

# Joseph's New Life

a four-step study on biblical happiness in **Genesis 41:37-57**

W	<i>Watching</i> in order to gather the measurable biblical data.
A	<i>Analyzing</i> the passage data to find the main theme and subthemes.
L	<i>Linking</i> the content themes to other Scripture and everyday life.
K	<i>Knowing</i> what to do and planning how to do it.

And Pharaoh said to Joseph,

"See I have set you over

all the land of Egypt."

Ex. 41:41

Commentary overheard in a Happiness Seminar at imaginary Quest Bible College

**Dr. Quest** (on the key linking (L) question)

Who wouldn't be happy about being released from prison and named prime minister? What a tremendous change! The closest biblical parallel may be Mordecai in the book of Esther, but is there anyone like Joseph among us today? Who in this group is a future prime minister?

**Indy** (on Joseph as an ideal manager)

Not me! Joseph was not just powerful, he was also an ideal manager who knew the future, knew exactly what needed to be done, and had years of experience working well with others. There are plenty of independent guys like me around, but probably nobody like Joseph.

**Dr. Quest** (on believers today as God's managers)

You may be right in a way. Yet, every believer is a manager or steward of God's gifts. Through the Scriptures, we know a lot about the future, and God has told us what to do. Best of all, as the Lord was with Joseph, he will be with us as well. What a great commission WE have!

JOSEPH'S NEW LIFE	Genesis 41:37-57
W.	A.
<i>who, what, when, etc. (especially measurable things)</i>	<i>Theme Analysis, putting it All together</i>
<p><b>Who?</b></p> <p>GOD (41:38, 39, 51, 52), JOSEPH  Pharaoh (41:37, 38, 41, 42, 44, 45, 46)  Pharaoh's servants (41:37, 38)  Asenath, daughter of Poti-Pherah (41:45, 50)  Manasseh (41:51), Ephraim (41:52)</p> <p><b>Where?</b></p> <p>in Egypt, the land of Joseph's affliction (41:52)</p> <p><b>When?</b></p> <p>before famine (41:37-52), during famine (41:53-57)</p> <p><b>What stands out?</b></p> <p><b>1.) PHARAOH'S ATTITUDE &amp; PROVISION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- totally positive because of God (41:38-39)</li> <li>- ring, fine clothing, gold chain (41:42)</li> <li>- chariot, and command to bow down (41:43)</li> <li>- Egyptian name and Egyptian wife (41:45)  Asenath, daughter of an Egyptian priest  Very little is said about her (41:48, 50).</li> </ul> <p><b>2.) JOSEPH'S HIGH POSITION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- second only to Pharaoh (41:40)</li> <li>- over all the land of Egypt (41:41, 43, 44)</li> <li>- great contrast with former affliction (41:52)</li> </ul> <p><b>3.) JOSEPH'S WORK</b></p> <p>A.) In the Years of Plenty (41:45-52)  trusted leader, traveling manager (41:45-46)  gathering, storing up for famine (41:46-49)  much grain (41:49) from God (41:47)</p> <p>B.) In the Years of Famine (41:53-57)  trusted leader, manager, grain seller (41:56)</p> <p><b>4.) JOSEPH'S SONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- name meanings show Joseph's godly thinking</li> <li>- Manasseh: forgetting past toil and wrong</li> <li>- Ephraim: being fruitful in place of affliction</li> </ul> <p><i>Add or change points as needed.</i></p>	<p><b>WORK: JOSEPH AS MANAGER</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the famine came as Joseph said (41:54)  but no other "as Joseph said" lines</li> <li>- Joseph was wise regarding future (41:39),  and this was prophet like.</li> <li>- but he had experience as manager (prison)</li> <li>- as manager, recommended storing grain</li> <li>- he traveled around as a manager</li> </ul> <p><b>MARRIAGE &amp; CHILDREN</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Little is said about Asenath (41:48, 50).  Is this because Joseph married a pagan?  No, because her father is revealed.  If coverup, he would be hidden.  No, because Joseph was a great leader.  His wife would have followed him.</li> <li>- The children's names reflect a godly home.</li> </ul> <p><b>WORK &amp; FAMILY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- potential conflict between work &amp; family  especially since Joseph had to travel</li> <li>- but no conflicts or problems are mentioned  (See Joseph in a home setting in 39:4.)</li> </ul> <p><b>OTHER ASPECTS OF HAPPINESS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>forgetting</b> past toil, affliction, and wrong  forgetting his father's house too? (41:51)  This may mean forgiving his brothers!</li> <li>- <b>being fruitful</b>  by God's grace  including by being productive at work</li> <li>- <b>being thankfulness</b> to God (41:51-52)</li> </ul>

L.

K.

*Like: what is the passage like?**Key points for us, Knowing what to do***Like what else in Genesis?**

- **like 47:13-26**  
which expands upon 41:53-56 (famine yrs.)
- **unlike Joseph's past affliction**  
Pharaoh welcomed, brothers rejected  
not in prison, traveling around Egypt
- **unlike most marriages in Genesis**  
no polygamy or competition in 41:45-52  
no scandal like with Judah (38:12-30)  
no struggle with barrenness (41:50, 48:9)  
Silence may indicate the lack of problems.

**Like what in other Scriptures?**

- **Joseph was like and unlike DANIEL.**  
both were leaders in foreign lands  
but Joseph's position was higher  
with no competition, plot, lion's den  
but Joseph was not a prophet  
but Joseph married and had children
- **Joseph was more like MORDECAI.**  
both were leaders in foreign lands  
both became 2nd in command (Esth. 10:3)  
both helped their people greatly
- **Like New Life in Christ** (2 Cor. 5:17-18)  
The N.T. emphasis is on inner change,  
free from sin to serve (John 8:36, Rom. 6:18-20)
- **Like the Lord Jesus**  
rejected by his brethren  
but highly exalted (Phil. 2:9-11)

**Like who else?**

- **Like someone whose life improves greatly**  
and suddenly by the grace of God
- **Like a godly, skillful businessman / manager**  
who manages well and is widely respected
- **Like faithful believers today**  
gifted and commissioned (Mat. 28:18-20)  
fruitful for God (John chapter 15)  
preparing for the future (Luke chapter 16)  
having godly homes (1 Tim. 3:1-7)

*Add or change points as needed.*  
*Choose your favorite likeness point(s).*

## AS MANAGERS LIKE JOSEPH, WE CAN BE HAPPY...

### 1.) BY BEING DILIGENT

wisely doing the work  
that needs to be done now  
and in preparation for the future

### 2.) BY BEING GODLY

and thankful,  
putting God first  
and helping others,

### 3.) BY BEING BLESSED

by God in various ways,  
especially at home.

God blessed Joseph's home according to his  
plan and because Joseph lived by faith and  
kept himself pure (39:7-12).

**How?** *Make some specific applications.*

*Commentary from various perspectives as overheard in a Happiness Seminar at imaginary Quest Bible College*

**Dr. Quest** (on happiness, change, and patience)

What do we need in order to be happy? Verses like 1 Tim. 6:6-8, show that we must be content. Yet, the life of Joseph shows that it was some really big changes that led to his greatest happiness. Of course, Joseph had to wait for years before those changes came, but they did come. So happiness involves both patience and change. What else?

**Hugh** (on the greatness of the changes)

Being released from prison and suddenly made the prime minister over all Egypt, wasn't just 'some really big changes,' it was like being resurrected from the dead! So the joy must have been humungous, sort of like what the disciples felt in Luke 24:52. The bigger the change the bigger the joy can be, and God does things that are bigger than big!

**Cal** (on things that did not change)

Changes? Not really, the Lord had been preparing Joseph all along, in line with HIS eternal plan! The young Hebrew had not been sitting in a cell all by himself for 13 years, because God had led the keeper of the prison to put Joseph in charge of all the other prisoners (Gen. 39:21-22). So Joseph was ready to be set over all the land of Egypt when God's time came. Happiness is based on continuity in God plan more than change.

**Wes** (on happiness and the will)

Oh, come on, Cal. Happiness involves the will and work. Joseph was willing to work long hours to get ready for the seven years of famine. Can you imagine what it would have been like for the Egyptians and others if Joseph had stayed home with his lovely wife and sons most of the time? (She was probably beautiful!) When the people cried out in hunger (41:58), he was ready because he had been willing to work all along.

**Socie** (on happiness and marriage)

What about Asenath? I don't know if she was beautiful or not, but since Pharaoh and all his servants held Joseph in high moral and spiritual regard (41:37-38), the king would not have introduced Asenath unless she was a woman of character. As for her being a pagan, since the king of Egypt himself seemed at least somewhat open to Joseph's God, she as his wife would have been even more so. Therefore I believe she became a true believer in the Lord and that was one of the keys to Joseph's happiness.

**Dr. Quest** (on the scarcity of happy homes in Genesis)

Are there many happy homes in the Book of Genesis? No! Jacob's family was one of the worse because of polygamy and competition among the wives and children. Joseph's wife, Asenath, however, was his only wife, and I too believe that she became a true believer. The naming of the children (41:51-52) shows Joseph's faith and probably hers as well. Above all, she helped Joseph forget the painful home in which he was raised, which probably involved forgiving his brothers (41:51). That was another key to his happiness.