

Heal a Family / Build a Nation
Lesson #5 – Based on Genesis 39:1-6
Adapted from the sermons of Jim Johnson
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Introduction: When we last visited with Joseph, we found that he'd been betrayed by his brothers, sold into slavery and shipped off to Egypt. Bound hand and foot, Joseph began a lonely two week journey toward Egypt. An Egyptian official named Potiphar, purchased Joseph from the slave traders. Joseph entered a land of idolatry and worship of multiple gods. Even Pharaoh himself was considered to be the falcon sky god Horus.

Joseph no longer had an over protective father to nurture him. His brothers had betrayed him, so his family structure was gone. He was in unfamiliar surroundings which were hostile to his worship of Yahweh, the One True God of Israel. On Joseph's first morning in Egypt he was awakened to the chanting of cultic hymns to these idols.

Questions:

Has there ever been a time when God yanked you out of your comfort zone?

Do you think God personally enjoys stretching us beyond our earthly support structures?

What is God's purpose in taking us through these valleys?

What is the problem with trials when viewed as a "present tense" teaching tool?

The Story continues: Even though Joseph's family and cultural support was no longer with him, the Lord was with him (v2). God was demonstrating to Joseph that he could not learn what he needed in the place where he was comfortable. Joseph's attitudes and future potential would not be developed in Israel. God knows that sometimes there are people and circumstances in our lives that hinder us from growing. A sovereign God knew what He needed from Joseph as a critical link in His "nation building" with the people of Israel. Joseph needed preparation and maturity to be what God needed him to be.

Questions:

In what ways have you sensed God's sovereign plan at work in your life?

*When do you have the greatest assurance (or lack of assurance) of the validity of Philippians 1:6?
("He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.")*

What has God asked you personally to give up for His kingdom?

What is the problem with trying to see God's plan for tomorrow, today?

What are some things God is currently building into your life?

The Story concludes: The Lord “was with Joseph and made Joseph a successful man (v2).” Joseph was a recipient of God’s grace and mercy even in captivity. God elevated Joseph in the eyes of his master to the extent that he was given responsibilities in Potiphar’s home. He succeeded in everything he tried and began to gain more and more responsibility and favor.

Joseph’s success was due to the Lord, not Joseph himself. He succeeded only because he had a very good God. Potiphar began to realize that Joseph’s success came from Joseph’s God. This no doubt allowed Joseph to speak of the Lord God openly. Potiphar turned the complete control of household assets to Joseph as Joseph gained more and more respect from his Egyptian master.

Questions:

Is it possible for us to experience this presence of the Lord, as Joseph did, so that it could be said of us, “the Lord is with us?”

Would you have followed the Lord in the past and committed your life to Him, had you known there would be turbulence ahead?

What does Joseph’s life say to us about allowing God to direct our path, and to be the One who brings us success? How do you define “success?” When do you know you have succeeded?

What does “sharing control” of our life do to God’s plan for our lives?

Closing thoughts: Life for Joseph took some unexpected turns. He was distressed but not defeated. He would go on to say to his brothers, “What you intended for evil, God intended for good (v50:20).” He was faced with temptations. He was delayed on his path to the future. He no doubt experienced all kinds of human emotions, from anger, to surprise, to elation. But he steadfastly held to his faith in God. He humbled himself each step along the way and assumed each role God had him play.

Questions:

How does a wrong response to God impact His plans for us and for others through us?

What are some of our errant responses to God when He is molding our character (James 1:2-4)?

Have you ever assumed that God can be emotionally manipulated?

How does “staying in the trial” (i.e. James 4:8-10) get us where God wants us to be quicker than resisting what is inevitable?

Are you developing a future oriented view of life?

Are you currently living life with the end result in mind?