

**JOSEPH —  
FRUITFULNESS THROUGH FAITH AND FORGIVENESS**

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“And Joseph said unto them,  
Fear not: for *am* I in the place of God?  
But as for you, ye thought evil against me;  
*but* God meant it unto good,  
to bring to pass, as *it is* this day, to save much people alive.  
Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones.  
And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.”  
(Genesis 50:19-21)

“He sent a man before them, *even* Joseph, *who* was sold for a servant:  
Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron:  
Until the time that his word came: the word of the LORD tried him.  
The king sent and loosed him; *even* the ruler of the people, and let him go  
free.

He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance:  
To bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom.  
Israel also came into Egypt; and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham.  
And he increased his people greatly;  
and made them stronger than their enemies.”  
(Ps 105:17-24)

“Joseph *is* a fruitful bough, *even* a fruitful bough by a well;  
*whose* branches run over the wall:  
The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot *at him*, and hated him:  
But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong  
by the hands of the mighty *God* of Jacob;  
(from thence *is* the shepherd, the stone of Israel:)  
Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty,  
who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above,  
blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the  
womb: The blessings of thy father have prevailed  
above the blessings of my progenitors  
unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills:  
they shall be on the head of Joseph,  
and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.”  
(Ge 49:22-26)

## Introduction

In the character of Joseph, a man steps out of biblical history who seems to have heroic proportions. Christians today may gain much insight into a life of fulfillment by imitating his responses to the tests that confronted him *while he did not know any of the outcome that awaited him*.

If the Scriptures tell the whole story, the character of Joseph is one nearly unmatched for sterling qualities of integrity, purity and wisdom. The character Joseph consistently displayed is the greatest accomplishment a human can achieve; it portrays mastery over self. However, if the historical legends and archaeological evidence is also taken into consideration, Joseph becomes almost super human.

To Joseph, known as Imhotep, is ascribed the invention of the simple machinery that was used to build the pyramids. Those monuments are the crown of a great civilization. Joseph is also to have devised the methods of embalming that preserve the remains of Pharaohs in recognizable state even 4,000 years later. Joseph designed and oversaw the construction of huge granaries with underground storage bins that were self unloading. These contributions alone helped to propel Egypt to the forefront in world civilizations<sup>1</sup>.

What is the cause for such outstanding character? What kind of background produced a man of such material resourcefulness? Was it a royal bloodline? Was it superior education and training? Was it an inheritance of wealth and luxury?

In a quest for answers, one word should be examined; the word **faith**. Again and again we see a man who made God the center of his existence. He did not focus on circumstances, nor did he focus on the way he felt about his circumstances. Rather he asked himself the question, “How would God feel toward me if I would take the easiest course of action?”

Faith is the secret to a life of forgiveness. Here a man finds the grace to rise above any harm earthly enemies can bring him. God who loves him has willed it so. This forgiveness then unleashes power and productivity.

So many times we become bogged down in thinking about what we are going through or what our emotions are doing to us at the moment. Welcome to the real world! When God sets out to accomplish something of eternal value, circumstances and emotions will often times take a down hill slide. It is only when we turn our full attention to “what does God want?” that we can do the right thing and find our way.

As you study Joseph’s tests from the perspective of knowing the outcome at the end, remember Joseph did not know how things would work out. He had

feelings just like any normal human being. If he could live with a focus on God’s calling for His life that enabled him to forgive and be fruitful without special Holy Spirit enablement, Christians today have no excuse to wallow in self pity or bitterness.

God is more concerned about our holiness and usefulness in His kingdom than He is about our comfort or good feelings. He will adeptly choose what our difficulties should be and give us grace to overcome them. When we keep this foremost in our thinking, we can imitate Joseph and the other heroes of faith.

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<sup>1</sup>The Exodus Case by Dr. Lennart Möller, pp 65-100

## Lesson 1

# The Tests of Domestic Tensions and Inconsistent Example

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Lesson Focus: To study what negative influences Joseph faced in his childhood, and to endeavor to find the balance in how much a person's background determines how he turns out.

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It is a common reality for people to despise how their parents or role models lived and end up repeating the same mistakes. They may have detested the carnality they saw lived out in their parents, but feel powerless to rise above it for themselves. If they are receiving Christian training, they see the difference between the ideal Christian life and the way they were programmed as youth. Through preaching and Bible study, they see the high calling God has for their lives. They may manage to leave a fairly good impression for a while, but inside they feel out of control.

Some turn to external displays of control to try to regain confidence. Others establish rituals they perform over and over again. These are only symptoms, they do nothing to cure the confused, helpless feeling inside.

Joseph is a man who shows us clearly that neither background, childhood, or frame of reference can bind us to be less than all God calls us to be. Determinism does not have to be reality for the disciple of Christ. Since we are created in God's image, and since we hear Christ's call to follow Him, we can be freed from our past to be what He wants us to be.

As we study this lesson, ask yourself some questions. *As I look at Joseph, is it fair for me to blame my lack of victory on the way I was brought up? Do I have to be unhappy because my past has incidents of abuse, neglect or rejection? What will it take for me to rise to God's calling for my life?*

### CONFLICT BETWEEN FATHER AND GRANDFATHER AND MOTHER DECEIVES TO KEEP IDOLS

The world Joseph was born into was filled with complicated relationships. His father Jacob and grandfather Laban had tricked and deceived each other for years. Laban had promised Jacob Rachel for a wife, and had then given him Leah. Later Jacob believed his father-in-law had changed his wages ten times.

Jacob finally decided to return to the land of his nativity. He requested permission from Laban to return in peace.

Laban protested such a change and offered higher wages, so Jacob stayed. When his wealth surpassed Laban's, then the brothers-in-law made accusations about Jacob that soured the relationship even more.

Finally Jacob decided he had enough and chose to leave without a farewell or blessing. This passage records the flare of tempers when Laban overtook Jacob in the way.

### Genesis 31:25-31, 34-36, 48-49, 55

25 Then Laban overtook Jacob.

26 And Laban said to Jacob, What hast thou done, that thou hast stolen away unawares to me, and carried away my daughters, as captives taken with the sword?

27 Wherefore didst thou flee away secretly, and steal away from me; and didst not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth, and with songs, with tabret, and with harp?

28 And hast not suffered me to kiss my sons and my daughters? thou hast now done foolishly in so doing...

30 And now, though thou wouldst needs be gone, because thou sore longedst after thy father's house, yet wherefore hast thou stolen my gods?

31 And Jacob answered and said to Laban, Because I was afraid: for I said, Peradventure thou wouldst take by force thy daughters from me...

34 Now Rachel had taken the images, and put them in the camel's furniture, and sat upon them.

35 And Laban searched all the tent, but found them not. And she said to her father, Let it not displease my lord that I cannot rise up before thee; for the custom of women is upon me. And he searched, but found not the images.

36 And Jacob was wroth, and chode with Laban: and Jacob answered and said to Laban, What is my trespass? what is my sin, that thou hast so hotly pursued after me?...

48 And Laban said, This heap is a witness between me and thee this day. Therefore was the name of it called Galeed;

1. *What were some ways that both Jacob and Laban betrayed each other's trust?*

2. *What negative emotions did Jacob display in this confrontation (v31&36)?*

3. *What did Rachel reveal by stealing idols from her father and lying about it?*

4. *What did Laban and Jacob do to mend their relationship?*

49 And Mizpah; for he said, The LORD watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another...

55 And early in the morning Laban rose up, and kissed his sons and his daughters, and blessed them: and Laban departed, and returned unto his place.

### CONFLICT BETWEEN FATHER AND UNCLE ESAU

The drama Joseph witnessed played out between his father and Uncle Esau was in many ways like the conflict between father and Grandfather Laban. Relationships often go through replays of similar complexities since they arise from selfishness and deception.

Twenty years had passed since the twins had been together. But they had parted with bitterness between them and fear was the very first emotion to surface as they came to meet again. Relationships never heal without genuine repentance, humility and love being communicated. A patch up gift or false display of affection do not genuinely rebuild trust. Imagine the impressions that must have been left through this way of covering over bitterness.

### Genesis 32:6-11

6 And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him.

7 Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed: and he divided the people that *was* with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands;

8 And said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape.

9 And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee:

10 I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands.

11 Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, *and* the mother with the children.

5. *Why was Jacob so afraid of his brother Esau?*

6. *What positive spiritual response did anticipating meeting Esau produce in Jacob?*

7. *Why did Jacob put Rachel and Joseph in a group behind the other family members?*

### Genesis 33:1-5

1 And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two handmaids.

2 And he put the handmaids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindermost.

3 And he passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

4 And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept.

5 And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children; and said, Who *are* those with thee? And he said, The children which God hath graciously given thy servant.

8. *How did Esau's response to Jacob differ from what Jacob expected?*

### SISTER IS DEFILED, BROTHERS DISPLAY VIOLENCE.

Jacob's main reason for returning to Canaan was because the angel of the Lord had appeared to him and told him to return to Bethel. Genesis 31:11-13. Bethel was where Jacob had witnessed the ladder of angels ascending and descending. However, when Jacob returned to Canaan, he did not make Bethel a priority. Rather he camped outside the gates of Shechem, settling on land he purchased. (This land later served as Joseph's final burial ground and was part of Ephraim's inheritance.)

Jacob's stay at Shechem was to have devastating consequences. Again, as we attempt to witness the scene that unfolds through the eyes of a youth, we wonder about the impact this scene must have had on Joseph.

Unprotected ignorant innocence. Youthful lust and fornication. Cold calculating vengeance. Weak indecisive scolding authority. Is there any example in this story worth following?

### Genesis 34

1 And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land.

2 And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her.

3 And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spake kindly

9. *What precautions might have been taken to spare Dinah from this defilement?*

unto the damsel.

4 And Shechem spake unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife.

5 And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter: now his sons were with his cattle in the field: and Jacob held his peace until they were come.

6 And Hamor the father of Shechem went out unto Jacob to commune with him.

7 And the sons of Jacob came out of the field when they heard *it*: and the men were grieved, and they were very wroth, because he had wrought folly in Israel in lying with Jacob's daughter; which thing ought not to be done...

25 And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males...

30 And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and I *being* few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house.

31 And they said, Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?

### MOTHER DIES IN CHILDBIRTH

There is probably no adjustment so difficult in life as giving up a loved one in death, especially when a young child loses a parent. If the death comes unexpected it often cuts off the relationship without closure, leaving a sense of abandonment.

Add this trauma to all the other experiences Joseph faced. How did he face these things without feeling like God had forsaken him? How did he escape the bitterness that so often leaves lifelong scars?

With each experience we face comes the opportunity to choose our response. It is obvious Joseph suffered and suffered deeply. But these sufferings only deepened his character, and refined his sensitivity to his Creator.

### Genesis 35

16 And they journeyed from Bethel; and there was

*10. How might Jacob's response have paved the way for his sons to take the avenging into their own hands?*

but a little way to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labour.

17 And it came to pass, when she was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also.

18 And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin.

19 And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which *is* Bethlehem.

20 And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave: that *is* the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day.

*11. What was the circumstance that brought about Joseph's mother's death?*

### Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. How do you think little Joseph felt as he witnessed the conflict between his father and grandfather?

2. What are some logical conclusions Joseph may have reached about his mother keeping idols for herself? \_\_\_\_\_

3. How do you think Joseph felt when he saw how badly his father feared Uncle Esau? \_\_\_\_\_

4. It doesn't seem that these inconsistencies seem to have affected Joseph. How do you think that could be? \_\_\_\_\_

5. What two revival scenes from Joseph's childhood are not included in these study verses that would have had a profound impact for good on his life? \_\_\_\_\_

6. How might the death of a loved one affect a child adversely? \_\_\_\_\_

7. How might the death of a loved one refine the character of a child?

8. What are some sinful patterns Joseph's brothers were choosing that show how different he was from his brothers? \_\_\_\_\_

9. How much does the environment a child is raised in need to affect him when he is older? \_\_\_\_\_

10. Why is it a mistake to blame our character deficiencies on the influences we faced as children or the way we were raised? How does this prevent us from character growth? \_\_\_\_\_

11. How should we relate to the temptation to feel we have not been given a fair chance at life or that others have had it much easier than we? \_\_\_\_\_

12. How can we help someone who feels trapped by their background and wishes to blame their character flaws on others? \_\_\_\_\_

## Jacob's Sons

<u>Leah</u>	<u>Bilhah</u>	<u>Zilpah</u>	<u>Rachel</u>
Reuben (1758 BC)			
Simeon (1757)			
Levi (1756)			
Judah (1755)	Dan (1755)		
	Naphtali (1754)		
		Gad (1753)	
Issachar (1752)		Asher (1752)	
Zebulun (1751)			
Dinah (1750)			Joseph (1745)
			Benjamin (1739)

Note: All dates are approximate, taken from The Chronology of the Old Testament, By Dr. Floyd Nolen Jones

## Lesson 2

### The Test of Rejection

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Lesson Focus: To examine the cruel dagger of social ostracism, when for whatever reason persons decide to push an outcast out of their lives.

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One of the strong desires that resides in humans is the craving to be appreciated and respected. Every person is made in the image of God. God by His own right desires and deserves to be worshiped. In mankind it is normal to want acceptance. Satan may pervert this into a unwholesome desire for supreme exaltation, or merely use rejection to bring discouragement or abandonment of principle.

There are two sides to this struggle. We need to be sensitive to the desire others have to be accepted. As Christians we can make an effective inroad into the lives of the lonely or ostracized as we take an interest in them. It is Christ-like to be warm and caring toward those who have felt the cruelty of rejection.

On the other hand, we need to stay objective toward our own desire to be appreciated. We may not permit this desire to cause us to compromise our standards, or go out of our way to attract attention.

As we enter into this lesson, lets back off and take inventory of our own life. *Are there people who I am hurting because I have pushed them out of my life? Am I acting foolishly in any way because I crave the appreciation of others? Where should I be having my own needs for acceptance met?* These are all questions we should be asking and finding answers for.

#### TENSIONS IN FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

After Rachel died, it seems that Joseph and Jacob drew closer together in their relationship. Here it mentions that Joseph was the son of Jacob's old age, but really all of Jacob's sons were born when he was older. (Jacob was seventy-seven when he left his father's house to go to Padan-aram. He was ninety-one when Joseph was born and about 108 when this story opens.)

Was Jacob partial and unfair with his children? Or was he simply rewarding loyalty and obedience? We probably cannot answer all these questions, but a situation was brewing that was going to bring heartache and regret to the family for years.

Some of the tension was a natural result of polygamy. With the wives vying with each other for supremacy it was only natural that the children would quarrel too. Then as youth reached the age of personal choice and chose to do

wrong, bitter resentments divided the family. Rejecting those who received favors only seemed natural.

#### Genesis 37:1-4

1 And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan.

2 These *are* the generations of Jacob. Joseph, *being* seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad *was* with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report.

3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he *was* the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of *many* colours.

4 And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.

1. *Is there any significance that it was Bilhah's and Zilpah's sons who seem to be the worst behaved?*

2. *How did the brothers choose to relate to Jacob's special love for Joseph?*

#### GOD GIVES JOSEPH INSIGHT INTO THE FUTURE

Along with his father's love and support, God had another blessing and anchor of hope for Joseph to carry him through the long lonely years; a vision of the future.

God had plans to turn Abraham's seed into a nation. He also knew with the instability of character in most of the other brothers, He would be unable to keep them separated if they dwelled among the Canaanites. His plan was to take them to Egypt as a family, and bring them out as a nation.

Looking back, we can see it clearly. But looking ahead, Jacob's family could see only their day by day conflicts. Then God gave Joseph a dream that became a guiding beacon for him to cling to. From Psalms 105 we learn that "the word of the Lord tried" Joseph. This word was no doubt when God spoke to him those nights in the dreams.

As was the pattern with dreams that were to come to pass immediately, the dream occurred twice.

#### Genesis 37:5-11

5 And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told *it* his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.

6 And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed:

7 For, behold, we *were* binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and,

3. *What were some of the causes of the brothers intense hatred for Joseph?*

behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf.

8 And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.

9 And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.

10 And he told *it* to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What *is* this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?

11 And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying.

4. How was Jacob's response to the dream different than that of the brothers?

#### THE BROTHERS FIND OPPORTUNITY TO VENT THEIR HATRED

**H**atred feeds on itself. Once we have convinced ourselves that there is a serious flaw in a person, it can poison our every evaluation of him. Looking back, we can see there was no justifiable reason for the brothers to hate Joseph the way they did. Perhaps the dreams did sound a bit conceited, but Joseph was only sharing them, not making them up.

As the brothers grew in their disgust and then hatred it was only a matter of time until they would find a way to express what they were feeding inside.

#### Genesis 37:12-28

12 And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem.

13 And Israel said unto Joseph, Do not thy brethren feed *the flock* in Shechem? come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said to him, Here *am I*.

14 And he said to him, Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.

15 And a certain man found him, and, behold, *he was* wandering in the field: and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou?

16 And he said, I seek my brethren: tell me, I pray

5. How do we know the hatred was only one sided, and Joseph had no resentment toward his brothers?

thee, where they feed *their flocks*.

17 And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan.

18 And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him.

19 And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh.

20 Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams.

21 And Reuben heard *it*, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him.

22 And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, *but* cast him into this pit that *is* in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again.

23 And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph out of his coat, *his coat of many colours that was* on him;

24 And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit *was* empty, *there was* no water in it.

25 And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry *it* down to Egypt.

26 And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit *is it* if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood?

27 Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he *is* our brother *and* our flesh. And his brethren were content.

28 Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty *pieces* of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.

6. Do you think the brothers were serious about the idea of killing Joseph?

7. Why did they not kill Joseph?

8. What was the logic used to sell Joseph instead of killing him?

**REJECTION: THE WRONGS OF MAN**  
**SET GOD'S PLAN FOR REDEMPTION IN MOTION**

There is no way we can justify the bitter envy of Joseph's brothers. Joseph was crying bitter tears and pleading with them for mercy (Gen 42:21). They chose to listen to their jealousy instead, and it demanded revenge.

This dastardly act of rejection becomes the key for a Joseph sitting on a throne. We can see that now clearly. Joseph saw it dimly. The brothers saw it not at all.

But Joseph had to have the right response in this test and unfolding drama. Had he allowed the rejection that he experienced and felt so keenly to turn to bitterness, the story would be far different than we read today.

**Genesis 37:29-36**

29 And Reuben returned unto the pit; and, behold, Joseph was not in the pit; and he rent his clothes.

30 And he returned unto his brethren, and said, The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?

31 And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood;

32 And they sent the coat of many colours, and they brought it to their father; and said, This have we found: know now whether it be thy son's coat or no.

33 And he knew it, and said, It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces.

34 And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days.

35 And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him.

36 And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, and captain of the guard.

9. Why do you think Reuben felt badly that Joseph was gone?

10. Describe the emotional turmoil the brothers reaped for following their vengeful thoughts.

**Questions for Thought and Discussion**

1. How do you think Joseph felt as he realized that his own brothers despised him?

2. Find some of the terms used to describe the older brother's attitude and actions toward Joseph

3. If persons can always choose the way they respond, why does verse 4 say the brothers could not speak peaceably with Joseph? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Why do you think the double dream of Joseph so upset his brothers? (see also Gen 41:32) \_\_\_\_\_

5. Was Jacob using wisdom when he gave Joseph a coat of honor when he did not do a similar favor to the other sons? \_\_\_\_\_

6. What steps could have been taken by Jacob to improve this unhappy family situation? \_\_\_\_\_

7. What do we know Joseph did not let the antagonism of his brothers control him? \_\_\_\_\_

8. How might we be like Reuben today and fail in completing our responsibilities and intentions to our brother or sister? \_\_\_\_\_

9. In what way might the deception of Jacob's sons be a fulfillment of the law of sowing and reaping? \_\_\_\_\_

10. What advice would you have for some one who is being rejected like Joseph was? \_\_\_\_\_

11. How you we relate to a situation where we observe someone being unfairly rejected by others? \_\_\_\_\_

## Lesson 3

### The Test of Moral Temptation

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Lesson Focus: To learn secrets for sexual purity and freedom regardless of the environment of moral decay or the pressure of personal temptation.

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When Joseph was taken to Egypt, he arrived in a world full of temptations for impure living. Egypt was a society known for its immorality. Potiphar's wife was probably not the exception, but the norm. Without God there was no spiritual teaching to raise the moral consciousness of the people.

Joseph arrived without any of the external barriers which may help a youth keep his innocence and purity. He also was in the prime of his youth, when naturally his bodily development was at its full potential. He had just been wronged by those who should have been his network of support.

What would the result of this be?

Meanwhile, back in Canaan things were not going so well. Reuben and his father's wife had succumbed to failure. Judah's debacle was an embarrassment that continues to cast a shadow over the testimony of God's people.

We already know the end of the account. Joseph chose to make purity a day by day way of life by focusing on God's nearness. Joseph's denial of immediate gratification is a monument of God's ability to keep a person in the hour of trial and a prime example of how denying gratification yields satisfaction instead.

As we study this question, we should be pondering some questions. *Is my moral condition where it should be? If I would face a temptation like Joseph did in my life tomorrow, would I stand? Are there roots of bitterness that are bringing me stronger temptations and may someday take me into failure?*

#### THE LORD WAS WITH JOSEPH

Joseph was a youth to whom God had made a promise. Even though he had been rejected by his brothers and was now reduced to being a slave, Joseph was not going to wrap his life around his hurts.

It is obvious that Joseph found fulfilment in throwing his heart into his service. Couple this earnestness in service with his native God given abilities, Joseph soon earned favor and trust for those he served.

#### Genesis 39:1-6

1 And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither.

2 And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.

3 And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand.

4 And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand.

5 And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field.

6 And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured.

1. What was Joseph's status as he entered Egypt?

*prosperous Strong's- to push or rush, carrying the idea of being aggressive*

2. What words indicate that both Joseph and God were involved in making Joseph's influence grow.

3. What phrase indicates the degree of trust that Potiphar had in Joseph?

#### TEMPTATION TO COMPROMISE PURITY

There has been a lot of speculation regarding Potiphar's wife. The divine record simply does not give much detail, so apparently it is not important. She was a wicked and deceitful person.

The only way Joseph was able to be an over comer of the major temptation was to do as is recorded. He refused to make provision for the flesh to fulfill the lust thereof. He focused on his commitment to Potiphar and the trust relationship they had. And most of all he remembered that God was there beside him. If we honor these principles we will always find victory in our temptations today too.

#### Genesis 39:7-10

7 And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me.

8 But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the

4. What three factors did Joseph keep in mind that preserved him in the hour of temptation?

house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand;

9 *There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?*

10 And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her.

### FALSE ACCUSATIONS FOR DOING RIGHT

Immorality and deceptiveness go hand in hand. Anyone who will stoop to immoral compromise has already crossed a huge hurdle. Telling a lie is small in comparison. While the conscience may prick at telling a lie, that is minor compared to what it would do with immorality. Yet as Proverbs 30:20 tells us, once the conscience is seared an adulteress may sin and act as if nothing even happened.

Potipher's wife's anger at being scorned drove her to unreasonableness. Even though no one would have had to know, she was determined to humiliate Joseph.

We do not know if Potipher believed his wife's tale or not. He was angry, but we do not know if it was at Joseph or his wife. He would have been justified to have had Joseph killed if he believed the charge to be true. As it was, we know Joseph was preserved alive because God had a work for him to do.

### Genesis 39:11-20

11 And it came to pass about this time, that *Joseph* went into the house to do his business; and *there was* none of the men of the house there within.

12 And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out.

13 And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth,

14 That she called unto the men of her house, and spake unto them, saying, See, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us; he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice:

15 And it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me,

5. *What made the situation so serious on the day when Potipher's wife attempted to seduce Joseph?*

6. *What caused Potipher's wife to make up these false charges against Joseph?*

and fled, and got him out.

16 And she laid up his garment by her, until his lord came home.

17 And she spake unto him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant, which thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me:

18 And it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled out.

19 And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled.

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

7. *Do you think Potipher believed the charges against Joseph? Defend your opinion.*

8. *What reward did Joseph reap for resisting the temptation of immorality?*

### Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. *We all understand that Joseph had no choice to be in Potipher's service. Do you think it would have affected the outcome if Joseph would have chosen this job because it paid better than other jobs or because he liked to be in a worldly environment? Explain.* \_\_\_\_\_

2. *How might being so prosperous have added to Joseph's moral temptation?* \_\_\_\_\_

3. *What can a person do to earn more freedoms in a situation where he wants to be trusted more and have more liberty?* \_\_\_\_\_

4. *What are some things a man should do to avoid the temptations of the strange woman?* \_\_\_\_\_

5. *What are some things a girl or woman can do to avoid the defilement of a lustful man?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. *How did Joseph's view of God preserve him in the hour of moral temptation?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. *How do we know God will not allow us to suddenly face a temptation that we are not able to overcome?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. *What are some steps Joseph took to remain morally pure?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. *Can you give any New Testament verses that help the Christian know where to draw the line in his own moral purity?*

## Lesson 4

### The Test of Unfair Treatment and Disappointments

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Lesson Focus: To learn to face life's disappointments victoriously and use these experiences to grow by in preparation for future responsibilities.

---

Joseph had faced and passed a difficult test. Immorality has a way of wearing one down, constant exposure may cause one to weaken in his resolve. Through it all, Joseph had stood. He had answered the higher call that he heard in his heart.

What was his reward to be? Would God repay the sacrifice he had made?

God repaid Joseph, but in His own timing. Joseph would need to wait long and weary years before good would come.

In the meantime, how would Joseph occupy himself? Potiphar had him placed in prison. This was a dungeon (40:15, and 41:14) which was reserved for more dangerous criminals. The Psalmist in Psalm 105:18 informs us Joseph was painfully held by iron fetters. Surely constrained in such harsh circumstances Joseph will revert to self pity or escape by day dreams. No one could survive in such harsh realities!

Self pity is a subtle trap. It is closely connected with pride, for when one has a trace of feeling like he deserves to be treated well, it is not uncommon to find things turn out less favorably. A resentment or low grade anger results. "I deserved better treatment than this!" is an attitude that brings depression; bitterly strong negative emotions.

As we delve into the passions of this lesson we do well to meditate on some questions. *What do I do when resistance to temptation only brings more pain; do I pity myself? How do I respond to the temptation to feel sorry for myself? Can I see the connection of humility to a spirit of thanksgiving?*

#### THE LORD WAS WITH JOSEPH

Joseph chose a path entirely different than one of self pity. We read that the Lord was with Joseph. The prison keeper showed him favor. This is an obvious sign that Joseph was making mature responses to his challenges. Because he did not turn his focus on what he deserved and did not get, he kept a sweet attitude the entire time.

The prison Joseph was thrown was likely little more than a hole in the

ground. His companions were political criminals, men who had in some way offended Pharaoh. Only strong faith could help one find purpose in such an environment.

#### Genesis 39:19-23

19 And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled.

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

21 But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

22 And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it.

23 The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the LORD was with him, and that which he did, the LORD made it to prosper.

1. What was the prison like where Joseph was held?

2. What were some attitude temptations that would have faced Joseph?

3. What responsibilities did the warden of the prison give to Joseph?

4. What are some traits Joseph would have had to display to receive such responsibilities?

#### WHEREFORE LOOK YE SO SADLY TODAY?"

As Joseph moved among the prisoners with his chains, he was able to meet a variety of personalities. Again, there are many things we cannot know about the setting this occurred in, but we do observe Joseph's service and his sensitivity to other's needs. He had a host of disappointments himself. Why would he care about anyone else?

But Joseph noticed other's feelings. He had a relationship that won their confidence and when Joseph asked about their reason for their sadness, the prisoners opened up to him. As they opened up to him, Joseph was able to point them to God, the Almighty One who plans and directs lives.

Here is a pattern of witness. As we forget our own rights, and say like the returning prodigal, "Make me as one of thy hired servants," we develop an attitude toward God, "I deserve nothing." Then when God places us in low and humble places we are not surprised.

If we believe God has placed us in an obscure corner, we will not resent it. When we are content from within, then we may reach out to others in a loving and caring way. After we have made deposits of caring service and look for

nothing in return, then we earn trust and confidence from even those who were once strangers.

When Joseph asked, “Why do you look so sad?” the king’s officers opened their hearts to Joseph. When he gave them a word from the Lord, they were ready to listen.

### **Genesis 40:1-13**

1 And it came to pass after these things, *that* the butler of the king of Egypt and *his* baker had offended their lord the king of Egypt.

2 And Pharaoh was wroth against two *of* his officers, against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers.

3 And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph *was* bound.

4 And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them: and they continued a season in ward.

5 And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream, the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, which *were* bound in the prison.

6 And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and looked upon them, and, behold, they *were* sad.

7 And he asked Pharaoh's officers that *were* with him in the ward of his lord's house, saying, Wherefore look ye *so* sadly to day?

8 And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and *there is* no interpreter of it. And Joseph said unto them, *Do* not interpretations *belong* to God? tell me *them*, I pray you.

9 And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, In my dream, behold, a vine *was* before me;

10 And in the vine *were* three branches: and it *was* as though it budded, *and* her blossoms shot forth; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes:

11 And Pharaoh's cup *was* in my hand: and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand.

12 And Joseph said unto him, This *is* the

5. *Why had Pharaoh thrown his officers in prison?*

6. *How did Joseph manage to win the trust of these complete strangers?*

7. *What troubled the officers about their dreams?*

8. *How was Joseph able to have the confidence that he could interpret their dreams?*

interpretation of it: The three branches *are* three days: 13 Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place: and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler.

### **AN APPEAL FOR CONSIDERATION**

**W**hile Joseph did not give in to self-pity, his present condition was ever on his mind. He knew God had a plan for his life, the dream had revealed it. According Psalm 105:19, this prophecy “tried” or refined him day after day. He no doubt wrestled with his calling from time to time, wondering how God would ever work things out.

In this moment he bares his heart. I was kidnaped! I am innocent! What I am enduring is not just! This is not discontentment nor bitterness. This is a heart cry of longing for justice.

Will his companion he befriends remember him?

Joseph was also given the unhappy task to pronounce judgement upon the hopes of the baker. For whatever reason his fate was entirely different than the butler.

These different judgements proved Joseph’s ability to discern the future. It is saddening that the baker would thus die, but the dreams came to pass according to Joseph’s fulfillment.

### **Genesis 40:14-41:1**

14 But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house:

15 For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews: and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon.

16 When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said unto Joseph, I also *was* in my dream, and, behold, *I had* three white baskets on my head:

17 And in the uppermost basket *there was* of all manner of bakemeats for Pharaoh; and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head.

18 And Joseph answered and said, This *is* the interpretation thereof: The three baskets *are* three days:

9. *What assertions did Joseph make about his condition?*

10. *What are some similarities between the baker’s interpretation and the butlers? What is the main difference?*

19 Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee, and shall hang thee on a tree; and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee.

20 And it came to pass the third day, *which was* Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast unto all his servants: and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants.

21 And he restored the chief butler unto his butlership again; and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand:

22 But he hanged the chief baker: as Joseph had interpreted to them.

23 Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgat him.

1 And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed: and, behold, he stood by the river.

### Questions for Thought and Discussion:

1. *Why do you think the disappointments of being thrown unfairly into prison and then being forgotten did not turn Joseph away from God?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. *What did Joseph need to do in order to have the Lord be with him?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. *What place did taking initiative and rendering faithful service fill in changing Joseph's circumstances?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. *Explain the process whereby Joseph came to the place where he was able to have Pharaoh's officer's willingly listen to him teach them about God.* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. *What connection is there between self-pity and depression?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. *If self-pity results in depression, why do people so quickly indulge in self-pity?*

7. *What should we do when we are tempted to feel sorry for ourselves, or that we are not being treated fairly?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. *Give some favorite verses that have helped you when you were tempted to feel God had forsaken you.*

9. *What effect do you think the disappointment of being forgotten by the butler had on Joseph in later life?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. *Approximately how many years did Joseph serve in prison? (see 37:2 & 41:46)* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11. *What would have made these years especially difficult years to serve in a prison?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

13. *Do unfair disappointments mean we have been outside the will of God and therefore are being punished? Explain your answer.* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

14. *What is the connection between complaining about one's lot in life and the sin of unbelief?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

15. *What is the best way to relate to someone who is wasting their life by feeling sorry for themselves?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

16. *How does the way God used dreams in the Old Testament differ from how he uses them today? Why was there a change?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Lesson 5

### The Test of Unexpected Good Fortune

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Lesson Focus: To discover what tests a person faces when abnormally good things happen to him, and how these good events should be handled so they do not bring more harm than good.

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It is easy to see that disappointment may bring tests, but is it possible that good fortune may also test us? This is a test others may more easily see how we are doing in than we ourselves. When we have success it may quickly generate pride or superiority in our hearts, and when we are proud, it is obvious for all. The strongest warnings in the New Testament are for the wealthy who may become high minded and trust in uncertain riches.

How is a person to remain humble when he is successful?

In this lesson Joseph is made the second ruler of the whole land. He becomes responsible for the most aggressive economic project of any nation up to that point in history. He is to put in motion a plan that will save thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands of lives. This entailed setting up a governmental system of collecting food in a fair way from the people, storing it for up to fourteen years without spoilage, and overseeing fair distribution. It called for designing huge granaries with systems of retrieving grain, which would have involved a great construction effort. It meant putting in place a large network of persons responsible to take care of the wealth of the nation.

All of this meant sudden good fortune. Would Joseph be able to become so successful and remain humble?

As we study this lesson, we should ask ourselves, *Do I stay humble when all seems to go my way, or do I become prayerless and drift away from my Bible reading time? Do I feel better than others or do I remain committed to humbly serve?* While we likely will never experience the celebrity status of Joseph, our tendencies toward pride make this a very realistic lesson.

#### I DO REMEMBER MY FAULTS

Did the butler forget, or did God have His own timing? From our perspective millennia later we see God had his timing to work out. It is very simple. But when we get into a similar situation, we are tempted to focus

on personalities. Why did \_\_\_\_\_ treat us the way he did?

Can we see God in the picture when people act in an unbecoming way?

#### Genesis 41:1, 9-13

1 And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed: and, behold, he stood by the river.

9 Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day:

10 Pharaoh was wroth with his servants, and put me in ward in the captain of the guard's house, both me and the chief baker:

11 And we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he; we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream.

12 And *there was* there with us a young man, an Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard; and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams; to each man according to his dream he did interpret.

13 And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was; me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged.

1. How long after the butler received his release from prison did Joseph need to stay in the dungeon?

2. What did the butler remember about Joseph?

#### FROM THE DUNGEON TO THE THRONE

It took thirty years for Joseph to get to the throne but it must have all happened within a few minutes. "They brought him hastily" the Scripture says.

It always takes emotions a while to catch up. If it took Joseph a while to "feel" like a prisoner, one has to wonder how long it took to "feel" like a ruler of the land. These times of sudden changes must be based on character, because feelings alone will never sustain a person in a time of great change.

Joseph displayed the same confidence before a searching Pharaoh as he did before the seeking prisoners. Deflecting the honor, the self importance that could have been his, Joseph states, "It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace." To the officers in prison, he had asserted, "Do not interpretations belong to God?"

Continuing in this confidence, twice Joseph asserts, "God is about to do..." and then, "God will shortly bring it to pass."

Joseph's confidence was not the confidence of being accustomed to being in the palace and advising the king. This is the confidence of being in the presence of God.

### Genesis 41:14-16, 25-32

14 Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon: and he shaved *himself*, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh.

15 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and *there is* none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of thee, *that* thou canst understand a dream to interpret it.

16 And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, *It is* not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace...

25 And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh *is* one: God hath shewed Pharaoh what he *is* about to do.

26 The seven good kine *are* seven years; and the seven good ears *are* seven years: the dream *is* one.

27 And the seven thin and ill favoured kine that came up after them *are* seven years; and the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind shall be seven years of famine.

28 This *is* the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh: What God *is* about to do he sheweth unto Pharaoh.

29 Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt:

30 And there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land;

31 And the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following; for it *shall be* very grievous.

32 And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; *it is* because the thing *is* established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.

### FROM INTERPRETER TO VIZIER

Apparently Joseph moved directly from interpreting the dream to advising Pharaoh how to relate to the challenge before him.

God was going to test Egypt through a great famine, but He also sent the resources so the people would be able to avoid the suffering and death that would have occurred had the people entered in unawares. God carried out this complicated plan because He cared for His people Israel, and He intended to

3. *What was Joseph's protection against intimidation as he made the great transition from the dungeon to the throne?*

4. *What two things were signified by Pharaoh having the same basic dream twice?*

5. *How did Joseph describe the severity of the famine which was to come to pass?*

turn them from a family to a tribe to a great nation.

### Genesis 41:33-36

33 Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt.

34 Let Pharaoh do *this*, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years.

35 And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities.

36 And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine.

### RULER OVER ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT

Apparently it didn't take long for Pharaoh to see the wisdom in creating a steward responsible to carry out Joseph's advice. Along with that he quickly knew who that steward would be. However, it wasn't just Joseph's personal experience that Pharaoh noticed and desired, he also observed that God was with him.

Along with his public responsibility came public recognition. Joseph was given honor that few men even dream about. From kingly wardrobe to kingly chariot, Joseph received honor and exaltation. No doubt there was much more acclaim than we can know not fully understanding the degree of wealth of that civilization. Pharaoh would have wanted to give so much public recognition in order to have the people submit to the policies that would be implemented.

### Genesis 41:37-49

37 And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants.

38 And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find *such a one* as this *is*, a man in whom the Spirit of God *is*?

39 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, *there is* none so discreet and wise as thou *art*:

40 Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the

6. *What qualifications did Joseph prescribe for the person to be in charge of preserving the Egyptian nation through the famine?*

7. *What percentage did Joseph decree it would require in savings each year in order to preserve the population through the famine?*

8. *How were Pharaoh's own personal possessions placed under Joseph's control?*

throne will I be greater than thou.

41 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.

42 And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck;

43 And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him *ruler* over all the land of Egypt.

44 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, *I am* Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.

45 And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnathpaaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On. And Joseph went out over *all* the land of Egypt.

46 And 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.

47 And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls.

48 And 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: the food of the field, which *was* round about every city, laid he up in the same.

49 And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for *it was* without number.

9. *What were some ways Pharaoh chose to show he placed his favor on Joseph?*

10. *How did Joseph choose to relate to the vast supply of grain that he needed to store and get back into the hands of the population in the time of need?*

11. *How could the people tell Joseph's interpretation of Pharaoh's dream was coming true?*

### JOSEPH'S CHOICES IN PROSPERITY

**A**long with public responsibility, Joseph's life also began to take a much more normal course. He received an Egyptian name and was given a wife.

For so long he had been a misfit. Now he had all an Egyptian could wish for. Wealth. Influence. Responsibility. Power. Would he make "fitting in" with the Egyptians a priority?

When Joseph chose to name his sons he showed two strong loyalties that governed his life and sent his sons on a course he wished for them to make. First was his Hebrew identity. Choosing Hebrew words he made slight alterations to make statements to his Egyptian friends. Surely this choice of words told his acquaintances that he was only a sojourner among them. The

second was his ongoing pilgrimage with God; both were statements of thanksgiving to God for His goodness to him.

### Genesis 41:50-57

50 And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, which Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On bare unto him.

51 And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For God, *said he*, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house.

52 And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.

53 And the seven years of plenteousness, that was in the land of Egypt, were ended.

54 And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said: and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. 55 And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do.

56 And the famine was over all the face of the earth: And Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt.

57 And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy *corn*; because that the famine was *so* sore in all lands.

12. *What do you think Joseph chose to forget about his father's house?*

13. *What does Manasseh mean?*

14. *What does Ephraim mean?*

15 *What did Joseph tell his Egyptian friends about his loyalties through his choice of names for his sons?*

16. *How do you know the famine reached into other areas of the Middle East and not just Egypt?*

### Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. *How do you think Joseph felt when he was called out of prison to stand before Pharaoh?* \_\_\_\_\_

2. *What was it that enabled Joseph to stand up under the pressure of being asked to interpret Pharaoh's dream?* \_\_\_\_\_

3. *Why do you think the butler forgot Joseph for two years and then suddenly remembered him?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. *What should we tell ourselves when other's negligence causes us hardship?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. *We are told we need to set goals for ourselves in life if we ever are going to amount to any thing. Do you think Joseph ever had dreams of becoming ruler over the whole land of Egypt?* \_\_\_\_\_  
*If not, how then did this come to pass?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. *What do you think it was that moved Pharaoh to select Joseph as the "discreet and wise" man who should manage the food conservation program?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. *What temptations do you think Joseph faced when he became ruler over the whole land?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. *What proof do you have that Joseph did not forget God during the years of his prosperity?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. *What are some directions for a brother who has received abundance of wealth as he relates to his brethren? See James 1:9-11* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. *How can a person keep riches from being wrong when he becomes wealthy?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11. *Is it wrong to have becoming wealthy as a goal in life?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

12. *Joseph had a situation where unexpectedly he became very famous and powerful. How may it harm a person to daydream that such a situation might happen to him?* \_\_\_\_\_

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## Lesson 6

### The Test of Power and Opportunity for Revenge

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Lesson Focus: To see some of the special tests that a position of authority and the opportunity for revenge may bring us and how to be gentle and forgiving toward all.

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Sometimes we hear that time changes things. This is true in some ways. In the twenty plus years since Joseph was rudely taken from his brother's lives, he had changed dramatically. He had grown to manhood. He had become a husband and father. The entire land of Egypt was trusting in his wise leadership.

But had time changed his brothers? When it relates to character it is not necessarily true that time changes things. Time gives people opportunity to change, but unless there is honesty with one's self, deception goes on and on. As it relates to wrongs one has committed, unless the wrongs are repented of and restitution made, the guilt goes on and on. In this study we will catch an insight into the memories of Jacob's sons which no doubt played and replayed over and over again. "We are verily guilty concerning our brother..."

Now tables were turned. The brother who had been pleading for mercy presently had the power of the greatest nation on earth at his disposal. The older brothers were still no doubt successful in their own way, but what was that compared to Joseph's responsibility? Besides, they were quickly being reduced to extreme poverty by the dearth in the land.

What will Joseph do with the power he has? What will he do with the old memories of being so cruelly taken advantage of? Will the absolute power he has lead him to turn in revenge against his brothers?

Joseph's harsh response in this lesson toward his brothers may be understood two ways. Either he was getting revenge, or he was testing their character. It is obvious by the kindness and favors he managed to inject unknown to the brothers that Joseph's harshness was a test, and not done from a bitter heart.

#### THE FAMINE BRINGS JACOB'S BROTHERS TO JOSEPH'S THRONE

The Sovereignty of God is clear in retrospect. When Joseph first had his dream, his family found the interpretation to be unbelievable. But God did not force the family to fulfill this dream against their will. He has ways of making people willing through "natural" circumstances.

One can only imagine Joseph's feelings with the instant recognition of his brothers as they bowed before him.

#### Genesis 42:1-4

1 Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another?

2 And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die.

3 And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt.

4 But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren; for he said, Lest peradventure mischief befall him.

1. How does Jacob come through in relating to his sons?

2. Why did Jacob keep Benjamin home?

#### JOSEPH TESTS HIS BROTHER'S CHARACTER

Joseph instantly knew the ten men bowing before him. He understood their communications between themselves. But he didn't know if they had really repented and changed their ways.

Joseph chose to use a tough approach. He would make accusations against his brothers as if they were spies. He would throw them in prison. By these tests he will see if they still hate and use each other spitefully, or if they have changed. He will find out if they resent and reject Benjamin, or if they protect him.

#### Genesis 42:5-17

5 And the sons of Israel came to buy corn among those that came: for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

6 And Joseph was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land: and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth.

7 And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them; and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food.

8 And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him.

3. What are some things that went through Joseph's mind as he met his brothers after these almost 22 years of separation?

4. What approach did Joseph use to relate to his brothers as he met them? What specific charge did Joseph lay on them?

9 And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, *Ye are spies*; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come.  
 10 And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come.  
 11 We *are* all one man's sons; we *are* true *men*, thy servants are no spies.  
 12 And he said unto them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land ye are come.  
 13 And they said, Thy servants *are* twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest *is* this day with our father, and one *is* not.  
 14 And Joseph said unto them, That *is it* that I spake unto you, saying, *Ye are spies*:  
 15 Hereby ye shall be proved: By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither.  
 16 Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether *there be any* truth in you: or else by the life of Pharaoh surely ye *are* spies.  
 17 And he put them all together into ward three days.

5. *What justification or explanation did the brothers use to defend their being there?*

6. *What did Joseph demand of his brothers to prove they did not have ulterior motives in coming to Egypt?*

7. *What discipline did Joseph put his brothers under to emphasize his seriousness of his concern?*

### “WE SAW THE ANGUISH OF HIS SOUL”

Joseph comes through as being reluctant in his releasing his brothers from their three days stay in jail. “I fear God” he explains, giving the inference that if he did not, he would just as soon see them kept incarcerated for national security reasons.

Now Joseph puts the men to the test. To prove you aren’t spies, you must go home and bring the youngest son along back with you to Egypt.

The brothers could well envision their father’s reaction to this proposal. They knew he would not respond well to letting Benjamin go with the pain he still carried over losing Joseph.

We witness their emotional conflict. They knew what they would face from Jacob, and they knew they were mostly to blame because of how they had treated Joseph. In bitterness they reflect back to that moment of triumph that had gone so sour. Reuben pitches in with his blame. Oh how long the bitter reaping of a rash moment!

### Genesis 42:18-26

18 And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live; *for I fear God*:  
 19 If ye *be* true *men*, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison: go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses:  
 20 But bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so.  
 21 And they said one to another, We *are* verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.  
 22 And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required.  
 23 And they knew not that Joseph understood *them*; for he spake unto them by an interpreter.  
 24 And he turned himself about from them, and wept; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes.  
 25 Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way: and thus did he unto them.  
 26 And they laded their asses with the corn, and departed thence.

8. *What plan did Joseph contrive to test the hearts of his brothers and to ensure they would return to him?*

9. *What memory came to the brother’s minds when Joseph insisted they bring Benjamin along when they returned to Egypt? Why did they think of this at this time?*

10. *How did Joseph feel when he heard his brothers talking about their cruelty to him?*

11. *If Joseph’s emotions were touched by their memories, why did he have Simeon thrown into jail?*

12. *How does Joseph’s love for his brothers become evident as he gives them food supplies?*

### FACING FATHER JACOB

Joseph’s brothers were on an emotional roller coaster. First they were falsely accused. Then they had to think of the conflict they were going to face with their father. This awakened old memories and guilt washed over them. Now they are going home, and the first thing they see is their very own money returned. The Scripture says their heart failed them and they were afraid.

At home they would encounter an their intimidating father. No doubt they

rehearsed the facts they would give over and over. Somehow, they would have to prepare him to think of letting Benjamin go along.

Apparently finding money in one sack had not led any of the men to think that all the money might be found returned in the sacks. When they found their money, a token of kindness, it did not allay their fears. Instead, they and their father only became more afraid of Joseph.

### Genesis 42:27-38

27 And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the inn, he espied his money; for, behold, it *was* in his sack's mouth.

28 And he said unto his brethren, My money is restored; and, lo, *it is* even in my sack: and their heart failed *them*, and they were afraid, saying one to another, What *is* this *that* God hath done unto us?

29 And they came unto Jacob their father unto the land of Canaan, and told him all that befell unto them; saying,

30 The man, *who is* the lord of the land, spake roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country.

31 And we said unto him, We *are* true *men*; we are no spies:

32 We *be* twelve brethren, sons of our father; one *is* not, and the youngest *is* this day with our father in the land of Canaan.

33 And the man, the lord of the country, said unto us, Hereby shall I know that ye *are* true *men*; leave one of your brethren *here* with me, and take *food for* the famine of your households, and be gone:

34 And bring your youngest brother unto me: then shall I know that ye *are* no spies, but *that ye are* true *men*: so will I deliver you your brother, and ye shall traffick in the land.

35 And it came to pass as they emptied their sacks, that, behold, every man's bundle of money *was* in his sack: and when *both* they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid.

36 And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved *of my children*: Joseph *is* not, and Simeon *is* not, and ye will take Benjamin *away*: all these things are against me.

37 And Reuben spake unto his father, saying, Slay

13. *What impressions do you get from Jacob's sons' retelling of their experiences in Egypt?*

14. *What pessimistic expression of unbelief do we hear from Jacob?*

15. *How do we know that Reuben was willing to take a more aggressive position in the family?*

16. *What unresolved question does this lesson close with?*

my two sons, if I bring him not to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again.

38 And he said, My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

### Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. List some possible reasons why Joseph dealt with his brothers as he did. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Explain why the old saying, "power corrupts" is often true. \_\_\_\_\_

3. What attitudes are necessary in order to avoid the snare of being corrupted because of a position of authority or power? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What things may have been a help to Joseph to avoid the temptations that this opportunity for revenge brought to him? \_\_\_\_\_

5. What does the brother's reference to their betrayal of Joseph in verse 21 reveal? \_\_\_\_\_

6. What is the significance of Jacob's words in verse 36 when he says, "Me ye have bereaved of my children?"

7. In what ways did Joseph express a deeper faith than even his father Jacob?

## Lesson 7

# The Test of Resentment and Bitterness

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Lesson Focus: To learn how great offenses can be sweetly overlooked, and broken relationships can be mended for the blessing of all involved.

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God created the human spirit with the ability to fellowship. This is intended to be one of the deepest satisfactions in life. When we feel loved, we feel secure. When we sense our love makes a difference in someone else's life, then life takes on meaning and purpose. Security and purpose are among life's sweetest and warmest rewards. God made us this way so we could be friends for eternity.

When love is withheld or frustrated, there is great potential for damage. When a person senses they are deliberately rejected or abused, this is keenly felt. A whole new temptation sets in, the temptation of resentment.

*Resent* comes from two Latin words. The prefix *re* means *again*. *Sentir* means *to feel*. Resentment means *to feel again*. Rejection drives a pain right through the heart. That cannot be helped. But resentment is when we allow ourselves to think about and feel that pain again. And again. And again. Slowly the resentment turns more rancid. As it sours, it turns to bitterness.

Bitterness is not a strange phenomena. It is the normal course. When a person forgives and fills his life with thoughts of blessing the offender, that is the phenomena.

Joseph knew he had been wronged and wronged deliberately. But Joseph knew there was a God who was stronger than any man who was ordering his life. Through his faith, Joseph was able to forgive, to lay down the rejection, to not resent nor feel bitterly toward his brothers. As he dwelled on thoughts of forgiveness, his emotions followed.

Joseph will test his brothers thoroughly in order to observe their character. Trust is a different issue from forgiveness. Trust is earned by the offender, but forgiveness is freely given by the offended. Joseph will not express bitterness, but he will be fair. He needs to have some questions answered.

As we study this lesson, we need to ask ourselves, "*What do I do with the rejection that stabs my heart when I realize someone doesn't appreciate me?*" "*Will I take the low road and allow the feelings to sweep over me again and*

*again? Or will I fill my life with a faith in God's goodness and trust Him to repay vengeance in his own way?*

### THE BROTHERS MUST FACE THE DREADED RULER

The famine dragged on. Months pass and still no rain. What will we do for provisions? How shall we survive? There is bittersweet consolation in the fact that Egypt has food. Yes, food is within the brothers' reach, but the tyrannical leader must again be faced.

The account again makes Jacob seem abrupt. He was a father who had a lot of pain in his life. He also was a father who sensed he could not trust his sons. And now he must yield up the treasure he valued most. He no doubt brooded over his options postponing the inevitable

### Genesis 43:15-16, 24-34

15 And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin; and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph.

16 And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the ruler of his house, Bring *these* men home, and slay, and make ready; for *these* men shall dine with me at noon...

24 And the man brought the men into Joseph's house, and gave *them* water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their asses provender.

25 And they made ready the present against Joseph came at noon: for they heard that they should eat bread there.

26 And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which *was* in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves to him to the earth.

27 And he asked them of *their* welfare, and said, *Is* your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? *Is* he yet alive?

28 And they answered, Thy servant our father *is* in good health, he *is* yet alive. And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance.

29 And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, *Is* this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son.

30 And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn

1. *Why did the men take double money along?*

2. *What emotion surfaced when Joseph saw his brother Benjamin?*

upon his brother: and he sought *where* to weep; and he entered into *his* chamber, and wept there.

31 And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, Set on bread.

32 And they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians, which did eat with him, by themselves: because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that *is* an abomination unto the Egyptians.

33 And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marvelled one at another.

34 And he took *and sent* messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him.

### JOSEPH TESTS HIS BROTHER'S CHARACTER

When the brothers felt their father's partiality and favor for Joseph, they boiled over in envy toward him. Did they feel the same way toward Benjamin? Or had they learned their lesson?

What Joseph did to test his brother's attitudes toward Benjamin was to create a situation where it would be to their advantage for them to abandon him in Egypt and go home alone.

Joseph had forgiven the brothers, but he needed to time to regain trust. Had they changed or would they jump at the chance to deal treacherously toward Benjamin? Well, he would give them their opportunity.

#### Genesis 44:1-18; 30-34

1 And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men's sacks *with* food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth.

2 And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his corn money. And he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken.

3 As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses.

3. *Why did Joseph eat by himself?*

4. *What are some steps Joseph took that would later substantiate his claim to be Joseph?*

5. *How did Joseph manage to create a situation where Benjamin was singled out as a criminal?*

4 *And* when they were gone out of the city, *and not yet* far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good?

5 *Is* not this *it* in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? ye have done evil in so doing.

6 And he overtook them, and he spake unto them these same words.

7 And they said unto him, Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing:

8 Behold, the money, which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold?

9 With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen.

10 And he said, Now also *let it be* according unto your words: he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless.

11 Then they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack.

12 And he searched, *and* began at the eldest, and left at the youngest: and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.

13 Then they rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city.

14 And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house; for he *was* yet there: and they fell before him on the ground.

15 And Joseph said unto them, What deed *is* this that ye have done? wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?

16 And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we *are* my lord's servants, both we, and *he* also with whom the cup is found.

17 And he said, God forbid that I should do so: *but* the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be

6. *Why did Joseph want the focus of attention on Benjamin?*

7. *What was the first indication that the brother's attitude toward Benjamin was different than their attitude toward Joseph had been?*

8. *What burden pressed Judah to plead so eloquently for Benjamin's release?*

9. *What did Judah offer instead of having Benjamin remain behind?*

my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father.

18 Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou *art* even as Pharaoh...

30 Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad *be* not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life;

31 It shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad *is* not *with us*, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave.

32 For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever.

33 Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren.

34 For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad *be* not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father.

### THE MOMENT OF TRUTH

**F**or twenty two years the brother's guilt had seared their consciences. Even now they were blaming present misfortunes on their past deeds. But the truth was about to come out. Error and sin may be hidden for a while, but eventually the truth will come out.

Joseph had forgiven. He had chosen to focus on accepting God's will for his life and to bless those who were around him.

Guilt and forgiveness were about to meet. Pent up emotions are about to be released. Join us in the happy moment of reunion, at least happy for the one who was wronged and knew the power of forgiveness.

### Genesis 45:1-9, 12-15, 21-28

1 Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren.

2 And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the

house of Pharaoh heard.

3 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I *am* Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence.

4 And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I *am* Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.

5 Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.

6 For these two years *hath* the famine *been* in the land: and yet *there are* five years, in the which *there shall* neither *be* earing nor harvest.

7 And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

8 So now *it was* not you *that* sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

9 Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not...

12 And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that *it is* my mouth that speaketh unto you.

13 And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither.

14 And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck.

15 Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him...

21 And the children of Israel did so: and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way.

22 To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred *pieces* of silver, and five changes of raiment.

23 And to his father he sent after this *manner*; ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she

*11. What emotional reaction did Joseph's brothers have?*

*12. For what reason did Joseph tell his brothers not to be grieved?*

*13. What seems to have been the break before the brothers accepted forgiveness and were willing to open up to Joseph?*

*10. What was the reason for Joseph's tears?*

asses laden with corn and bread and meat for his father by the way.

24 So he sent his brethren away, and they departed: and he said unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way.

25 And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father,

26 And told him, saying, Joseph *is* yet alive, and he *is* governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not.

27 And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them: and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived:

28 And Israel said, *It is* enough; Joseph my son *is* yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.

14. *What was the concern Joseph registered with his brothers as they were leaving for Canaan?*

#### LINGERING DOUBTS AND RESOLUTION.

Seventeen years have passed. Father Jacob has now died and the expanding family enters a new chapter in family life. The first question that seems to surface on the brother's part is, "How will Joseph treat us, Will he take revenge?"

Just think about the time frame. Joseph was seventeen when his brothers dealt treacherously. He was thirty when he stood before Pharaoh, so that was thirteen years later. Seven years of plenty and two years of famine had passed so twenty two years had passed before Jacob came to Egypt. Now another seventeen years had passed, so now we have thirty nine years since the offense had been committed.

Thirty nine years and their wrongdoing is still on the brother's minds. What a high price to pay for a grudging attitude.

The reason for Joseph's forgiveness surfaces clear and strong. He saw that God's good hand was in it all. If we apply this thinking to life's hurts, we too will develop a sweet attitude that make the passing years a delight.

#### Genesis 50:5, 16-21

5 And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him.

16 And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying,

15. *What did the brothers do to ensure that Joseph would not hate them and make them pay for the evil they had committed?*

17 So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him.

18 And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we *be* thy servants.

19 And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for *am* I in the place of God?

20 But as for you, ye thought evil against me; *but* God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as *it is* this day, to save much people alive.

21 Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.

16. *What verse from Joseph's earlier life seems to mirror verse 20?*

*What verse does it parallel from Romans 8?*

#### Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. *Why do you think Joseph was so hard on his brothers before he revealed himself to them?* \_\_\_\_\_

2. *How do you think Joseph felt when he saw his brothers bowing before him just as he had dreamed when he was a lad?* \_\_\_\_\_

3. *How do you know that beneath Joseph's stern exterior he concealed a heart that yearned after his brothers?* \_\_\_\_\_

4. *How did Judah prove that he had changed from what he was when Joseph was a lad at home?* \_\_\_\_\_

5. *Why were the brothers so terrified at Joseph's presence when he revealed himself to them?* \_\_\_\_\_

6. *Do you think the brothers felt condemned or relieved when they finally had to tell the truth about what they had done to Joseph?* \_\_\_\_\_

7. *Jacob lived for seventeen years in Egypt (Gen 47:28) Was it necessary for Joseph's brothers to still carry a concern about how Joseph would treat them when Jacob died?* \_\_\_\_\_

*Why do you think they felt that way?* \_\_\_\_\_

## Lesson 8

# The Test of Vision for Future Generations

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Lesson Focus: To see how important it is to have a vision for the future of our churches and families and how this will affect generations to come.

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Time seems to pass slowly that when we are in our youth. We may not think much of the future and how our immediate choices will affect future generations. We know what we want now and what seems to be good for us. It is a temptation to let future generations fend for themselves.

King Hezekiah is a sad example of this. God had sent him an experience to try his heart. When the Babylonians had visited him he had showed them all the treasures of his house. Isaiah rebuked him as documented in Isaiah 39, but “Then said Hezekiah to Isaiah, Good *is* the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. He said moreover, For there shall be peace and truth in my days.” (Isa 39:8)

Joseph knew how close his family was to being acculturated into the Canaanite system. A number of his brothers had already been caught up in impure relationships or mixed marriages. There was great potential they would lose their identity as being God’s special people. As they moved into Egypt, there were natural boundaries in the Egyptian culture. The Egyptians despised all other peoples. They still would not eat with Joseph even though he was ruler next to Pharaoh. But would this be enough to keep the Israelites separated from their sensual living and evil ways?

One doesn’t have to observe the choices of young people very long until they will see the legacy of those who choose to barter their birthright for a mess of pottage. Once people leave a godly heritage for some personal advantage the usual result is that all future generations also reject any godly heritage their ancestor might have had.

As we meditate upon this lesson, let us ponder a few questions. “*Are the choices I am making either publically or in my private life establishing a course that will bring me spiritual blessing? What kind of influence am I having in my group of friends, in my congregation, among my younger siblings? Will the course I am taking keep us separated from the world to God?*”

### JOSEPH IS REUNITED WITH HIS FATHER

The reunion between Jacob and his son must have been bittersweet. How glad they were to be together again! Father and son again in each others arms after so many years of separation. But think of the years lost. Think of all the memories they would have loved to have made together. Opportunities had been snatched from them that could never come again.

When a person dwells in bitterness, they will refuse to accept even the good times as being good. They will find bitterness to dwell on.

After these many years in Egypt Joseph understood the culture. He knew what a snare it could be to his brothers and their children. He had escaped these snares by internal controls, his convictions. But his brethren were falling into immorality even when it was not coming as it were to knock on their doors.

Joseph knew if he identified his family as shepherds, they would face immediate rejection. The Egyptians would scorn them. But he also knew they needed the protection this barrier provided.

#### Genesis 46:28-34

28 And he sent Judah before him unto Joseph, to direct his face unto Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen.

29 And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen, and presented himself unto him; and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while.

30 And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou *art* yet alive.

31 And Joseph said unto his brethren, and unto his father's house, I will go up, and shew Pharaoh, and say unto him, My brethren, and my father's house, which *were* in the land of Canaan, are come unto me; 32 And the men *are* shepherds, for their trade hath been to feed cattle; and they have brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have.

33 And it shall come to pass, when Pharaoh shall call you, and shall say, What *is* your occupation?

34 That ye shall say, Thy servants' trade hath been about cattle from our youth even until now, both we, and also our fathers: that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd *is* an abomination unto the Egyptians.

1. What territory did Joseph choose in which to meet his father? Why?

2. What occupation did Joseph instruct his father and brother to identify with when asked by Pharaoh? Why?

## A SOJOURNING ARRANGEMENT IS WORKED OUT

Here is a strange meeting. The upper crust of society in a fleeting world meets with those who have a vision of eternity, but for time are living as the off scouring of this world.

In the interview with five of the brothers, the men acknowledge their occupation, and arrangements are made for them to live separated from the society they benefit and benefit from.

God always makes a way for His people to be separated from the society in which they live. According to Jesus' prayer in John 17, we are not taken out of this world, but we are kept from the evil of this world. In the New Testament, we are not to have external barriers as much as internal differences. It was God who put it in the hearts of the Egyptians from their past culture to despise shepherds. It was God who arranged that Jacob's sons would find that as their occupation. Then He put the two together to preserve his people for His purposes. How good God is!

### Genesis 47:1-7

1 Then Joseph came and told Pharaoh, and said, My father and my brethren, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan; and, behold, they *are* in the land of Goshen.

2 And he took some of his brethren, *even* five men, and presented them unto Pharaoh.

3 And Pharaoh said unto his brethren, What *is* your occupation? And they said unto Pharaoh, Thy servants *are* shepherds, both we, *and* also our fathers.

4 They said moreover unto Pharaoh, For to sojourn in the land are we come; for thy servants have no pasture for their flocks; for the famine *is* sore in the land of Canaan: now therefore, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen.

5 And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, saying, Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee:

6 The land of Egypt *is* before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell: and if thou knowest *any* men of activity among them, then make them rulers over my cattle.

7 And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh: and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

3. What did the brothers do to establish the concept from the very beginning that they were only going to be in Egypt for a short while?

4. How did Pharaoh regard the land of Goshen?

5. What motive might Pharaoh have had in describing Goshen in this way?

## THE BLESSING FOR JOSEPH'S POSTERITY

No man lives to himself or dies to himself. This is true in a man's own generation, but is doubly true as his life impacts his descendants after him. When Israel gave Joseph a blessing, he took his two sons and adopted them into his own family line. This is why Ephraim and Manasseh are named among the twelve tribes of Israel.

In this setting Israel pronounces a prophetic message for Joseph. Because of his faithfulness and the relationship the father and son enjoyed, he could place unreserved blessings upon Joseph and his tribes after him. Joseph is spoken of as being separate from his brothers, and the lifetime of harmony and submission were part of that separation.

It is easy to forget future generations when we don't have our own present figured out. But choose the eye of faith and live for God today. If He is pleased by your choices, future generations will be blessed too.

### Genesis 49:22-26

22 Joseph *is* a fruitful bough, *even* a fruitful bough by a well; *whose* branches run over the wall:

23 The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot *at* him, and hated him:

24 But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence *is* the shepherd, the stone of Israel:)

25 *Even* by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb:

26 The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.

6. What was the wall that Joseph reached over and bore fruit in spite of?

7. Who did Jacob recognize as being the source for Joseph's success?

## JOSEPH'S INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING HIS BURIAL

To capture the theme of the vision of separation that Joseph had throughout his life, we now fast forward to the end of his life. We now find Joseph on his deathbed. Who is he thinking about? Himself or others?

Joseph showed his faith in God's promise to Abraham to bring his descendants out of the strange land in 430 years. He strengthened that promise with a prophecy of his own, that God would give Israel as special visitation in

the proper time. He clearly had the vision that Israel as a people would not be absorbed into the Egyptian culture.

**Genesis 50:22-26**

22 And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he, and his father's house: and Joseph lived an hundred and ten years.  
23 And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation: the children also of Machir the son of Manasseh were brought up upon Joseph's knees.  
24 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.  
25 And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.  
26 So Joseph died, *being* an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

8. How long did Joseph live?

9. If Joseph was seventeen when he was taken to Egypt, how many years did he live there?

10. How do we know Joseph's heart was in the future of Israel, apart from the land of Egypt?

**VISION REALIZED**

The years rolled on. Joseph's body waited. But God's time clock was ticking. In Exodus 12:41 we find out that God kept His word regarding Israel's deliverance down to the exact day.

When the Children of Israel left Egypt, they took Joseph's mummified body along. Through forty more years in the wilderness his body waited for its final resting place. The prophecy was half completed, Israel had come out of Egypt. But the rest of the promise was that the Israelites would be brought into the land of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

It fell to the hands of one of Joseph's descendants, Joshua, of the tribe of Ephraim to lay Joseph's body to its final rest. Joseph's desires for his body and for his people had come to fulfilment.

**Exodus 13:19**

19 And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you.

**Joshua 24:32**

32 And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in

11. What leader remembered to take Joseph's remains along when Israel was delivered from Egypt?

Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for an hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph.

**Hebrews 11:22**

22 By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

12. Where was the final resting place of Joseph's bones?

13. Why do you think Joseph was not buried with the other patriarchs at Hebron?

**Questions for Thought and Discussion:**

1. Why do you think Joseph wanted his father and brethren to dwell in the land of Goshen?
2. What can we learn about Joseph in his desire to give the best of the farm land to his father and brothers?
3. What possible long-range results could have been reaped had Joseph helped his family to "fit in" with the Egyptians?
4. List several parallels between Jacob's family living in Egypt and our experience in the world today? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What long-range goals regarding separation from the world should parents have today for their families? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. How might a choice of the vocation of the father affect future generations? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What is one basic requirement for us if our posterity are to be blessed? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Give some choices a parent may make to insure his offspring will choose to be separate from the world in succeeding generations. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Lesson 9

### The Test of Financial Responsibility

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Lesson Focus: To discuss financial habits which will guide us through economic prosperity or adversity.

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**D**iscipline. It's a word that sounds good, but a virtue exceedingly difficult to exercise when times are good. Joseph's had vision included seven years of plenty beyond what Egypt had ever experienced. During this time it probably seemed impossible for difficulties to ever come again.

Prosperity brings the dual temptation of sloth and waste. Why restrain one's impulses when there is so much and it seems there always will be? After sloth and waste become the norm, then greed and violence soon follow. Every society that tastes abundance of material possessions often soon finds itself in a vicious struggle of escalating crime.

God has planned that human government is the first line of defense against fallen human nature. Witness the atrocities committed before the flood, in that time period when there was no human government. After the flood God instituted human government and capital punishment. Civilizations that have survived for any length of time have built on the principle of human government to restrain man's excesses.

Governments need capital to survive. Capital needs to come from some source. Wealth can be gotten from two sources; either it must be wrested from nature, or it must be taken from someone else who has. If there are no other countries nearby to conquer and take wealth from, then a country will turn to taxation.

Taxes are not a curse when they are coupled with discipline. The wealthy often benefit as well as the poor from the discipline of having to contribute for a larger good.

As we ponder the events of this lesson, we need to reflect on two basic questions. One related to our own spending habits. *Have I learned to exercise self discipline in my work and in my spending habits? Do I use good times to prepare for difficult seasons? Why am I borrowing money? Because I am greedy and cannot wait on God?* The other basic question relates to attitude toward the government and taxes. *Do I have a right attitude toward making my contribution to a stable economy? Sure taxes from my income are painful, but can I see beyond my comfort and advancement and see a larger cause?*

### JOSEPH TAKES THE STEWARDSHIP

**J**oseph's interpretation was from the Lord. The land began to yield its bounty. But success brings its challenges. Immediately the burden of stewardship was thrown on Joseph's shoulders; a series of bumper crops that needed careful management.

Joseph worked out a system whereby each region had a city where the surplus stores were kept. That would have required regional stewards to oversee the construction of storage facilities, and then stewards to oversee the ingathering and storage issues. At first records were kept of what was gathered; apparently bought from the farmers. Eventually the harvest was so overwhelming that careful numbering was considered unnecessary.

One of the great principles of surviving economic cycles is to be learned here. When there seems to be an abundant supply, someone needs to be exercising discipline and making provision for when fortunes reverse. The tendency is to expand one's lifestyle to consume all available resources. It is difficult to say no when there is so much wealth available.

Here is where Joseph's vision was no doubt sorely tested. As the government bought more and more of the food to lay up in storehouses, probably there were some who questioned the wisdom of such disciplines.

Joseph was also experiencing blessing in his family life. His wife Asenath and sons Manasseh and Ephraim rounded out his family life. Surely he must have felt the added pressures as they were laid upon his shoulders. But just as he responded to disappointments and discipline, in the same way Joseph responded to the success. He stayed close to the his God, and was faithful in all things.

#### Genesis 41:1, 47-52

1 And 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.

47 And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls.

48 And 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: the food of the field, which was round about every city, laid he up in the same.

49 And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for it was without number.

50 And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, which Asenath the daughter of

1. What was the scope of Joseph's stewardship under Pharaoh?

2. What was Joseph's plan for storing the surplus grain?

3. What are some signs that the harvests were overwhelming?

Potipherah priest of On bare unto him.

51 And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For God, *said he*, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house.

52 And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.

### FAMINE BRINGS ITS DISCIPLINE AND SUFFERING

It is normal for economies to have their cycles. There are times when the economy expands and wealth seems to be available in an unbelievable measure. People adjust to the wealth and subconsciously believe the good times will last. Then things change in subtle ways. Suddenly there is a down turn. Money and wealth seems to become scarce. Recession or depression set in. People begin to feel the discipline, and some may even suffer. Those who refused to exercise self discipline in times of plenty suffer the most. Those who spend and borrow in times of prosperity will suffer greatly when the economy turns.

Joseph led the nation in a program of survival. From our perspective we see the nation becoming increasingly socialistic. The government eventually owned all the cattle, the land and even the people themselves. A system of taxation was implemented which guaranteed the government continued income and wealth and exercised discipline over the people.

### Genesis 41:53

53 And the seven years of plenteousness, that was in the land of Egypt, were ended.

54 And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said: and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.

55 And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do.

56 And the famine was over all the face of the earth: And Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt.

57 And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy *corn*; because that the famine was *so* sore in all lands.

4. *How did Joseph feel about his busy life?*

5. *What did the famine do to the economic status of Egypt among the nations of the world?*

6. *What was the first*

### Genesis 47

13 And *there was* no bread in all the land; for the famine *was* very sore, so that the land of Egypt and *all* the land of Canaan fainted by reason of the famine.

14 And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the corn which they bought: and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house.

15 And when money failed in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came unto Joseph, and said, Give us bread: for why should we die in thy presence? for the money *faileth*.

16 And Joseph said, Give your cattle; and I will give you for your cattle, if money fail.

17 And they brought their cattle unto Joseph: and Joseph gave them bread *in exchange* for horses, and for the flocks, and for the cattle of the herds, and for the asses: and he fed them with bread for all their cattle for that year.

18 When that year was ended, they came unto him the second year, and said unto him, We will not hide *it* from my lord, how that our money is spent; my lord also hath our herds of cattle; there is not ought left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies, and our lands:

19 Wherefore shall we die before thine eyes, both we and our land? buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh: and give *us* seed, that we may live, and not die, that the land be not desolate.

20 And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them: so the land became Pharaoh's.

21 And as for the people, he removed them to cities from *one* end of the borders of Egypt even to the *other* end thereof.

22 Only the land of the priests bought he not; for the priests had a portion *assigned them* of Pharaoh, and did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them: wherefore they sold not their lands.

23 Then Joseph said unto the people, Behold, I have

*commodity that the people used for food until they had no more?*

7. *What did the people trade off secondly?*

8. *What did the people give up next in their desperation to survive?*

9. *Why had people not profited from Joseph's interpretation and saved grain on their own?*

bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh: lo, here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land.

24 And it shall come to pass in the increase, that ye shall give the fifth *part* unto Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own, for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your households, and for food for your little ones.

25 And they said, Thou hast saved our lives: let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants.

26 And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt unto this day, *that* Pharaoh should have the fifth *part*; except the land of the priests only, *which* became not Pharaoh's.

10. What percentage of their income did the Egyptians give up in taxes?

11. What was the Egyptian's attitude toward their tax load?

### Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. What percentage did Joseph gather from the people in the years of plenty? (See Gen 41:34) \_\_\_\_\_

2. How could the people survive off this small percentage for so many years of famine? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What principle of economic wisdom does this represent? \_\_\_\_\_

4. How many years did it take until the money and cattle were gone and the people had nothing left for their survival? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Why do people tend to spend more in times of economic prosperity instead of living simply and saving or giving the excess to the Lord's work? \_\_\_\_\_

6. If all the earth had been blessed with plenty why was there surplus of food only in Egypt? \_\_\_\_\_

7. How should we feel about the money we need to give up each year in payment of taxes?

8. How might our welfare in this world and in eternity be affected by how we use money today? \_\_\_\_\_

9. What are some evidences we are making wise use of our finances and not serving mammon? \_\_\_\_\_

10. How is it possible for a person to be generous in giving to the Lord's work and still have enough for his own needs? \_\_\_\_\_

# Lesson 10

## Types of Christ from the Life of Joseph

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Lesson Focus: To see some of the ways in which Joseph's experience was typical of Jesus' and see how we must live like Christ in our attitudes and actions.

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Types are a phenomenon found only in the Word of God. Types are prophetic deeds, acted out by men and women living years before what they represented comes to pass. God has exclusive control over history and He alone is able to make things happen in a way to predict the future.

God desires that all generations recognize Jesus Christ as His only begotten Son, distinguished from every other human being throughout all history. But there is a danger that people fail to recognize his distinctive personhood and see Him only as a great man.

In order to tag, or identify, Jesus when He came, God gave clear identifying signs about His Son. From the fall of man at Eden, God began to give man promises. At first God gave more general prophesies; His son would be a human, he would be a descent of Abraham etc. As the time grew closer the prophesies became more specific, giving precise aspects about His life, His ministry and His suffering. Daniel in Daniel 9:24-27 gave the specific time when Messiah would come. Types are a part of this pre-revelation of Jesus. They are specifically referred to in Romans 5:14 where Adam is identified as a "figure" or Greek "type" of Christ who was to come.

Types confirm Christ as God's Anointed One and illuminate aspects of His life. They support the fact that Christ's coming was not an after thought with God. Even in Joseph's time God knew what He would do with Jesus.

Another purpose for types is to learn how we are to relate to the challenges of life. Types illustrate and prophesy beforehand Jesus' life. Then Jesus' life is a challenge to us to know how we should respond under test. This thought is found in *"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples (types): and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."* (1Co 10:11)

Directions:

Following are several Scriptures that show us some of the types of Christ in Joseph's life. Write the type you see in the Scriptures on the lines beside the text and be prepared to discuss these further in class.

**Genesis 37:3**

Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours.

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**Matthew 3:17**

And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

**Genesis 37:10**

And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?

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**John 10:33, 37-38**

33 The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God...

37 If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.

38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.

39 Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand,

1. What can we expect today from evil men when we speak the truth? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Should we keep quiet if we know people do not want to hear the truth? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Genesis 45:4-5, 8**

4 And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.

5 Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life...

8 So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

**Luke 23:34**

Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

3. From what source did both Joseph and Christ find power for forgiveness? \_\_\_\_\_

4. How did forgiveness set both Joseph and Jesus free? \_\_\_\_\_

**Genesis 37:32**

And they sent the coat of many colours, and they brought it to their father; and said, This have we found: know now whether it be thy son's coat or no.

**Matthew 28:11-15**

11 Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.

12 And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers,

13 Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.

14 And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.

15 So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

5. Why does a false report so often come against those who are doing the Father's will? \_\_\_\_\_

**Genesis 39:7-9**

7 And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me.

8 But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand;

9 There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?

**Matthew 4:1-4**

1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.

3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

6. Where did both Joseph and Jesus turn for strength in the hour of temptation? \_\_\_\_\_

**Genesis 37:28**

Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.

**Matthew 26:15**

And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.

**Genesis 39:2-6**

2 And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.

3 And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand.

4 And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand.

5 And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field.

6 And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured.

**John 5:30**

I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

**John 9:4**

I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

7. *What is our responsibility today in relation to the work of God in this world?* \_

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8. *What verse in Scripture would teach us to do well in the things we are given to do?* \_\_\_\_\_

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**Questions for Thought and Discussion**

1. *Which of the types given above can you most identify with? Explain the connection you sense.* \_\_\_\_\_

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2. *Explain several reasons why God included types in the Scriptures.* \_\_\_\_\_

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3. *What might be some advantages of direct prophecies over types and shadows?* \_\_\_\_\_

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4. *How are types more helpful than direct prophecies?* \_\_\_\_\_

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