

Heal a Family / Build a Nation
Lesson #7 – Based on Genesis 39:19-40:23
Adapted from the sermons of Jim Johnson
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Introduction: You'll remember from our last discussion that Joseph had just fled from Potiphar's wife following her unsolicited advances. He'd resisted temptation by fleeing and by leaving his outer garment in her clutches. She painted the incident as being Joseph's fault when her husband returned. Potiphar, aware of his wife's lack of character, placed Joseph in "protective custody" in the part of the jail used for political prisoners. (see vs. 39:19-20; Ps. 105:17-18)

Joseph's dream was postponed. vs. 39:19-23.

The dream of leadership God gave to Joseph back in Hebron was fading in the rear view mirror. Joseph was having a hard time seeing himself leading his brothers through the bars of a jail. Yet, Joseph did not turn on God with anger or blame.

"But the Lord was with Joseph and extended kindness to him, and gave him favor in the sight of the chief jailer (vs. 39:22)."

The chief jailer did as Potiphar had done, he gave Joseph authority over the affairs of the jail.

Questions:

Has there ever been a time in your life when you were unjustly accused of something you truly didn't do?

How did you respond to the loss of a promotion, a relationship, a friendship from that accusation?

Do you think your response resembled Joseph's response?

Is God responsible for the "bad things" that happen to us?

What happens when we begin to blame God for bad things that happen to us?

What is the right perspective in the face of difficulties?

Joseph's dream was "pushed forward." vs. 40:1-22

Joseph hit the bottom in an Egyptian jail cell. He was a slave in the jail of a foreign land. But God had him perfectly positioned to fulfill a place of authority that even Joseph couldn't imagine at the time. (see vs. 40:1-3)

God put Joseph in the right place. Vs. 1-4

Two prisoners who worked directly in the sphere of the Pharaoh were added to the prison; the Pharaoh's cup bearer and baker. Some kind of offence to Pharaoh had landed them in the same jail with Joseph. Joseph had charge over these men.

God put Joseph in the right place at the right time. vs. 5-8

These two assistants to Pharaoh each had a dream involving Pharaoh that needed interpretation. Evidently these were bad dreams which caused these men to ask for Joseph's help. Joseph asked, "Doesn't the interpretation of dreams belong to God? Tell me and maybe I can help (vs. 9)."

God equipped Joseph with the right skills. vs. 9-13

The cupbearer of Pharaoh shared his dream with Joseph and Joseph interpreted the dream. There was no indication that Joseph had an interpretive skills, and yet on this occasion, he told the man that in three days he would be released from jail and restored to his office.

God put Joseph with the right person. vs. 14-15

Joseph used the favor he'd done for this man to begin his release from jail. Joseph asked the man to remember him before Pharaoh and assist Joseph with his release. God was "networking" for Joseph to fulfill His plan for Joseph.

God provided Joseph with the right answers. vs. 16-22

The baker for Pharaoh also had a dream Joseph interpreted. However, God gave Joseph some bad news in regard to this dream and this baker. Joseph bluntly told the guy that in three days he'd be executed. As it turned out, Joseph was right. As the baker swung from the gallows, Joseph's reputation for interpreting dreams grew. Joseph became hopeful that the cupbearer would mention him to Pharaoh and spring him from jail. Joseph sensed that God was at work in his circumstances to fulfill his role as a leader.

Questions:

Has there ever been a time when you sensed God was positioning you for greater things?

What kind of events took place to give you that outlook?

How has God used influential people in your life to accelerate His plan for you?

How has God used circumstances, difficult or otherwise, to fulfill His plan for you?

What are you believing God for right now?

Joseph himself is forgotten. vs. 23

For two years following his release from prison, the cupbearer of Pharaoh did not think about Joseph nor mention him to Pharaoh. Joseph was 28 years old and in his eleventh year of slavery. ***Why was God delaying His plan for Joseph?***

Joseph wasn't ready until God made him ready for leadership.

Joseph learned about leadership and about Egyptian politics.

Joseph learned humility and to care about someone as lowly as a cupbearer in a jail.

Joseph learned to trust in God.

God wasn't finished ordering the circumstances. Two years passed before Joseph was needed again to interpret the dream of Pharaoh.

We ready ourselves for the future by embracing the present.

