Matthew 5:21-26, "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.'<sup>22</sup> But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire.<sup>23</sup> Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you,<sup>24</sup> leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.<sup>25</sup> Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison.<sup>26</sup> Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny.*

Their tradition said Don't kill somebody, because if you do, you might be in danger of being put in jail. There is no moral issue here, just make sure you don't get thrown in jail. So that's why you don't kill.

Remember that your brother has anything against you Leave your gift before the altar and go your way and be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

Why?

Because you are not going to know what worship is.

You can't commune with God.

You can't fellowship with God until you've resolved that forgiveness attitude.

First reconciliation, then worship.

First we forgive, then we're forgiven.

So, we need to be called to examine our own lives.

### ***Example of Forgiveness.***

#### **Matthew 18:23-35,**

If you do not forgive others you will not be forgiven.

You put yourself in the position to experience two things:

1. You will not know the joy of communion with the Lord and
2. You will know the chastening of the Lord.

*V 23, Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.*

begins with "therefore." that word links it with the previous passage. The previous passage is all about one Christian forgiving another Christian.

*V21, Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"*

it's all about my brother sinning against me.

This is how it is My kingdom."

People who are in my kingdom need to understand that my kingdom is like this.

The main character is "a certain king." That's none other than God Himself.

God is the king in this parable!

The word servants, '*doulois*,' bond slave, bond servant.

It shows that the servant who is in bondage to his master.

They were provincial governors who served the king by ruling certain areas of his kingdom and provinces. Their responsibility was to report to the king, to rule on his behalf. Collecting taxes from the people and then to be turned over to the king for the support of the entire kingdom and for the royal treasury.

So, the term here is not in the usual sense, the household *doulos* or the bond slave *doulos*, but this provincial governor.

When God created man and put him in the earth, He gave man dominion over the earth. He made man a steward of all that he possesses. That is man in general, whether man knows Christ or does not. Men have been entrusted with the treasure given by God. Their very life and breath are a gift from God. He is the one who owns it.

An annual accounting some period of time when the king wants to take an inventory these provincial governors had to bring into him all the taxes that they had collected. They had to show where the taxes came from. They had to give the king and his kingdom in the royal treasury the proper percentage and keep for themselves in their own operation what was rightful for them.

So there was a periodic accounting, and what we see in the passage is that God calls men to a periodic accounting. It isn't necessarily the accounting of the great white throne judgment, which is final judgment, but is the accounting of a time of great conviction, when men are called to face God for what they're doing with their life. And that's the heart of the interpreting of the first few verses of the parable.

*V 24, And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents.*

This provincial governor in the parable owed ten thousand talents.

The time around the life of Jesus, the total revenue collected by the Roman government from Idumea, Judea, and Samaria, the total revenue was 600 talents.

The total revenue collected from Galilee was 300 talents.

So, if this guy had collected, embezzled, and wasted 10,000 talents, that is an astronomical figure.

You might want to know that when the tabernacle was built, the Lord said to them, "I want you to overlay all these elements in gold." You know, the ark of the covenant and many other things had to be overlaid in gold. You might want to think back on that and imagine all of that precious gold that overlaid all of those factors in the tabernacle, and if you're curious about that, it tells us in **Exodus 38:24** that there were 29 talents of gold.



When the temple was built, there were 3,000 and the whole place was overlaid in gold, and that was only 3,000. Ten thousand talents are astronomical.

People have estimated anywhere from 16 million to 2 billion and everything in between. You might want other comparisons.

The Queen of Sheba, she came to visit Solomon one time, and she wanted to give him a gift that was commensurate with his incredible wealth, and so she gave him 120 talents.

*1 Kings 10:10, Then she gave the king one hundred and twenty talents of gold, spices in great quantity, and precious stones. There never again came such abundance of spices as the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.*

The king of Assyria laid upon Hezekiah 30 talents of gold as a magnanimous amount.

What is this talking about?

Sin.

Sin is the debt.

The largest term in the Greek language is ten thousand. It's the term *muriōn*.

It is the highest term that could be used.

It literally means, “he owed a myriad. He owed an inestimable, incalculable, unpayable debt, beyond any ability to pay, beyond any ability even to calculate.”

Our sin is inestimable, incalculable and could not even be counted. The sum of our sin is beyond comprehension.

This is a critical element in bringing someone to true salvation. Every one of us must be brought to the point where we see this mountain of sin, incalculable.

***Psalms 25:11**, For Your name’s sake, O Lord, Pardon my iniquity, for it is great.*

You see, our sin is a debt and it is a debt that is beyond calculation. It’s so great that we can’t even estimate it, let alone pay it.

***V 25**, But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made.*

The punishment is very severe.

- ✓ Sell the man into slavery,
- ✓ Sell his wife into slavery,
- ✓ Sell all his kids into slavery,
- ✓ Sell his house
- ✓ Sell anything and everything he owns.

There are few places in the Old Testament where there were special circumstances in which a person could be sold into the service of another one to repay a debt.

***2 Kings 4:1**, A certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha, saying, “Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared the Lord. And the creditor is coming to take my two sons to be his slaves.”*

If you couldn’t pay a debt, you instantly became a slave. And you paid your debt by working off what you could. Your wife became a slave, and all your kids became slaves, and everything you owned was sold and turned into cash for the one to whom you owed the debt.

This picture of hell.

Where will all men be sent to pay for their sin?

Where else do people go as punishment for the debt they owe to God?

Hell.

It's talking about eternal hell.

People go to hell to pay for their sins, but one thing you need to know is all eternity in hell will still not pay for their sins.

The parable is saying the debt is unpayable.

The debt is unpayable, but they will pay and all that could be exacted from their incapacity will be exacted from it.

*V 26, The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.'*

### **1. He fell down.**

He was broken, devastated and totally shattered. He knew what he faced. He couldn't pay the debt. He was going to lose his freedom. He was going to be in permanent bondage because he could work his whole lifetime, and never pay it off. Just like hell, you can work eternity and never pay it off.

### **2. He worshipped**

He not only fell down, but he worshiped. That is literally "to kiss toward." It comes from kissing the hand, the knee, the foot of the monarch to whom you plead for mercy.

He is pleading for mercy. He is admitting his sin, broken, and humble.

### **3. Pleaded for compassion**

He says, "Have patience with me." Pleads for compassion, for the lord's patient endurance, for the lord to just wait and give him a chance and he will do better.

The heart attitude is right. Everything is there. It's just that he doesn't understand the grace of forgiveness yet. So, the Lord has him right where he wants him.

*V27, Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.*

Oh, what a great verse! the grace of that verse.

Lord forgave an absolutely incomprehensible debt in a moment out of compassion for the debtor. He loosed him.

What does it mean?

He released him from the obligation. He freed him from the debt.

Why did he do that?

He was moved with Compassion.

Where does compassion come from?

Comes from love.

This man happened to love that servant, as God loves all men.

When the king saw him in a situation where there was no remedy, it didn't change his love.

- Even though the debt was incurred against him,
- Even though he had been violated,
- Even though his kingdom had been robbed, and
- Even though he had personally been sinned against

he still forgave him. The magnanimity of God's forgiveness.

He canceled the loan. He released the obligation.

What did the guy do to deserve that?"

He did nothing.

How you get the forgiveness of God?

You come to God with a broken heart over your utter sinfulness knowing you could never pay the debt, crying out to God for mercy and patience in a dire situation, and facing eternal judgment and saying, "Lord, please." At that moment God comes in with His tender forgiving grace and loving kindness and forgives your debt.

Now, all that possibly could be said about salvation isn't said here, but there's something wonderful said here that may not be said in many other places in the Bible. And so it is a marvelous, marvelous parable. I believe

- ✓ The moment the sinner recognizes his sin,
- ✓ The moment he comes to the only one who can possibly deal with that sin,
- ✓ The moment he confesses that sin, and
- ✓ Repents that sin, and worships God who alone can forgive that sin,

The moment he does that, that's when God rushes in with the forgiveness made available in Jesus Christ who already paid the debt Himself!

*V 28, "But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!'"*

That's absurd.

You say to yourself, "How soon did this guy forget what he had been forgiven? How soon did he forget his Lord's compassion?"

Went out and found in other words, the idea is that he was looking for somebody. This was not an incident that he didn't expect. He didn't inadvertently run into the guy. He was out there searching for this fellow.

Who was it?

One of his fellow servants.

This other servant was not necessarily the same rank. He perhaps worked under this first servant. It may have been that he was a provincial governor and this guy was one of his local tax collectors, but they both served the same king.

He goes, finds the guy, lays his hands on him, takes him by the throat, and saying, "Pay me what you owe me."

We don't expect him to forgive if he wasn't forgiven. We don't expect him to act like God acts if he doesn't have God in his heart. We don't expect him to do what God did if he doesn't know God did that or if God didn't do that.

*V 29, So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.'*

For a moment look at verse 26, its similar to speech what he gave it to his master.

The guy got the same speech back that he gave the lord, just as if that might jog his mind a little.

You were begging the king to let you off the hook, and now a guy owes you dollar and you are strangling him?

The servant is begging.

The application is obvious. Compared with our sins against God, our sins against each other, our debt is unpayable. The other debts we incur with people are easily payable.

When we have received forgiveness so vast, so far-reaching, so comprehensive, how can we be so small in not to forgiving others?



It's unimaginable, but Christians do this.

It may well be that the disciples were amidst doing it themselves. They were fighting to see who would be the greatest in the kingdom.

*V 30, And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt.*

He had no compassion. This is an impossible reaction.

Himself forgiven, he should have forgiven.

Himself loved, he should have loved.

Himself having received mercy, he should have dispensed it.

The greatest sins that a man commits against a man are NOTHING!

They are nothing but pocket change, compared to the sins committed against God. God forgives them all.

Who is man not to forgive lesser?

How can those truly forgiven not forgive?

When God has forgiven an infinitely greater debt, how easily we forget.

*Titus 3: 2-5, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men. <sup>3</sup>For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. <sup>4</sup>But when the kindness and the love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, <sup>5</sup>not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, <sup>6</sup>whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, <sup>7</sup>that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

Don't treat people like you used to. Look at what Christ has done for you.

Sadly, the church has been riddled all its lifelong by the tragic sin of unforgiveness, and the consequent bitterness and hostility and discord.

Consider the source.

If you're not forgiving, that isn't the new you.

When you do that, you will cut yourself off from that relational forgiveness with God that makes the communion sweet.

*V 31, So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done.*

They saw the whole thing.

These fellow servants would have done all they could to get the guy to do what was right and forgive the debt.

Apparently, they have exhausted that capacity, and this servant who is determined to get his due out of this guy is resistant to all their efforts. "So, when his fellow servants saw what was done, they've been involved in the process. They did the only thing they had left. "They were very sorry."

They go to the presence of the king. They told him everything that had gone on. No doubt they recited the whole process to the king.

What was the response of the king?

*V 32, Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me.*

He comes to him and says, "O you wicked servant."

He says, "Shouldn't you have forgiven your fellow servant or had compassion on him as I had pity on you?"

You should have had compassion and pity just like I did.

Somebody owes you something.

They have done something to hurt you.

They have done something to irritate you.

They have offended you.

Said something about you that wasn't true,

Said something about your wife that wasn't true, or your husband, or your kids, or whatever, and they have done something to hurt you and offend you.

They have maybe done something to defraud you economically, or property wise, or whatever, and you are going to let the thing burn in you or you're going to get your due.

No. Just have compassion.

*Galatians 6:1, Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.*

That's what you should have done because that's what was done for you when you pled for forgiveness.

*V 34, And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.*

His lord was angry."

What makes Him angry?

Sin makes Him angry.

He always gets angry about sin. That's a built-in response. The Lord has holy indignation against evil, even in your life and mine.

What are we doing with this Christian turning him over to the inquisitors, the tormentors?

You don't think that could be a Christian?

*Hebrews 12:5-11, And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; <sup>6</sup>For whom the Lord loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives." <sup>7</sup>If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? <sup>8</sup>But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. <sup>9</sup>Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? <sup>10</sup>For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. <sup>11</sup>Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.*

Every Christian feels the tormentors.

Every Christian feels the scourging.

Every Christian at some point in time is going to feel the inquisitors putting the pressure until we confess and repent.

What the parable is saying is plain and simple.

The sinner will satisfy God. He will pay what can be paid. He will satisfy the debt when he is broken, repentant, contrite in heart, and steps into the sphere of obedience.

Fellowship is restored. Chastening makes us pay with a view, not just to punishment, but to refinement as a goal.

When your child does something bad, you don't just whack them around so that you can deliver the punishment.

You do that with a view to changing their behavior. To modifying their behavior so they'll do right next time. God is doing the very same thing.

*V 35, "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."*

He is not saying this to unbelievers because there's one thing unbelievers can't do, and that's they can't act like God toward each other and forgive.

When a person was forgiven and wouldn't forgive and he was punished, you have been forgiven and you better forgive, or you are going to be chastened.

Two things stand out in this parable.

1. **Positive:** We ought to forgive because we have been forgiven so much.
2. **Negative:** We ought to forgive, because if we don't, we are going to be chastened. It's a very strong word.

It's to us.

### *William Arnot*

"A traveler in Burma, after fording a certain river, found his body covered all over by a swarm of small leeches busily sucking his blood. His first impulse was to tear the tormentors from his flesh, but his servant warned him that to pull them off by mechanical violence would expose his life to danger. They must not be torn off, lest portions remain in the wounds and become a poison. They must drop off spontaneously and so they will be harmless.

"The native prepared a bath for his master by the concoction of some herbs and directed him to lie down in it. As soon as he had bathed in the balsam bath, the leeches dropped off. Each unforgiven injury," says Arnot, "rankling in the heart is like a leech sucking the life blood. Mere human determination to have done with it will not cast the evil thing away. You must bathe your whole being in God's pardoning mercy and these venomous creatures will instantly let go their hold and you will stand up free. You must bathe your whole being in God's pardoning love."

That's the parable.

The wonderful life story of Joseph who forgave his brothers.

*Genesis 50:20, <sup>20</sup>But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.*

They had thrown him in a pit, and sold him into slavery, and treated him as if he were dead. He forgave them everything.

You must see how much you have been forgiven. We can stand around praying for the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace, but we'll experience it when we learn to forgive, won't we?

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## ***10. Promotion and Diligence***

A fool was talking with a wise man. And this wise man asked a fool a question.

"Which two days of the week begin with the letter 'T'?"

The fools answered, "Well, sir, it is easy. Today and Tomorrow."

The wise man was stunned but after a while decided to give him another chance.

He then asked again, "O.K. Do you know how many seconds are in a year?"

"How many seconds are in a year?"

promptly said the fool, "Twelve!"

"Twelve?" said the wise man, surprised, and confused.

"Yes, sir. January 2nd, February 2nd, March 2nd ..."

You will need to grow in two things in your youth on the top of gaining knowledge.

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*Joseph GREW mature enough to help and save others!*

*Involve God in your life.*

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*Genesis 41:16, So Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace."*

To put it simply, Joseph said to Pharaoh "I cannot do it,' "

But God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires!

We as Christians should learn to lean on God and ask the Holy Spirit to get involved in every part of your daily activities, from little things to big things. He will certainly be more than pleased to do so!

There are four recorded dreams which Joseph encounters in his life.

Please notice the developments in the way Joseph handled those dreams.

1. The first dream in Genesis 37:5-7,
2. The Second Dream in Genesis 37:9,
3. The Third dream in Genesis 40,

#### 4. The Fourth dream in Genesis 41.

First Dream is recorded in

*Genesis 37:5-7, Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more. <sup>6</sup>So he said to them, "Please hear this dream which I have dreamed: <sup>7</sup>There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf."*

The second dream in

*Genesis 37:9, Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me."*

In this both dreams, Joseph simply boasted of his dreams and made a fuss out of his family. There was no proper interpretation of the dreams, and those dreams were meant only for himself.

Joseph didn't have much Wisdom in understanding and discernment in interpreting the dream.

In the third dream, he began to show humility by depending on God for interpretation.

*Genesis 40:5-8, Then the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were confined in the prison, had a dream, both of them, each man's dream in one night and each man's dream with its own interpretation. <sup>6</sup>And Joseph came in to them in the morning and looked at them, and saw that they were sad. <sup>7</sup>So he asked Pharaoh's officers who were with him in the custody of his lord's house, saying, "Why do you look so sad today?" <sup>8</sup>And they said to him, "We each have had a dream, and there is no interpreter of it." So Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell them to me, please."*

Joseph gives the right interpretation to the Cupbearer.

*Genesis 40:12-13, And Joseph said to him, "This is the interpretation of it: The three branches are three days. <sup>13</sup>Now within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your place, and you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand according to the former manner, when you were his butler."*

Joseph gives the right interpretation to the Chief baker.

**Genesis 40:18-19**, So Joseph answered and said, "This is the interpretation of it: The three baskets are three days. <sup>19</sup> Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head from you and hang you on a tree; and the birds will eat your flesh from you."

The fourth dream is unlike the others.

Pharaoh has a dream.

**Genesis 41:81-8**, Then it came to pass, at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh had a dream; and behold, he stood by the river. <sup>2</sup> Suddenly there came up out of the river seven cows, fine looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow. <sup>3</sup> Then behold, seven other cows came up after them out of the river, ugly and gaunt, and stood by the other cows on the bank of the river. <sup>4</sup> And the ugly and gaunt cows ate up the seven fine looking and fat cows. So Pharaoh awoke. <sup>5</sup> He slept and dreamed a second time; and suddenly seven heads of grain came up on one stalk, plump and good. <sup>6</sup> Then behold, seven thin heads, blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them. <sup>7</sup> And the seven thin heads devoured the seven plump and full heads. So Pharaoh awoke, and indeed, it was a dream. <sup>8</sup> Now it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled, and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men. And Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was no one who could interpret them for Pharaoh.

Joseph depended only on God for interpretation.

**Genesis 41:16**, So Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace."

Provided proper interpretation with the help of God.

**Genesis 41:25-32**, Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "The dreams of Pharaoh are one; God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do: <sup>26</sup> The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good <sup>[b]</sup>heads are seven years; the dreams are one. <sup>27</sup> And the seven thin and ugly cows which came up after them are seven years, and the seven empty heads blighted by the east wind are seven years of famine. <sup>28</sup> This is the thing which I have spoken to Pharaoh. God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do. <sup>29</sup> Indeed seven years of great plenty will come throughout all the land of Egypt; <sup>30</sup> but after them seven years of famine will arise, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine will deplete the land. <sup>31</sup> So the plenty will not be known in the land because of the famine following, for it will be very severe. <sup>32</sup> And the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.

Joseph not only gave the interpretation of the dream but also a Practical and applicable solutions to the interpretation.

*Genesis 41:33-36, "Now therefore, let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt. <sup>34</sup> Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, to collect one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt in the seven plentiful years. <sup>35</sup> And let them gather all the food of those good years that are coming, and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. <sup>36</sup> Then that food shall be as a reserve for the land for the seven years of famine which shall be in the land of Egypt, that the land may not perish during the famine."*

Joseph gave out a down-to-earth solution to help millions of other people.

Could you see the progression in growth in the walk with the Lord?

God uses someone with a big dream to help others!

Ricardo Kaka, a Brazilian soccer player, uses his fame to attract thousands of young people to Jesus and to give glory to God.

Frank Lampard, an Englishman, does the similar things using his career of a successful soccer player.

They all dreamed big and used their success as a tool to help and save many others.

Knowledge is NOT enough.

You need to grow both in discernment and wisdom if you want to be promoted in your life. One of the ways to gain discernment and wisdom comes through reading the Bible.

*Genesis 41:39, "Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you."*

## ***Life after Promotion***

What kind of life did Joseph live after success?

### ***1. Joseph kept his diligence and sincerity by preparing for future even after success.***

*Genesis 41:46-50, Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt. <sup>47</sup> Now in the seven plentiful years the ground brought forth <sup>48</sup> abundantly. So he gathered up all the food of the seven years which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities; he laid up in every city the food of the fields which surrounded them. <sup>49</sup> Joseph gathered very much grain, as the sand of the sea, until he stopped counting, for it was immeasurable. <sup>50</sup> And to Joseph were*

*born two sons before the years of famine came, whom Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On, bore to him.*

Many become proud, greedy, and stiff-necked when they reach a certain level of success, a comfort zone. There are actually a good number of those who succeed in this world, but only a few are being used by God continuously even after their success.

*Genesis 41:34, "Let Pharaoh appoint commissioners over the land to take a fifth of the harvest of Egypt during the seven years of abundance."*

In spite the high taxation of 20%, no one complained because the harvest was so much abundant so they could not even count, and because showed an example of a godly leader by working hard.

*Genesis 41:46, "... travelled throughout Egypt ..."*

*Genesis 41:47, "During the seven years of abundance the land produced plentifully"*

*Genesis 41:49, "Joseph stored up huge quantities of grain, like the sand of the sea; it was so much that he stopped keeping records because it was beyond measure."*

*Genesis 41:50, "Before the years of famine came ..."*



Continue to live an exemplary life even after success and work hard when God promotes you!

It is now time to exercise your God-granted influence to help and save others, not a time to settle down and begin to relax.

Never say "This is enough!" and get into a status of "self- intoxication".

God doesn't use self-centred.

There are two kinds of people in this world.

- ✓ Those who live in past oriented perspective, and
- ✓ Those who live in future-oriented perspective.

The former loves to say, "I was" or "I used to be" and live bound by past achievements.

While the latter keeps saying "I will be" or "I plan to be" and continue to live with hope for even better tomorrows.

I know of a certain professional doctorate holder who couldn't stay in his job for long everywhere he worked for, simply because he refused to do any kind of manual works for his employer. He only wanted to be served and never knew how to serve.

## ***2. Joseph kept his commitment to his family and friends even after success.***

*Genesis 41:50-52, And to Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, whom Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On, bore to him. <sup>51</sup> Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: "For God has made me forget all my toil and all my father's house." <sup>52</sup> And the name of the second he called Ephraim: "For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction."*

It normally becomes more challenging to maintain one's humility and to keep faithful to his/her family and friends after success. However, Joseph faithfully kept his relationship with his Gentile wife and his two children.

Family comes first before your success.

*1 Timothy 3:5, (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?)*

Even after much turmoil and sorrows in his earlier life, Joseph's self-image was healthy. He did not bring his past hurts into his relationships with others, including his family.

We can clearly see that from his meaningful gesture of naming his children.

The firstborn was named Manasseh (meaning 'forgave')

The second son Ephraim (meaning 'blessed').

Joseph knew the power of forgiveness. He must have learned that when he 'forgave' his brothers God 'blessed' him in return.

He grew up to be a fine leader without 'bitterness.'

A leader MUST deal with his/her own bitterness before he/she is promoted by God. English vocabulary "forgive" is composed by two words; "for" and "give."

After all, to forgive means to "give" up your right, emotion and hurt at the foot of the cross "for" your blessings!

### ***3. Joseph kept his considerate heart toward others even after success.***

*Genesis 41:53-57, Then the seven years of plenty which were in the land of Egypt ended, <sup>54</sup> and the seven years of famine began to come, as Joseph had said. The famine was in all lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. <sup>55</sup> So when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread. Then Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph; whatever he says to you, do." <sup>56</sup> The famine was over all the face of the earth, and Joseph opened <sup>1</sup>all the storehouses and sold to the Egyptians. And the famine became severe in the land of Egypt. <sup>57</sup> So all countries came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain, because the famine was severe in all lands.*

When you reach a certain level of success, make sure to influence the people within your capacity for the glory of God. That is the ultimate reason why God promoted you! "And all the countries came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph."

Grow a large vessel in you, large enough to embrace and serve the whole humanity. Always remember, God blesses you for the sake of other people, not just for you!

Avoid a temptation of mass egoism, that is to be nice to only those who may be nice to you. Once you fall in this vulnerable temptation, it results in no additional blessings.

God's love is for all humanity.

Keep honest to yourself and to God. It will help you remain considerate toward others. It is notable that after glory of transfiguration Jesus and his disciples came down the mountain, not yielding to Peter's suggestion of staying up there (Matthew 17:1-9).

Keep sincere to your call and honest to yourself after glory of success. That alone can help you stay on the track to the end of your race. Joseph saved millions of people because he was always found honest and sincere before God.

Many failed to do this when they let their God given power and glory blind their eyes from their true self. Do not forget to acknowledge grace of God all the time. Success fails when it settles down only for a comfortable life. It also has to grow!



## **11. Devotion - All Things Work for Good**

When I was introduced to the gospel for the first time, it was through a certain evangelist who threw this statement to me: “Jesus loves you and died for you.”

Jesus, a descendant of Judah, became a ransom for you and me. Judah, a forefather of Jesus Christ, prophetically confessed.

*Genesis 44:32-34, My lord, I guaranteed to my father that I would take care of the boy. I told him, ‘If I don’t bring him back to you, I will bear the blame forever.’<sup>33</sup> “So please, my lord, let me stay here as a slave instead of the boy, and let the boy return with his brothers.<sup>34</sup> For how can I return to my father if the boy is not with me? I couldn’t bear to see the anguish this would cause my father!” (NLT)*

Around 2000 years later, Jesus, a descendent of Judah, professed this way

*Matthew 20:28, just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”*

*Mark 10:45, For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”*

Apostle Paul wrote

*1 Timothy 2:6, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,*

*Hebrews 9:15, And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.*

I sincerely ask you to invite Jesus into your life today if you have never done that before.

He became “your ransom” and took away all your sins and miseries 2,000 years ago on the cross. Jesus is still waiting for you to take Him as your choice of ultimate refuge and hope. He loves you!

### **Discover life through Forgiveness**

Only when you discover the purpose of your life, you can truly forgive.

*Genesis 45:5-8, But don’t be upset, and don’t be angry with yourselves for selling me to this place. It was God who sent me here ahead of you to preserve your lives. <sup>6</sup> This famine that has ravaged the land for two years will last five more years, and there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. <sup>7</sup> God has sent me ahead of you to keep you*

*and your families alive and to preserve many survivors. <sup>8</sup> So it was God who sent me here, not you! And he is the one who made me an adviser to Pharaoh—the manager of his entire palace and the governor of all Egypt.*

This is a dramatic reconciliation for Joseph after a total of twenty-two years

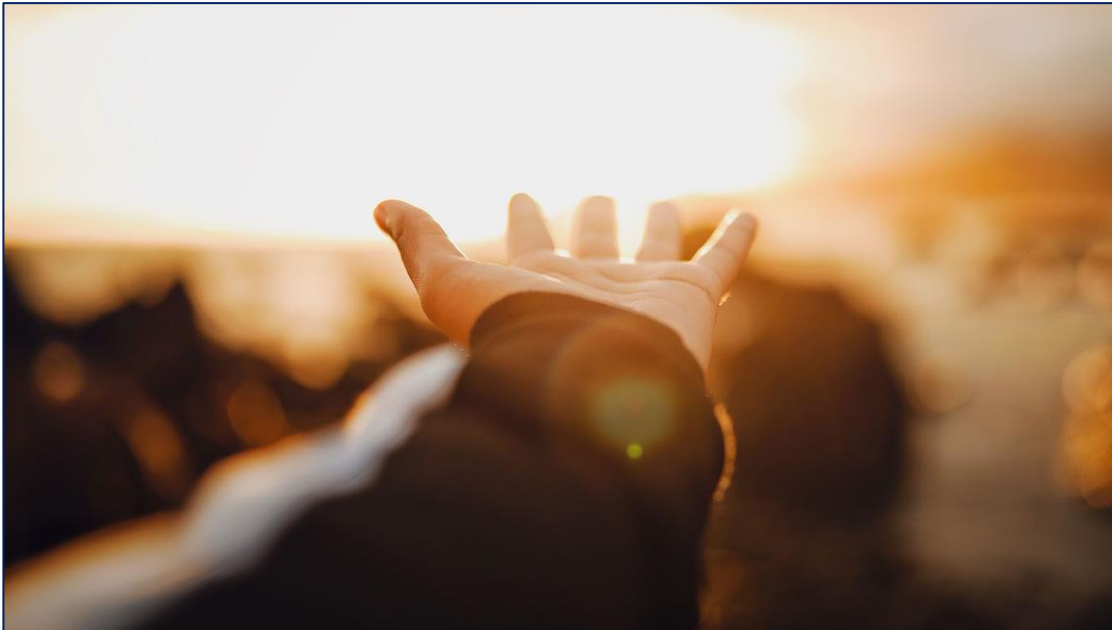
(13 years of slavery and prisoner life

+ 7 years of ruling Egypt during good harvest

+ 2 years of ruling Egypt during famine = 22 years).

*V6, “For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will not be plowing and reaping.”*

***The best of all this world is yours to enjoy.***



*Genesis 45:20, Don't worry about your personal belongings, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.”*

This word came to pass later.

*Exodus 12:35-36, Now the children of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, and they had asked from the Egyptians articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing. <sup>36</sup> And the Lord had given the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they granted them what they requested. Thus they plundered the Egyptians.*

God wants you to enjoy all the best things in your life. Try to enjoy everything (e.g. school, friends, church, parents, etc.).

*1 Timothy 6:17, Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.*

When NASA first started sending up American astronauts and began to compete with Russia on space engineering, they quickly discovered that ballpoint pens would not work in zero gravity. To combat the problem, NASA scientists spent a decade and \$12 million to develop a pen that writes in zero gravity, upside down, underwater, on almost any surface including glass and at temperatures ranging from below freezing to 300C degrees hot.

NASA boasted that they defeated the challenge and that it was the best pen to be used in space. However, when confronted with the same problem, the Russians used a pencil.

There are two ways God wants us to enjoy the best in life.

1. God giving us better things to enjoy.
2. We learning to be content and thankful for what God already gave us.

It is not a matter of where you were born and where you live that makes you to enjoy life more.

It's about HOW you live that makes a difference on whether you can enjoy your life or not. God is a good God and our God has put you here because He believes this is the BEST place for you to be at this time and at this hour of your life!

When you learn to relax and take this truth into your heart, then you can begin to enjoy the things and people around you.

Joseph knew this secret and that is how he was able to enjoy his life even in a foreign land of Egypt.

*Acts 17:26, And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings,*

### ***God only wants the best for you***

Whether you understand it or not at some moments of your life. When you realize that our God is not some kind of a policeman who is waiting for you to make a mistake so that He can punish you. When you realize that God wants you to know that He is willing to give you all His best whenever He believes you are ready for it, you can be truly free to love God all you want and enjoy every bit of your life on earth.

When the Israelites were hopeless in Babylon captivity God spoke through Prophet Jeremiah.

*Jeremiah 29:10-11, For thus says the Lord: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. <sup>11</sup> For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.*

“The best is yet to come,” the best is yet to come for your life.

It may be hard in the beginning part of your life while young, like Joseph, but if you dive yourself all the way to love God and to keep loving Him as your ultimate Vision, your best is only yet to come.

Your beginnings will seem humble, but so prosperous will your future be.

*Job 8:7, Though your beginning was small, Yet your latter end would increase abundantly.*

After all, the name of Joseph means “may he add” or “addition.” Increase is on the way even for your life!

***God is at work when you think you are in trouble.***

*Genesis 42:36, Jacob exclaimed, “You are robbing me of my children! Joseph is gone! Simeon is gone! And now you want to take Benjamin, too. Everything is going against me!”*

When Jacob was professing that everything was against him in his life, God was actually working on his behalf.

Who could have thought that the ruler of Egypt was his lost son? Remember, when you feel at corner, blocked in front, back, left and right, it is still open upward.

Turn your eyes upon Jesus, who WILL work on your behalf when you are in trouble.

***Develop healthy emotions.***

Joseph grew up in such a dysfunctional family where his father Jacob exercised a terrible favouritism toward Rachel and her children Joseph and Benjamin.

His favouritism eventually created a disastrous jealousy and division in the family. Yet, he still does not seem to care about his other children including Simeon who became captive in Egypt. He doesn't even consider him or call him by name.



*Genesis 42:38, But Jacob replied, “My son will not go down with you. His brother Joseph is dead, and he is all I have left. If anything should happen to him on your journey, you would send this grieving, white-haired man to his grave.*

*Genesis 43:14, May God Almighty give you mercy as you go before the man, so that he will release Simeon and let Benjamin return. But if I must lose my children, so be it.”*

Although he was the ultimate victim of such chaotic family background, Joseph developed healthy emotions in his life. He must have been able to do so by keeping God’s words close to him while living a tough life of a slave, prisoner and immigrant in Egypt.

A healthy leader knows how to cry when sad, and to laugh when happy.

He/she can be bold when disciplining and be gentle when mending.

He/she should know how to control emotions.

Even Jesus is the loving, gentle Lamb of God, and at the same time, mighty, strong Lion of Judah!

*Genesis 42:24, Now he turned away from them and began to weep. When he regained his composure, he spoke to them again. Then he chose Simeon from among them and had him tied up right before their eyes.*

*Genesis 43:30-31, Then Joseph hurried from the room because he was overcome with emotion for his brother. He went into his private room, where he broke down*

and wept. <sup>31</sup> After washing his face, he came back out, keeping himself under control. Then he ordered, “Bring out the food!”

Keep this verse in your heart.

**Proverbs 29:11**, *A fool vents all his feelings, But a wise man holds them back.*

### ***Be a person who wins your parents’ recognition.***

The Bible records that two compassionate sons of Jacob approached their father to persuade him to let Benjamin go with him, so that they might buy more foods and also bring back Simeon held in Egypt.

One was Reuben.

**Genesis 42:37-38**, *Then Reuben said to his father, “You may kill my two sons if I don’t bring Benjamin back to you. I’ll be responsible for him, and I promise to bring him back.”*

<sup>38</sup> *But Jacob replied, “My son will not go down with you. His brother Joseph is dead, and he is all I have left. If anything should happen to him on your journey, you would send this grieving, white-haired man to his grave*

The other Judah.

**Genesis 43:8-11**, *Judah said to his father, “Send the boy with me, and we will be on our way. Otherwise we will all die of starvation—and not only we, but you and our little ones. <sup>9</sup> I personally guarantee his safety. You may hold me responsible if I don’t bring him back to you. Then let me bear the blame forever. <sup>10</sup> If we hadn’t wasted all this time, we could have gone and returned twice by now.”*

<sup>11</sup> *So their father, Jacob, finally said to them, “If it can’t be avoided, then at least do this. Pack your bags with the best products of this land. Take them down to the man as gifts—balm, honey, gum, aromatic resin, pistachio nuts, and almonds.*

Reuben was a compassionate man, and we know it from his attempt to rescue Joseph when other brothers were considering killing him.

**Genesis 37:21-22**, *But when Reuben heard of their scheme, he came to Joseph’s rescue. “Let’s not kill him,” he said. <sup>22</sup> “Why should we shed any blood? Let’s just throw him into this empty cistern here in the wilderness. Then he’ll die without our laying a hand on him.” Reuben was secretly planning to rescue Joseph and return him to his father.*

Judah was also a compassionate man who suggested not killing Joseph at the very scene.

*Genesis 37:26-27, Judah said to his brothers, "What will we gain by killing our brother? We'd have to cover up the crime. <sup>27</sup> Instead of hurting him, let's sell him to those Ishmaelite traders. After all, he is our brother—our own flesh and blood!" And his brothers agreed.*

However, Reuben's suggestion was refused by Jacob while Judah's permitted.

Why?

Here is the reason.

*Genesis 35:22, While he was living there, Reuben had intercourse with Bilhah, his father's concubine, and Jacob soon heard about it. These are the names of the twelve sons of Jacob:*

When your behaviours are upright, your suggestions will work, and your words will have power at critical times. Otherwise, your words may be abhorred at such times.

Do your best to win your parents' recognition.

***God's dream for your life comes to pass by all means.***

It is only a matter of time.

*Genesis 42:9, And he remembered the dreams he'd had about them many years before. He said to them, "You are spies! You have come to see how vulnerable our land has become."*

What was Joseph's dream over twenty years ago?

*Genesis 37:7, "We were out in the field, tying up bundles of grain. Suddenly my bundle stood up, and your bundles all gathered around and bowed low before mine!"*

Now his dream came to pass, even twice.

*Genesis 42:6, Since Joseph was governor of all Egypt and in charge of selling grain to all the people, it was to him that his brothers came. When they arrived, they bowed before him with their faces to the ground.*

*Genesis 43:26, When Joseph came home, they gave him the gifts they had brought him, then bowed low to the ground before him.*



## 12. Be Faithful

### **Matthew 25:14-29, & 1 Corinthians 4:1-2**

God is love, apart from the fact that one of God's key characters is His faithfulness. God is faithful to us meaning that He does what He promises, and He is reliable and dependable. You can totally rely on God because He is faithful.

*1 Thessalonians 5:24, He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.*

This is the reason why God has called you and because He is faithful.

*2 Timothy 2:13, If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.*

God always delivers on His promises. He promised Abraham and Sarah a child in their old age and it came to pass.

*Hebrews 11:11, By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.*

Receive strength and grace today to bring forth that child, that dream, that vision in the name of Jesus.

Because of God's faithfulness, Sarah though past the age of child bearing bore a son.

*Deuteronomy 7:9, "Therefore know that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments;*

*1 Corinthians 10:13, No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*

Even when it comes to temptation, God is faithful. He does not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able to bear. He even makes a way of escape for us so that we don't fall.

In truth, all of God's creation depends on His faithfulness. Because of His faithfulness, He has put some natural laws in place and that is why everything functions the way they do. If God decides not to be faithful and refuses to allow sun to shine or rain to fall, all plants will be dead.

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*Faithfulness is not just a character of God, but God demands that we are faithful.*

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In the Old Testament several words are used for faithfulness— **'emun'**, “trusting, faithfulness,”

**'emuna'**, “firmness, faithfulness, fidelity,”

**'emet'**, “firmness, truth, faithfulness, verity.”

All of these, however, are derivatives of the verb **'aman'**, “to confirm, support, uphold,” and so, “be established, be faithful, certain, to believe in.

The word used for faithfulness in the New Testament is the noun **'pistis'**, which has both an active and a passive sense or use.

In its active use, it often refers to “faith, belief, trust.”

In the passive sense, it means “faithfulness, reliability, fidelity.” It is used of the “faithfulness” of God, of Christ, and of man.

*1 Corinthians 4:1-2, Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. <sup>2</sup> Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.*

Apostle Paul is saying here that we are considered as servants of Christ and stewards of mysteries of God. God has entrusted us with His mysteries, but we must be faithful.

A good servant does what His master says. He is there to please his master.

*Revelation 2:10, Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.*

It means that in order to receive the crown of life, we all must be faithful. You will not miss your crown in Jesus name.

This shows that our entire life is a test of our faithfulness or stewardship. Pass the test of faithfulness or stewardship and you will be promoted.

Jesus spoke a parable that the kingdom of heaven is like a man travelling to a far country and then called his servants and to one he gave 5 talents and another he gave two talents and to the last one he gave one talent.

The master divided the talents among the servants according to their abilities. No one received more than he can handle. If one fails in their assignment it is not because they were overwhelmed but because of laziness or being disobedient towards the master.

The talents represent our gifts, our time and our resources. God expects that we invest them wisely until He returns. We are responsible to use well what God has given us.

The issue is not how much we have but how well we use what He has given us.

After a long time, the master came back, and he called his servants and the one that was given 5 talents have doubled it up and it is now ten talents and the one with two now had four but the one with one just went and buried it and did nothing with his talent.

The master then said to the one with five talents.

*V21, His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'*

It is interesting because the master said the same thing to the one with the 2 talents.

*V 23, His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'*

This shows that it is not the size or quantity of the result we have but our being faithful to what the Lord has committed into our hands.

The third servant just went to bury the talent he was given, he decided to play it safe and called his master a hard man.

*V 26-29, "But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. <sup>27</sup> So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. <sup>28</sup> So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. <sup>29</sup> For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.'*

Everyone does not have the same opportunities. Nor do we all have the same abilities. But we all have something.

May the Lord find us faithful when He returns?

In the story the master is the Lord Jesus himself and the servants are us.

### *What does it mean to be faithful?*



It means to be steadfast or consistent in allegiance or affection. A faithful person does not waver. They are always there. You can count on them.

Firm in adherence to promises or in observance of duty. You keep your promises and do your duties well.

It means to be loyal.

*Proverbs 17:17, A friend loves at all times, And a brother is born for adversity.*

It means to be dependable and trustworthy. A faithful person can be relied upon.

Are you dependable and trustworthy?

Willingness to carry through on all God's commands to the end. It's not just to do things half way but to be there till the end.

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*That is why faithfulness is not proven overnight but it is demonstrated over time. That is why our motive has to be right. Motive is the reason why we do what we do.*

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Faithfulness is doing what God has told you to do with the resources He has given you.

Faithfulness is one the fruits of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit works on our heart and on our mind to reveal how much better it is when we do what God would do or say what God would say. By practice over time we develop characteristics, we routinely behave as God would behave. Not because we should, or must, but because we choose to, we prefer to, because it is in our character to do so.

*Proverbs 20:6, Most men will proclaim each his own goodness, But who can find a faithful man?*

It means that faithfulness is not a very common character trait. It is rare.

Faithfulness is not an option we choose. God expects us to be faithful to Him, and He seeks men and women who will live so as to consistently carry out His will.

*1 Samuel 2:35, Then I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest who shall do according to what is in My heart and in My mind. I will build him a sure house, and he shall walk before My anointed forever.*

### ***Biblical characters that was faithful***

*Genesis 5:24, And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.*

Enoch must have been loyal, reliable, feared God, obeyed God.

### ***Jesus Christ is the supreme example of faithfulness.***

He always did God's will and spoke God's words. He had only one desire, which was to do God's will.

*Luke 22:42, saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."*

Jesus' obedience did not come naturally. This we are told in the Book of Hebrews. Even for Jesus, faithfulness was something to learn.

*Hebrews 5:8, though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.*

We, too, can learn faithfulness.

*Luke 16:10-12, He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.<sup>11</sup> Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the*

*true riches? <sup>12</sup> And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?*

As we grow more faithful in one area of our life, that faithfulness can carry over into other areas.

Faithfulness toward God begins with faithfulness toward family, faithfulness on our job, and faithfulness in financial dealings. We can't wait to show our faithfulness until someone trusts us with something big. We must be faithful now with whatever has already been entrusted to us.

Let us not be too quick to say or promise anything. God judges us when we make promises:

will we do the thing that we have said?

*Ecclesiastes 5:1-5, Walk prudently when you go to the house of God; and draw near to hear rather than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they do evil. <sup>2</sup> Do not be rash with your mouth, And let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven, and you on earth; Therefore let your words be few. <sup>3</sup> For a dream comes through much activity, And a fool's voice is known by his many words.*

*<sup>4</sup> When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; For He has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed— <sup>5</sup> Better not to vow than to vow and not pay.*

## **Moses**

*Numbers 12:6-8, Then He said, "Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream. <sup>7</sup> Not so with My servant Moses; He is faithful in all My house. <sup>8</sup> I speak with him face to face, Even plainly, and not in dark sayings; And he sees the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid To speak against My servant Moses?"*

### **What does "all God's house" mean?**

It means that he obediently did all God asked of him.

Moses was characteristically enthusiastic for God as the Israelites but quite different from the Israelites with him. The people were enthusiastic one day, grumbling the next, and idolatrous soon after. Moses did not allow the people's attitude to deter his own obedience.

He was an imperfect man like us, and he, too, made his notable mistakes. Yet, he consistently did God's will the best he could.

You will recall that to others God often spoke in dreams and visions, but He did not do so to Moses. God spoke clearly to him, and He cites Moses' faithfulness as his reason for doing so.

If we obey, if we are faithful, that behavior enables us to hear God's voice more clearly. When our heavenly Father speaks, He expects and deserves obedience.

### **Abraham**

Nearly every action in Abraham's life showed how faithful he was to God. He left his country and countrymen never to return. He believed the promise of a son though such a birth was naturally impossible.

***Romans 4:18-21**, who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be." <sup>19</sup>And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. <sup>20</sup>He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, <sup>21</sup>and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. <sup>22</sup>And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness."*

He cast out a son, Ishmael when Sarah and God commanded it.

***Genesis 21:9-14**, <sup>9</sup>And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing.<sup>[e]</sup> <sup>10</sup>Therefore she said to Abraham, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, namely with Isaac." <sup>11</sup>And the matter was very <sup>[d]</sup>displeasing in Abraham's sight because of his son.*

*<sup>12</sup>But God said to Abraham, "Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called. <sup>13</sup>Yet I will also make a nation of the son of the bondwoman, because he is your <sup>[e]</sup>seed."*

*<sup>14</sup>So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and <sup>[d]</sup>a skin of water; and putting it on her shoulder, he gave it and the boy to Hagar, and sent her away. Then she departed and wandered in the Wilderness of Beersheba.*

He was even willing to offer his son Isaac out of obedience to God when God demanded it.

***Hebrews 11:17-19**, By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, <sup>18</sup>of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," <sup>19</sup>concluding that God was able to*

*raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.*

Because of his faithfulness, he enjoyed the blessings of God.

### **Daniel**

*Daniel 6:1-5, It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to be over the whole kingdom; <sup>2</sup> and over these, three governors, of whom Daniel was one, that the satraps might give account to them, so that the king would suffer no loss. <sup>3</sup> Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm. <sup>4</sup> So the governors and satraps sought to find some charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no charge or fault, because he was faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him. <sup>5</sup> Then these men said, "We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God."*

Daniel was faithful to God, but he had reasons of personal safety to disobey or "deny" God. He had been snatched from home, moved as a prisoner to Babylon, and enrolled in school in the king's court.

Daniel refused to defile himself with the king's delicacies. They told him not to pray and he still chose to obey God rather than man. They threw him into the lion's den and the Lord shut the mouth of the Lions.

God honored and exalted him for that faithfulness. He was so faithful in his assignments. From Daniel we learn that God honors faithfulness even in the most ungodly surroundings.

### **Joseph**

For the past two days we have been studying the life of Joseph.

Joseph obeyed God even when faithfulness brought him difficulties. He was sold as a slave while carrying out his father's orders.

#### **Genesis 37:13-29,**

He was thrown into prison because he was faithful to his master, Potiphar.

#### **Genesis 39:1-20,**

Joseph was always faithful to God, and in due time he was set down at the right hand of Pharaoh, ruler of Egypt.

## *In what ways do we demonstrate faithfulness?*

### *1. Being faithful to God*

Have you made up your mind that no matter what happens you will remain faithful to the end and never give up on God?

*Luke 10:27, So he answered and said, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbour as yourself.' "*

Satan will do everything to make you quit serving God and we must remember that that it is those who endure to the end or are faithful to the end that will be saved.

*Matthew 24:13, But he who endures to the end shall be saved.*

We have seen people quit serving God because of unmet needs, they say that if God can't give me a wife or a husband, or job why I must serve Him?

#### **Can Satan do anything to make you quit serving God?**

Our true character is demonstrated when the pressure is on.

#### **If God does not give you what you want, will you still serve Him?**

He can see our heart you know. We must realize that God does not need us to be who He is, but we need Him to be who we are. That is why our motive for serving God is very important. Why are you serving God?

We must make sure we are serving Him for the right motive because He knows what is in your heart anyway. Our motive for serving Him should be because He is the almighty God and without Him life makes no sense.

If we serve Him only because of His blessings, we will not be faithful when the pressure is on.

A lot of times, people have stopped serving God because of the pleasure of sin. Sex, drugs, boyfriend and girlfriends. Bible says sin is pleasurable for a season but the end of it is destruction.

### *2. Faithful in prayer*

Prayer is the life blood of a believer. Prayer is the air we breathe.

If you are not praying, you will not have spiritual strength. We are encouraged to be faithful in prayer.

*Romans 12:12, rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer;*

Bible says we should pray without ceasing. Pray always.

**How is your prayer life today?**

### **3. Faithful in Saint's Gathering**

*Hebrews 10:25, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*

Gathering together to worship and to meet with Jesus.

*2 Thessalonians 2:1, Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,*

Believers are encouraged to be faithful in church attendance. Jesus our master faithfully attended church services. Likewise, we must aspire to do the same.

*Luke 4:16, So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.*

*Luke 13:10, Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath.*

Have a fervent passion of being faithful in church attendance. Don't only go to church when you feel like it.

*Psalms 84:1-4, How lovely is Your tabernacle, O Lord of hosts! <sup>2</sup> My soul longs, yes, even faints For the courts of the Lord; My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. <sup>3</sup> Even the sparrow has found a home, And the swallow a nest for herself, Where she may lay her young— Even Your altars, O Lord of hosts, My King and my God. <sup>4</sup> Blessed are those who dwell in Your house; They will still be praising You. Selah*

Sometimes it is spiritual but because you don't see it with your physical eyes, you don't know.

When people stop missing church regularly it is a sign that they are falling out of love with God or they have backslidden.

They start to drift away from God. It's automatic. They will begin to have doubts of things you were sure about. I've seen this happen to people.

*Hebrews 3:12-13, Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; <sup>13</sup> but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*

#### **4. Faithful in giving.**

*Proverbs 3:9, Honour the Lord with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase;*

*Mark 12:41-43, Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much. <sup>42</sup> Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans. <sup>43</sup> So He called His disciples to Himself and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury;*

What is Jesus doing in this passage?

How would you have felt if you were the widow—everyone else is making a show of putting in great sums of money and all you have are two small coins that weren't worth much at all?

Can you think of any reason that she might NOT have given her money?

(Excuses: Embarrassed of what people might think; How is such a little amount going to do any good; Shouldn't she keep it since it's all the money she has. Isn't that okay?)



According to Jesus, who put in the most money? Why?

What was the difference between how the rich people gave and how the poor widow gave? (She gave out of her poverty and she gave her all.)

If you were to give like the widow, what would that mean to you? What would it cost you if you gave your life like this?

### **5. Faithful in your relationships**

Be faithful to your relationships. Husbands, wives', brothers and sisters.

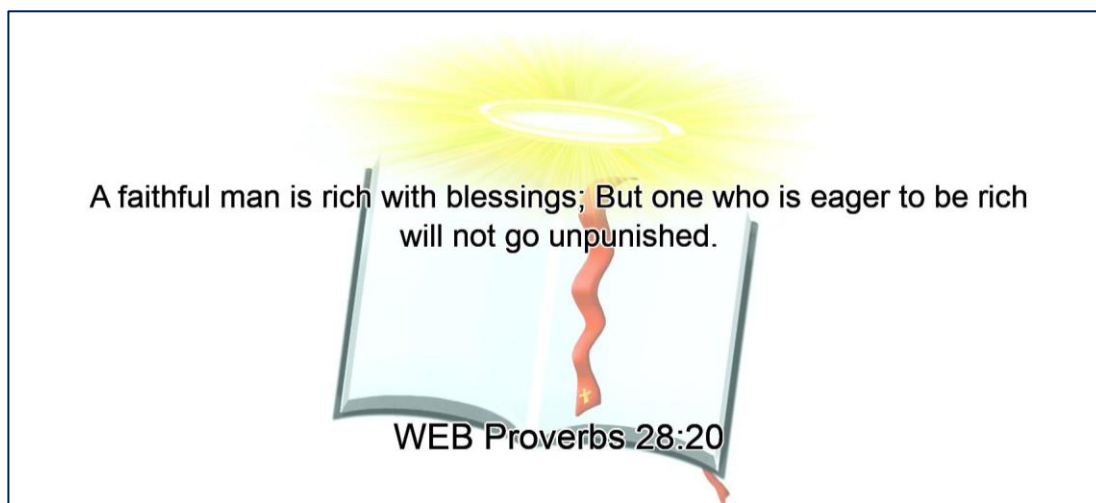
*1 Peter 4:8, And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."*

### **Benefits of being faithful**

Promotion in God's kingdom requires faithfulness.

*Proverbs 28:20, A faithful man will abound with blessings, But he who hastens to be rich will not go unpunished.*

Faithfulness is a pre-requisite for blessing and that is why the enemy will always challenge your faithfulness. I've never seen anyone who serves God faithfully and is not blessed. It is a key requirement of our heavenly reward.



*Revelation 2:10, Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.*

God preserves the faithful.

*Psalms 31:23, Oh, love the Lord, all you His saints! For the Lord preserves the faithful, And fully repays the proud person.*

Protection for evil one.

*Psalm 97:10, You who love the Lord, hate evil! He preserves the souls of His saints; He delivers them out of the hand of the wicked.*

Deliverance from death. When God told Isaiah to go and tell king Hezekiah that he should put his house in order and was going to die, what was his response?

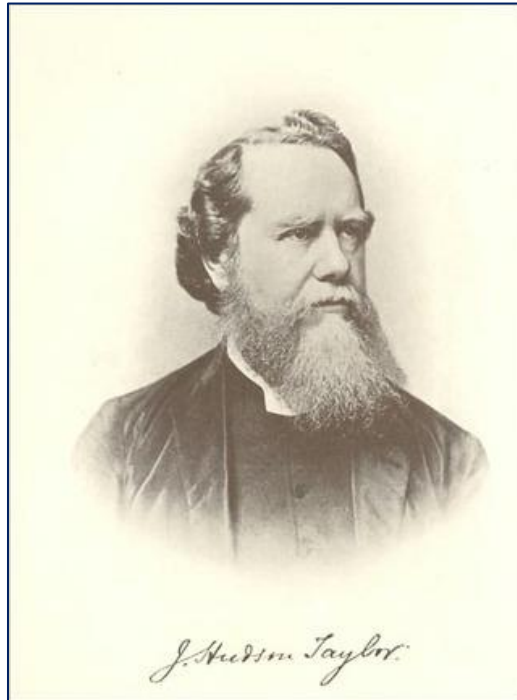
*Isaiah 38:3, "Remember, Lord, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.*

Hezekiah wept bitterly. God then added 15 more years to his life.

### **Conclusion**

God demands that as His children we are faithful.

Decide to be a faithful person today because God blesses faithfulness



It was a stormy night in Birmingham, England, and the famous missionary, Hudson Taylor, was to speak at a meeting at the Seven Street schoolroom. His hostess assured him that nobody would attend on such a stormy night, but Taylor insisted on going. "I must go even if there is no one but the doorkeeper." As it turned out, less than a dozen people showed up, but the meeting was marked with unusual spiritual power. Half of those present either became missionaries or gave their children as missionaries; and the rest were faithful supporters of the China Inland Mission for years to come.

Hudson Taylor was committed to serving the Savior regardless of names (who showed up) or numbers (how many showed) or the nature of the situation (stormy conditions) and God honored his faithfulness.

***Will you?***

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