

Connecting The Dots Between God's Control & Our Conduct

A Series Of Studies About Joseph's Life (Genesis 37–50)

Joseph's Hope-Filled Faith That Never Wavered: Resisting Resentment & Remaining Resilient

Genesis 39:19–41:1; John 15; 1 Peter 4–5; Psalm 105; plus more!

- Genesis 37 = Joseph's **dreams & clothing** became a theme to follow
- Genesis 39 = Joseph's **clothing** was used to accuse him & put him in jail
- Genesis 40 = With God's help, he accurately interpreted two **dreams**
- With the special blessing of the Lord's presence, Joseph was able to correctly interpret the disturbing dreams of Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker. Within 3 days the cupbearer would be freed from prison and restored to his position, but the baker would be executed. As this series of events unfolds, reasons for Joseph to be discouraged increased when the cupbearer forgot to tell Pharaoh about Joseph. However, Joseph's faith in the Lord never seemed to be destroyed by his circumstances!
- The lessons we learn from Joseph's situation help us to recognize that the Lord tests His faithful followers as a way to prepare us for ministry and to strengthen our faith for facing the times of discouragement, difficulty, or despair that we'll experience in the midst of a sinful society.

Three overarching TRUTHS that help to introduce today's study:

God is always working to cause all things to fit together for what's best for those who lovingly submit to His authority & are called according to His perfect plan!

Because we live in a sinful society, our obedience to God can sometimes lead to unpleasant circumstances.

Unpleasant circumstances aren't necessarily an indication that God isn't present or isn't pleased with us. It's always possible that God is working in background to test, train, or teach us something for our benefit!

- 1** Because Joseph recognized **God's presence** was with him, he relied on Him to enable him to fulfill **God's purpose**. {39:19–40:8}
 - Joseph was unjustly put in prison, but the Lord was with him;
 - Pharaoh's cupbearer & baker offended him & he put them in jail;
 - Joseph put in charge of them, to take care of them;
 - Both the cupbearer & the baker had a dream on the same night;
 - Joseph observed that they had become dejected;
 - He asked, "Why are your faces so sad today?"
 - They told him, "We've had a dream, but there's no one to interpret;
 - Joseph: "Don't interpretations belong to God? Please tell it to me."
- 2** *The Lord enabled Joseph to interpret the dreams, & Joseph used this as an opportunity to try to plead his case before Pharaoh!* {40:9–19}
 - The cupbearer gave Joseph the details of his dream.*
 - It included a vine with 3 branches, grapes to squeeze into Pharaoh's cup that was put into Pharaoh's hand.*
 - Meaning: 3 branches = 3 days & he would be released to his old job;*
 - Joseph's confident request with an explanation:*
 - When it goes well for you, please tell Pharaoh about me!*
 - "I don't belong here! I've not done anything wrong!"*
 - The baker saw that Joseph's first interpretation was favorable so he told Joseph the details of his dream.*
 - It included 3 baskets filled with bread for Pharaoh on his head, & the birds were eating the bread out of the baskets.*
 - Meaning: 3 baskets = 3 days & his head would be lifted off him & he would be hanged on a tree where the birds would feast on his flesh!*
- 3** Joseph's prophecies were perfectly fulfilled, but his promise was temporarily forgotten! {40:20–23}
 - On the third day, it was Pharaoh's birthday!
 - He made a feast for his servants where he restored the cupbearer to his office, but he executed the baker just as Joseph interpreted!
 - But the cupbearer forgot about Joseph!
 - The Lord was teaching Joseph to trust in Him alone!
His timing is always perfect!

—PERSONAL APPLICATIONS & LESSONS TO STRENGTHEN OUR FAITH

- 1— **When Joseph acknowledged that interpretations belong to God, he was recognizing that he needed the Lord’s help to interpret dreams!** In Genesis 41:14–16 Joseph told Pharaoh that he wasn’t able to interpret his dream, & God would enable him to do it. John 15:5 Jesus said, “Without Me, you can do nothing!”
In everything we do, it should be done for God’s glory!
- 2— **Joseph’s experiences teach us to look beyond the moment so we can see how God is working in the details!** Our secular society has essentially eliminated God from their belief system & the most accurate description of our culture’s philosophy often leads to futility. God has saved us to be His witness to the world & to display a sincere sense of hope.
- 3— **Joseph must have faced the constant temptation to become disappointed & discouraged, but there’s no biblical evidence that he was!** God allowed Joseph to ride an emotional roller coaster, but the biblical text indicates that he had an absolute & unshakeable assurance that God was with him in the midst of everything he faced. He also had a deep confidence in God’s faithfulness. He had endurance because He saw God at work in the details of his life!
- 4— **Three concluding truths about dealing with difficulties, discouragement, & disappointments (3–D times):**
Discouragement & disappointment often result when our high hopes & expectations aren’t met! Joseph probably had to fight off some emotions when the cupbearer temporarily forgot his request. But God came through for him & in Genesis 41 he was remembered. Notice what Psalm 105:16–24 says!
God uses 3–D times to train, teach, & test (3–T) us!
If our focus is properly on the Lord, this leads to hope! But if our perspective is misguided, it will lead to despair.
God is never unfaithful; His promises are true, but His timing is His & His alone, not necessarily ours! His grace is sufficient!

Some Relevant Quotes & Discussion Questions to Help us Dig Deeper

- “The world needs to see what God can do through a person who is fully committed to Him!” —**D. L. Moody**
- “*When a man or woman decides to be a champion for God, they set themselves up for a lot of heat and criticism.*” —**David Jeremiah**
- “God doesn’t ask or expect us to face life’s difficulties and demands by relying upon our own strength. Instead He offers us a relationship by trusting that Christ’s death & resurrection will rescue us from the power of sin. His Holy Spirit gives the strength we need!” —**GAD**
- “*The chances that we would be deceived by propaganda would diminish significantly if we spent as much time reading our Bibles as we do following the news. Scripture is a lens through which we see the world more clearly.*” —**Erwin Lutzer**
- In this week’s study, we’re trying to learn the lessons God taught Joseph when he was waiting to be released from jail. Please carefully read Genesis 39:19–40:23 to prepare for the study questions below.**
- 1— Even though Joseph was imprisoned in a foreign jail where the leaders worshipped idols & false gods, he boldly expressed his belief in God. It seems quite evident that he believed that God was with him & God would enable him to correctly interpret the dreams. What does this teach us about the powerful impact of genuine faith in the Lord? Please notice the 3 overarching truths on the first page of these notes. How do they influence our perspective about the meaning of faith?
- 2— Joseph’s experiences remind us to look beyond the moment to see how God is at work. How does that conflict with what appears to be the philosophy of our secular society? How can we use this distinction between our beliefs & what our society believes to be a witness for Him?
- 3— Genesis 40 shows how Joseph was steadfast in his faith, but he probably had to deal with a sense of disappointment when it took so long for him to be released from prison. How can a believer who has been through situation like this, fight off doubt & discouragement?
- 4— How would you counsel a follower of Christ who’s disappointed with God? What steps should he/she take? Please use scripture!
- 5— How would you answer a scoffer who suggests that hoping in God is simply a “pie in the sky when you die” philosophy?