

Heal a Family / Build a Nation
Lesson #8 – Based on Genesis 41:1-40
Adapted from the sermons of Jim Johnson
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Preparation and placement for ministry in the life of Joseph. Vs. 40:1-14

Two years after Joseph had interpreted the dreams of the cupbearer of Pharaoh, he lingered in prison waiting for the day the Lord would take the next step in moving his life forward. That process began when Pharaoh had two dreams for which he needed an interpreter. The cupbearer remembered Joseph and his ability to interpret dreams.

Joseph was placed in a position to move forward when others recognized his value.

Someone who'd benefited from Joseph's past ministry was used by God to renew Joseph's hopes for his future. An objective third party, not Joseph's own self promotion, was used by God when God was ready to use Joseph.

Joseph was placed in a position to move forward when his abilities were needed.

God used Joseph when God needed him for what He had prepared him for all along. God's timing had everything to do with Joseph being put in a position to be used of God.

Joseph was placed in a position to move forward when he had properly prepared himself.

When Joseph was called into the presence of Pharaoh, he cleaned himself and shaved. He prepared himself for what God had ordained. In addition, God had used Joseph in a leadership and management role in the past to prepare him for the duties Pharaoh would soon assign to him.

Questions:

What are the benefits to you/to others of your waiting until you are ready to assume the responsibilities God has prepared for you?

What happens to us when we try to move forward prematurely?

Have you experienced God's hand in your life to position you for some special "mission," great or small, that has benefited the kingdom?

How has God made provision for your preparation for a particular job or ministry?

What happens when a person who is in the wrong place at the wrong time assumes authority or influence over the lives of others?

Joseph's dependence on God in the middle of a tough interview. Vs. 40:15-40

When Joseph was brought into the presence of Pharaoh he faced a man who everyone in the room thought was a "god." Nothing on the earth was as powerful as a king in the ancient Middle East. Pharaoh questioned Joseph about his abilities to interpret dreams.

Joseph, fully dependent on God at that moment for his very life, answered by saying, *"It is not in me: God (i.e. Yahweh, the God of Israel, the One and only True God) will give Pharaoh (who thought he was God) a favorable answer. I am a humble servant of God. It is God who will give you an answer."*

Joseph was ready to move forward when he saw that his life journey was more about God than himself. (Eph. 2:10; 1 Cor. 6:19-20)

Joseph was not before Pharaoh to promote himself, nor to try to seize a personal networking opportunity. His very life was dependent on God, and he knew it. Pharaoh could have killed him for insubordination.

Joseph further understood that his, as well as Pharaoh's future, was fully in the hands of God. Joseph was in a position to interpret dreams in a beneficial way when God had everything in place to move His plans forward, not Joseph's personal agenda.

Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dreams in detail without hesitation or pause. In addition, God honored Joseph's interpretation by authenticating what he said to Pharaoh. Joseph delivered when everything was on the line. Both dreams indicated that seven years of prosperity would be followed by seven years of famine. God had clearly cast the future with not one dream, but two which indicated His sovereignty over all of Egypt. The next fourteen years of Egyptian history proved Joseph right.

Joseph was ready to move forward when his attitude and actions reflected his concern for others. His concern was for all of Egypt and what God had revealed was ahead for the nation.

In vs. 40:34-35 Joseph said, *"Let Pharaoh take action to appoint overseers in charge of the land, and let him exact a fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt in the seven years of abundance. Then let them gather all the food of these good years and store up the grain for food in the cities under Pharaoh's authority, and let them guard it. Let the food become a reserve...so that the land may not perish during the famine."*

Joseph was ready to move forward when God gave him a vision for what needs to be done.

Part of what God does to ready us is to give us experience both good and bad that helps us see life and its problems more clearly. As we bring our past experiences to bear on the present we should be able to construct solutions to the problems that confront us.

Questions:

How have you seen God move to increase your awareness of your own dependency on Him?

Where are you in your journey toward allowing God the position of centrality in your life?

What happens to us when we become "others focused" at work or in ministry?

**Joseph was ready to move forward when God opened a door for him.
When God thought Joseph was ready to move forward, Joseph moved forward.**

Questions:

To what destination do you suspect God is taking you these days?

What "ready lights" seem to be flashing on your dashboard?

What lights are still dark and undefined?

What can you do to pursue the direction you feel God is taking you?

Are you willing to make the life choices and take the risks associated with doing the will of God?

What is stopping you from pursuing your own God given dream?