

JOSEPH: A MAN OF INTEGRITY AND FORGIVENESS

A Classic Series

Remembered and Promoted

Genesis 41:1–46



LET'S BEGIN HERE

Affliction, mistreatment, persecution, hardship, and pain often characterize the Christian walk. We see that truth in Peter's words: "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you" (1 Peter 4:12).

In life, testing is more often than not "par for the course." But sometimes God rescues us from our plight, bringing us into new circumstances. For thirteen years Joseph had been a slave in Egypt. But God was faithful; He never abandoned Joseph. And all the while, His plans for Joseph were in motion, leading Joseph to the cusp of his release from prison and an unexpected blessing. Through Joseph's example, we should be encouraged to trust God—even in difficult times of waiting.



LET'S DIG DEEPER

1. The Test: Darkness before Dawn (Genesis 40:23–41:1)

When life seems hopeless, the promises of God resonate in our hearts, giving us hope.

When the cupbearer returned to his trusted position, he immediately forgot about Joseph. For two years Joseph waited in prison, hoping the cupbearer would remember him and mention his name to Pharaoh.

So what happened during those two years? Why did God let that happen? The Lord was stoking the fire, burning away the impurities in Joseph's character, preparing Joseph for a new ministry.



Quotable

*Affliction is
gold in the
making for the
child of God.
He alone
determines the
timing.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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2. The Turning Point: Pharaoh's Dream (Genesis 41:1–36)

More than seven hundred mornings and evenings had come and gone since the day Joseph interpreted the cupbearer's dream. This morning dawned with no more promise than the ones before, but it would be the day when his life would change forever. Ironically, the change came about as the result of another dream.

As Joseph woke to face another monotonous day, Pharaoh awoke with his mind reeling over two dreams. Troubled by his dreams, Pharaoh called the magicians and wise men to interpret his dreams. When none of them could discern the dreams' meanings, the cupbearer finally remembered his friend Joseph who had accurately deciphered his dream. Pharaoh wasted no time—he immediately called for Joseph. After Joseph revealed the coming famine, he proposed a food storage and distribution plan to save the Egyptian empire from ruin. Now, Pharaoh needed a man of wisdom to execute this plan.

3. The Reward: Joseph's Promotion (Genesis 41:27–46)

Not once did Joseph ask for the job of overseer. Not once did he seek his freedom. Not once did he even mention the injustice done to him. Joseph spoke directly, honestly, for the glory of God. Though the young Hebrew never placed himself among the “discerning and wise” (Genesis 41:33), Pharaoh clearly saw his insight and skill. Pharaoh recognized Joseph's God-given qualities, the very ones needed to oversee the task of saving, storing, and distributing food (41:37–39). Then, in one unexpected move, Pharaoh promoted Joseph to the position of overseer of the food distribution program, as well as to the position of prime minister over the entire land of Egypt (41:40–46). Within the span of a few short moments, Joseph went from the pit to the pinnacle.



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A CLOSER LOOK

The Source of Blessing

“God wants your life to be easy; He wants you to enjoy health and wealth right now. Prosperity, after all, is a sign of your faithfulness and God’s unique favor. . . .”

So say many preachers today.

Then why is life so hard? Why do Christians struggle with illness, financial difficulties, broken relationships, and more? The pat answer by the hucksters of prosperity preaching is to blame it on our own lack of faith. But if God’s plan is to make our lives easy, then someone forgot to tell Jesus! No one was more faithful to the will of God than Christ (Luke 22:42). And no one experienced suffering like He did (23:1–56).

Don’t be deceived, God will not be reduced to a dispenser of pills and bills. He is the sovereign Creator and King of the universe, and He can do as He pleases (Isaiah 45:9; 64:8). He may choose to reward His children with large bank accounts, business successes, or some other material blessings, but *He is under no obligation*. On the other hand, our world is a fallen, sinful place. God may allow His children to live in poverty, to deal with illness, or to suffer persecution as His own Son did. Regardless, we are to remain faithful. We can trust that His ultimate plan for our lives is in motion. And He has promised that His mercy and grace will sustain us (1 Peter 4:19).



LET’S LIVE IT

Joseph’s promotion was incredible! But let’s not focus on the signet ring and gold necklace he wore and forget the gold character it adorned. Joseph’s character, which had been forged in the fires of his lonely prison cell, reveals two important lessons for us.

First, *during the waiting period, trust God without panic*. We must learn to trust God to handle the cupbearers in our lives. Even if others forget or reject us, we should remain faithful to the God who will never forget or reject us. He loves us enough to use waiting to build character.



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Second, *during the time of reward, thank God without pride*. As we wait during the dungeon times of life, God strips away our pride. We spend hours asking God for endurance and promise to thank and glorify Him when we regain our liberty. But when the cell door swings open, we should resist the temptation to forget the suffering and waiting or believe we deserve the good that we have received. Instead, we must stay on our knees, thanking God for His blessing.

Have you experienced long periods of waiting where nothing seems to happen . . . or at least not quickly enough? How did you feel during that time—about yourself and about God?



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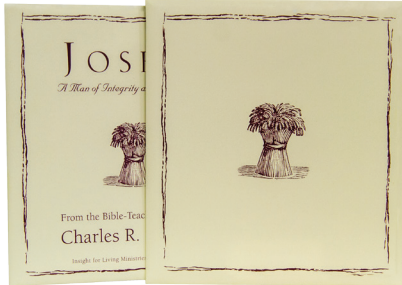
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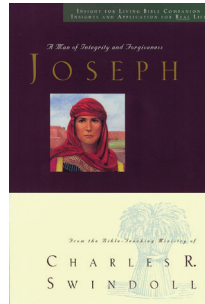
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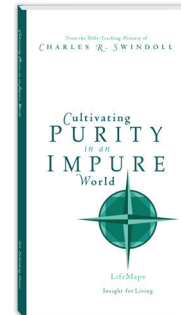
Tools for Digging Deeper



Joseph: A Man of Integrity and Forgiveness
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