

THE STORY OF JOSEPH: FROM THE PIT TO THE PALACE

By:

Anita Sikes

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INTRODUCTION

Joseph was always his father's favorite son. Joseph was the son of Jacobs' favorite wife, Rachel. Joseph's father made him a coat, or tunic of many colors as a token of his favoritism toward Joseph. Joseph demonstrated integrity in his life and was full of Godly character. Joseph was given a special gift of dreams by God, both in having prophetic dreams and interpreting them. Joseph was hated by his brothers because he was his father's favorite son and because of the special gift of dreams that Joseph had been given. Joseph always maintained his attitude of servitude to his father, and to Father God. Throughout Joseph's life, during the good circumstances, and the bad, Joseph served his father, God, and his masters and was always an example of a life that glorifies God. Joseph believed God, and honored everyone that God placed into his life, even his spiteful brothers and his masters in Egypt.

I. A MASTER OF DREAMS

Joseph was given two personal prophetic dreams by God concerning the future of him and his family that would be fulfilled literally. In his youthful enthusiasm, Joseph told his family about his dreams, and even though the dreams had been given by God and was a futuristic answer to the problems they would encounter as a family, it only caused them to resent Joseph even more.

The first dream, the dream of them binding the sheaves, foretold of Joseph reigning over his brothers, this dream was an insult to his older brothers because it was the custom that the older ruled over the younger, and this caused them to hate Joseph even more. Joseph's second dream, involved the sun, the moon, and eleven stars, which prophetically indicated that his father, mother (even though his mother was already deceased) and his eleven brothers would one

day bow to him. This dream insulted even his father, however, his father knew that these dreams were from God, so he kept, and pondered, them in his mind.

Joseph would have been wise to either be more sensitive about telling his family his dreams, knowing that there was already envy and strife among them, or perhaps even better for Joseph would have been for him to keep them between him and God. The lesson for us to learn from Joseph's experience here is that not everyone is on the same spiritual level as we are at the same time. Joseph, knowing that his brothers hated him should have used more discretion in revealing the dreams to them. The Scriptures teach not to cast our pearls before swine.

Jacob told Joseph to go and check on his brothers who traveled while tending their father's sheep in search of better pasture. As Joseph was going to check on the welfare of his brothers, they saw him coming from a far off and recognized him because of his distinctive tunic. His brothers' hatred and envy of him, led them to discuss murdering him. Joseph's brothers feared that his dreams might actually come true, and they thought killing him was their answer.

Reuben, Joseph's oldest brother intervened on his behalf and convinced the other brothers not to kill Joseph, but to cast him into a pit, because Reuben had plans of later rescuing Joseph. After Reuben left his brothers, and left Joseph in the pit, the other brothers stripped Joseph of his tunic and devised a plan to sell Joseph as a slave to some traveling Ishmaelites. Joseph's brothers thought there was more profit in selling him rather than killing him. First the brothers allowed hatred and envy to grow in their hearts, then murder, then profit from ill gain; all these devises from Satan only caused further destruction in their lives. They believed they were done with this master of dreams.

Joseph's dreams were God given dreams; however, there is also a timing to be perfected in the full manifestation of the plans that God has for our lives. Premature enthusiasm can be

detrimental in the successful fulfillment of God's plans for us. We need both the wisdom and the timing of God to be perfected in us to properly complete the plans that Father God has for us.

Later in Joseph's life while he was in prison and in charge of all the prisoners, the king's cupbearer and baker both have prophetic dreams and Joseph interprets them with divine accuracy. Joseph also interpreted Pharaoh's dreams about the coming seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine with divine accuracy; Joseph was a master of dreams.

II. YOUR ATTITUDE DETERMINES YOUR ALTITUDE

Joseph was willing and obedient in every area of his life. He was obedient to God, his parents, to his masters in Egypt, even to Pharaoh. Joseph's Godly attitude preserved him in the trials and test of his life, and helped him to keep his integrity intact even though he had been misused and falsely accused. If Joseph had yielded to his flesh he would not have been successful in completing what God had called him to do. Joseph begged his brothers not to sell him into slavery. The brothers considered him as good as dead, believing that he would never return from slavery.

God always cared for and supernaturally protected Joseph. Joseph kept a covenant relationship with God which caused him to walk in divine favor and blessing. Joseph's attitude of integrity and obedience to God's plans and way of life caused Joseph to succeed in spite of a life of unfair circumstances. Our mind is our battlefield, and if we will keep our thoughts guarded, bringing every thought captive to Christ, we will always be able to fight from victory, not fight trying to gain victory.

Our mind has to get renewed to God's Word and stay renewed to God's Word, God has supernatural plans for all of us, however, we do have to fight the good fight of faith. The Word teaches us that the willing and obedient eat the good of the land, not just the willing, or obedient,

but both the willing and obedient. Our attitude has to stay in line with God's word in order for our altitude to reach the capacity God has planned for us. Usually we are our own worst enemy because we believe what we say to ourselves more than we believe anyone else.

Joseph was a good example to us because he kept his mind disciplined to God's ways. Joseph had many chances to fear, or even hate everyone else, including God, for the chain of events that Joseph experienced on his journey from the pit to the palace. Joseph kept his love for God and family intact regardless of his circumstances and regardless of his many opportunities he had to get out from his love walk, which always includes forgiveness. Walking in love and forgiveness keeps you in the proper attitude that Father God needs from you in order for you to accomplish all that He has in His divine plan for you.

To keep a proper attitude towards God and His way of doing things is very much a fight of faith, because that level of submission and dedication can only be obtained when we daily crucify our flesh and keep our heart on the Fathers' ways. Like a jet without any fuel cannot obtain the altitude it needs to accomplish the purposes for which it was intended, neither will we be able to obtain the altitude that we need in order to be about our Father's business unless we stay committed to the discipline of God.

Because Joseph walked in the proper attitude, he was able to experience the altitude to live faithfully above his circumstances. Joseph occupied high places of honor, and responsibility in every area of his life. Even as a slave Joseph lived and worked in his master's house which was an unusually high station for a slave. When Joseph was unfairly thrown into prison because of his Godly integrity, he kept the proper attitude and he was placed into a high position of honor and authority. Joseph would have never seen the success and fulfillment of God's plans in his life had he not kept his Godly attitude.

Using the Godly discipline taught to us in God's Word, we are more than able to maintain a proper attitude, regardless of our circumstances. God can only use His children that, by faith and obedience, stay in the heavenly altitude that He has designed for us to live and function

III. A LIFE OF GLORIFYING GOD

As a young boy serving his father, Joseph was obedient and kept his father's wishes, even to the point of leaving home to check the welfare of his evil brothers. After being sold into slavery Joseph honored his master, Potiphar, he kept all of Potiphar's business perfected to the place where Potiphar only concerned himself with what he ate. Even after Potiphar's wife falsely accused Joseph and had him unjustly thrown into prison, Joseph served the chief jailer with all of his abilities. Joseph then was promoted to serve directly under Pharaoh after interpreting his dream about the seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine, another God given opportunity for Joseph to use his gift as a master of dreams to save his family and a nation.

Joseph lived his entire life glorifying God. From the time Joseph was a boy working for his father, while working for Potiphar, while working in the prison, and even while serving Pharaoh, Joseph's commitment to live according to God's plan caused everyone in his life to see God glorified through him.

With God's divine wisdom and judgment, Joseph managed the years of plenty and the years of famine wisely, as no man would have been able to. Because Joseph honored God and his family and never compromised his beliefs or integrity he successfully accomplished the plans of God to save His people. Joseph walked in love and forgiveness with everyone in his life; it seems especially with the ones who treated him the worst. This God kind of love operating through your life will bring you the success and contentment that is supernatural.

When we live our lives to glorify God, and stay submitted and obedient to His plans, even the most evil thought out plans will never prosper against us. Our responsibility in this supernatural life with God is to lay ourselves daily on the altar of sacrifice, and allow God to burn off all the dross. To take up our cross and follow after Him is a daily walk where the purpose of every aspect of our life is to glorify God. Once we refuse to compromise our integrity and faith in God, no matter what the circumstances are, then we find that God's glory shines through us and it is the Father that people see through us and not us ourselves.

God is no respecter of persons, as He was with Joseph, He will be with us. Within ourselves we do not have the ability to live life at this level, God never intended for us to live life that way, instead we totally surrender ourselves to Him, and it is Him through us that causes us to live at God's supernatural level. We will have to submit to His plans; stay focused only on Him, and as always, greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world.

We must never allow the circumstances in our lives to occupy any area of our faith walk, because, circumstances change but Father God never will. Father God is always faithful, just, and perfect in all of His ways even when we don't know or understand. Joseph knew this about Father God, and allowed himself to trust and follow after God regardless of his circumstance. Joseph was fully persuaded that God loved him, had good plans for him, and would bring those plans to pass. Because of Joseph's character and obedience nations of people saw the magnificent glory of God through Joseph's life.

Using Jesus as our example and Joseph as a good point of reference we should strive to live our lives every day in such a way that others can see the glory of God through us. We should ask ourselves daily if the actions we are taking, and the decisions that we are making will glorify God. If we happen to be the only example of Jesus that someone sees, what would their opinion of Jesus be? Joseph lived his life to glorify God, and many others were changed and helped by

Joseph's level of consecration to God. When we stand before Jesus, we want to hear Him say to us "well done faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord".

CONCLUSION

From the beginning Joseph chose to live for God, and to have God glorified through Him. When it wasn't popular, easy, or fair Joseph lived a life of Godly character and integrity that is rarely seen. Many lives were spared and changed because Joseph was faithful to God and His plans. Joseph began as a master of dreams when he was just a boy and this gift from God continued to serve him well throughout his life. Joseph was careful to keep his attitude in line with the altitude that God had planned for him. Joseph served as a good example of how to live a life that will use the gifts that God has given us, how to run our race well, and finish our life with God being glorified through us.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Scripture references are from the NKJV Study Bible formerly titled The Nelson Study Bible New

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