

# JOSEPH: A MAN OF INTEGRITY AND FORGIVENESS

## A Classic Series

### Highlights of Twilight and Midnight

Genesis 47:27–50:26



#### LET'S BEGIN HERE

When your loved ones gather to reminisce about your life, what memories will they share? What do you hope they will remember? The story of Joseph's life—his journey from the pit to the pinnacle—leaves us in awe. Few have known such highs and lows, and fewer still have lived a life so full of grace and forgiveness. And as we have discovered in our study of this extraordinary man, if we choose to follow Joseph's example, our lives can be marked by such noble traits, creating a spiritual legacy for those who come after us. What greater memory could we leave to those who love us than that of a life well-lived—full of grace and truth?



#### LET'S DIG DEEPER

##### 1. Jacob: Sickness, Blessing, and Death (Genesis 47:27–50:3)

The joyous, tear-filled reunion between father and son led to many rich years of fellowship. And their renewed relationship continued until the dignified, sorrowful death of the patriarch, Jacob.

When Jacob moved his family to Egypt, he was 130 years old and the famine was in its second year (Genesis 45:11). Seventeen years later, with the famine behind them, the tiny nation of Israel had settled permanently in Goshen and had flourished there (47:27–28).

How sweet those years must have been for Jacob—to see Joseph rule with authority and integrity, to see his family growing.

But Jacob became ill, and he knew he wouldn't recover. Thinking of the promise God made to his grandfather, Abraham (12:1–3), Jacob expressed his desire to be buried with his forefathers in Canaan. After promising to fulfill Jacob's request, Joseph was left with a precious memory of his father's humility as Jacob bowed before the Lord in worship (47:29–31).



#### Quotable

*Do your  
forgiving now  
so that you can  
live a long,  
full, aged life,  
free of bitterness.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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Then, after Jacob blessed his grandsons Manasseh and Ephraim and his sons, Jacob died. Scripture captures this beautifully: Jacob “was gathered to his people” (Genesis 49:33). The pain was almost more than Joseph could bear. Falling on his father, Joseph wept and kissed him (50:1).

Eventually composing himself, Joseph ordered the embalming of his father. When the word spread that Joseph’s father had died, the whole nation mourned for seventy days (50:2–3).

## 2. Joseph: Grief, Grace, and Glory (Genesis 50:4–26)

When the time of mourning for Jacob ended, Joseph sought permission from Pharaoh to bury his father in their homeland of Canaan (Genesis 50:4–5). With a long funeral procession trailing behind, Joseph buried his father in the cave at Machpelah (50:6–13). Then the funeral party returned to Egypt (50:14).

As soon as they arrived back in Egypt, the brothers began to relive a terrible memory—the sin of selling Joseph into slavery. What if Joseph chose to seek retribution now that Jacob was gone (50:15)? They sent a message from their deceased father, begging Joseph’s forgiveness. They even threw themselves at his feet and offered their lives in servitude (50:16–18).

Joseph wept over their fear and anxiety (50:17). They still didn’t understand that he had forgiven them! With a broken heart, Joseph uttered some of the most gracious words in the Bible. He put his brothers’ fears to rest, reminding them that he wasn’t in the place of God with the authority to seek retribution for sin (50:19). Joseph acknowledged their sin, but he had an eternal perspective—God had ensured the salvation of thousands in Egypt through their foolishness (50:20). Joseph continued to extend grace, committing to care for them (50:21).

Joseph lived to see his grandsons and great-grandsons (50:22–23). When Joseph realized that his time to die was fast approaching, he gathered his brothers and encouraged them to remember that God had promised to preserve and deliver them. Then he asked to be buried in the land of his fathers, Canaan (50:24–25). Simply and with dignity, Joseph died at the age of 110 (50:26). Marked by integrity, grace, and forgiveness, his was a life well-lived.



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#### DOORWAY TO HISTORY

##### *Bring Out Your Dead*

Death hits like a blow to the gut—and that’s how it felt when the patriarch Jacob died. In the ancient Near East, various cultures dealt with death and the dead in different ways. The Greeks and Romans cremated their dead. The Hebrews buried their dead either in the ground or in caves. Though preparation and burial of the body were generally made in haste, funerals could be elaborate. But the Egyptians practiced the most elaborate and intimate burial rite of them all.

Egyptians buried their dead, but only after the body was embalmed. The purpose of embalming was to preserve as much of the body as possible so it might be reunited with its soul. Egyptians believed that decomposition robbed the soul of its essence, so they took great pains to halt that process.

Embalming might take up to forty days and involved the removal of most of the vital organs. The body was then entwined with linen treated with a mixture of salt, spices, and gums. After bandaging, the body was placed in a papyrus carton painted with religious symbols. Wealthy Egyptians and nobles might be placed within three different coffins, the last being a decoratively carved stone sarcophagus.

Egyptian law prescribed seventy-two days of mourning for deceased pharaohs. Scripture tells us the Egyptians mourned Jacob for seventy days (Genesis 50:3). This period of mourning included the forty days of embalming.



#### LET'S LIVE IT

The last page of Joseph’s life has been turned and the book closed. But the lessons learned from his life are still being written, even today. So before you put the book on the shelf and get busy with your life, remember two enduring truths.

First, *to grow old free of bitterness is one of the finest legacies we can leave behind*. Too many people become hardened and embittered by life instead of allowing hardships to render them soft and humble. But we can choose our response to difficult times and circumstances. Joseph sets an example of one who left a legacy of grace and forgiveness rather than of bitter revenge.

The second enduring truth we can take from Joseph’s life is that *to face death right with God and man is the finest way we can enter eternity*. Forgiveness is perhaps the greatest gift one can give and receive. And there is no more enduring legacy than living the words, “I forgive you.”



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Is there someone from whom you need to seek forgiveness? Is anything keeping you from seeking forgiveness? If you were to die tomorrow, would everyone in your life have assurance that you hold no grudges? Is there someone you need to forgive?



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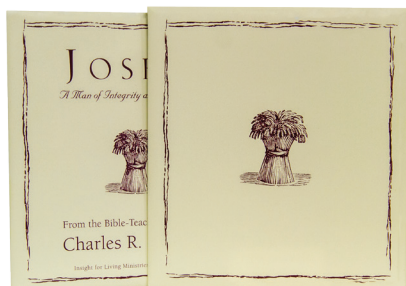
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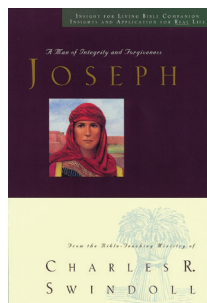
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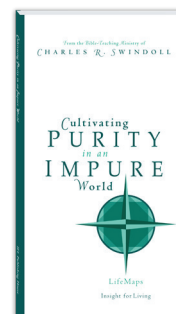
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