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*Lessons from the life of*  
JOSEPH

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H<sub>2</sub>O

A Heart of Wisdom

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'And the patriarchs, becoming envious, sold Joseph into Egypt. But God was with him...'  
Acts 7:9

Oftentimes when we think of Joseph, what comes to mind is the multi-coloured coat his father Jacob gave him, and the envy Joseph's brothers had for him because of the dreams he had. Yet there is a lot more to his character and the intricacies of his life journey and walk with God which we can apply to our lives today.

We pray that this series the Lord will draw us nearer to Him and show us how He is with us through both good and bad situations.

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## Day 1 A Heart of Service

“And Israel said to Joseph, “Are not your brothers feeding the flock in Shechem? Come, I will send you to them.” So he said to him, “Here I am.” Then he said to him, “Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me.” So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron, and he went to Shechem.” Genesis 37:13-14

Joseph was loved by his father Jacob but envied by his brothers. The 11th of 12 of Jacob’s male children, it must have been hurtful for Joseph to have older brothers who he must have looked up to constantly speak harshly to him rather than take him into their care and mentor him. Joseph sharing his dreams with his brothers (Genesis 37:5-11) made them hate him even more.

“And the man said, “They have departed from here, for I heard them say, ‘Let us go to Dothan.’” So Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan.” Genesis 37:17

“But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you” Matthew 5:44

Jacob gave an instruction which Joseph readily agreed to follow and undertake a journey from Hebron to Shechem to check on his brothers’ welfare. Let’s pause and reflect on this. Joseph was willing to journey about 80km to check on the welfare of people who had already shown him clearly that they didn’t like him. When he got to Shechem and found his brothers weren’t there, he journeyed another 20km or so to their current destination. He could easily have turned back at Shechem and told his father they were no longer there, which was the truth. Yet Joseph chose to go the extra length to ensure he fulfilled his assignment.

**Reflection:** How often are we willing to go the extra mile when we’ve been given an assignment, and would we be willing to do this for people who’ve treated us badly?

**Prayer:** Lord give me a heart that’s willing to serve You regardless of how other people make me feel.

## Day 2 Discretion and Discernment

“Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more. Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers...” Genesis 37:5, 9

One lesson we can learn from Joseph’s life is the power of discretion. Being a teenager at this point, Joseph still lacked a sense of discretion and told people who already openly envied him something that made them even more envious of him. Even his loving father rebuked him for sharing the second dream - even though he still kept the matter in mind.

“Take control of what I say, O Lord, and guard my lips.” Psalms 141:3 NLT

“Discretion is a life-giving fountain to those who possess it...” Proverbs 16:22 NLT

Sharing too much, sharing with the wrong people is a mistake we often make in life, simply because we don’t always know what’s really going on in someone else’s heart concerning us. Much as he knew his brothers didn’t favour him, it’s doubtful Joseph would have considered them capable of wanting to kill or sell him, yet that was the case. There are times when we unknowingly create unnecessary issues for ourselves by saying too much/too soon to the wrong people.

“But the Lord said to Samuel, “Don’t judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The Lord doesn’t see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”” 1 Samuel 16:7

We don’t know what’s going on in people’s hearts, but the Lord does. So it’s critical we lean on the power of the Holy Spirit to guide us not only on who we let into our space, but what to tell them and when as timing is also important. As such we don’t have to live in a state of permanent distrust of everyone as we have a Helper who can help us navigate these unknowns.

**Reflection:** How often do we ask the Holy Spirit to guide us in our speech on a daily basis?

**Prayer:** Lord, please guard my lips and control what I say. Give me understanding of how and when to speak and discernment about who to share with.



## Day 3

### Success God's Way

'The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.' Genesis 39:2

Having been sold by his brothers, Joseph finds himself a slave in a foreign land in Potiphar's house. Anyone hearing Joseph's story and observing him from the outside would call him really unfortunate, going from the favoured son of a wealthy man to being one of the slaves of an Egyptian. Yet the Bible tell us not only that the Lord was with Joseph, but also described him as being successful. Since we generally define success in terms of position and material things we possess, how could a slave who didn't even have control of his own movement, talk less of possess material items be called successful? This tells us that God looks at success very differently from us.

'For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?' Mark 8:36

God looks at the heart, not the externals. Throughout his time in Potiphar's house, Joseph was successful because he maintained a heart for God. He was diligent in his dealings, honest even when he could have gotten away with many misdeeds. We also see no record of him demonstrating bitterness or murmuring in spite of his negative external circumstances. There's no way anyone can be like this if God isn't with that person and if that person also doesn't cultivate staying in God's presence.

**Reflection:** God isn't interested in our material possessions, but in the state of our hearts. There may be times when we feel we're alone and God has abandoned us, but He's promised never to leave or forsake us (Deut 31:6) and He keeps His word. Many times if God permits us to go through challenging situations, there's a version of us He's working on drawing out, so we are better than before.

**Prayer:** Lord help me truly realize that success with you isn't about what I have, but who I am becoming as I fulfil Your purpose for my life.

## Day 4

### The God of Suddenly

“And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.”” Gen 41:41

In less than 24 hours Joseph went from being a slave turned prisoner to being a ruler in Egypt. This is the same Joseph that had pleaded with Pharaoh’s butler not to forget him two years earlier. God can turn our circumstances around in a blink of an eye, but it’s important we always recognize that He has a plan much bigger than ours.

“But remember me when it is well with you, and please show kindness to me; make mention of me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house...Yet the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.” Gen 40:14, 23

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.” Rom 8:28

Purpose and timing are two critical elements of life we should never lose sight of. Had the butler remembered Joseph as soon as he came out of prison and Pharaoh pardoned and freed him, Joseph would likely have tried to find his way back to his father’s house in Canaan. Meanwhile God’s plan for him was to be a ruler in Egypt. Pharaoh needed to have the dream and Joseph needed to be readily available to interpret the dream. Sometimes when things don’t appear to be working out, it helps for us to go to God to ask Him what He’s working out in or around us.

“So Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, “It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace.”” Gen 41:16

When Joseph encountered Pharaoh, he had gotten to the stage that he fully depended on and always gave glory to God. So he wasn’t swayed by the trappings of the office and still maintained his walk with God even after being elevated. Sometimes the delay we’re experiencing isn’t because God doesn’t love us, but because He knows we’re not ready for what we’re asking for. Remember God’s priority is the state of our heart and eternal location. He won’t give us something that we can’t handle until we’re ready.

**Prayer:** Lord I know that You can change things around me in an instant and what’s more important to You is my heart towards You and others. Help me to keep this in the forefront of my mind daily



## Day 5 Dream Fulfilled

“... And Joseph’s brothers came and bowed down before him with their faces to the earth... Then Joseph remembered the dreams which he had dreamed about them” Genesis 42:6, 9

We see Joseph’s dream played out right before his eyes as the brothers who had sold him into slavery now came to him for help - though they didn’t know it was him at the time. Joseph was about 17 when he had the dreams, 30 when he became ruler in Egypt and almost 40 when it came to pass. He had even forgotten about the dreams until it started playing out. This may be what some of us are going through now.

“At the time I have decided, my words will come true. You can trust what I say about the future. It may take a long time, but keep on waiting— it will happen!” Habakkuk 2:3 CEV

Perhaps we’ve forgotten the words God has given us concerning our lives. Or maybe we remember but don’t believe because our current circumstances don’t look anything like what we’re expecting. Remember God always has a plan, and He works according to His timetable not ours. He also works out a lot within and around us so that when the word comes to pass, it will be a blessing to us without any loss.

Sometimes we are so focused on the end point, we don’t realize that the journey is a critical part of the process of getting to the end point. God always prepares us for what He’s bringing us into. We see this in the lives of Joseph, David, Moses, Paul, and so many others. It’s His way. So when God gives us a vision, the manifestation may not be immediate and we will do well to ask Him how to prepare so we can align our lives with His agenda.

**Reflection:** Are there things you’ve given up on because current circumstances don’t match the expected outcome? Let’s take it to the Lord to ask Him what He’s working out and how to cooperate with Him.

**Prayer:** Lord thank You for reminding me that Your word will always come to pass at the time You’ve decided. Help me to align with Your timetable so I don’t lose focus. Encourage and strengthen me Lord when I’m getting weary and help me remember that Your word will Never fail.

## Day 6

### God's Big Picture

"But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life." Genesis 45:5

Joseph's brother who dealt harshly with him at home, considered killing and ended up selling him now needed his help. As a ruler in Egypt he could literally do whatever he wanted and no one would have restrained him had he chosen to deal harshly with his brothers. Rather than do so, Joseph was the one encouraging them not to feel bad about what they did to him. Why? Because he saw the hand of God in the situation.

"Known to God from eternity are all His works." Acts 15:18

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" Philippians 2:5

The Lord guides us along the best pathway when we yield to Him (Ps 32:8), but we must bear in mind that the best way isn't always the most convenient or comfortable way. Most times it's actually the opposite. But as we mature in our relationship with God and start understanding His ways, it's easier for us to trust what He's doing, even if we may not fully understand the process at the time. Nothing about Joseph's process was comfortable or pleasant. In fact anyone hearing his story would have felt sorry for him. But God was with him through it all, developing a man who would not just be ruler in Egypt, but a key resource in delivering Israel from a famine. Joseph forgave his brothers, not because they deserved it, but because He saw what God had worked out in and for him.

Forgiving doesn't in any way justify what's been done to us, but unforgiveness can stop us from fully yielding to who God wants us to become. We can't forgive on our own as it takes grace, but we can be honest with the Holy Spirit and let Him know how we really feel and ask him to help us.

**Prayer:** Lord I see that fulfilling Your purpose may cost me laying aside personal hurts and even ambitions so You can have full expression in me. Lord give me the grace to totally yield to you so my life will count not just here but also in eternity.



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