

**Joseph:
Daydream Believer
Episode 7**

Jacob lied, stole, cheated, slandered and put himself first. (Sound like anyone you know?) Yet in His mercy God spoke comfort to Jacob and us:

"I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your descendants. Your descendants will also be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and in you and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you" (Genesis 28:10–22).

Adam's sin alienated mankind from God. To provide the Way back to unity with Him, the Father chose to "save" us by sending His Son, Jesus, to be the only acceptable Sacrifice for our sins (John 1:11-13, 3:16-18, 36).

To become our sinless Substitute on that cross, Jesus had to be all-God **AND** all-man (Philippians 2:5-11). God chose Abraham to begin the Hebrew family into which Christ would be born. They would need a homeland, so He gave them a permanent deed for a piece of Middle Eastern land much larger than the borders of today's Israel. Joseph plays a starring role in the Abraham to Isaac to Jacob to Joseph genealogy.

Young Joe, his dad's favorite, enrages his brothers with his dreams of ruling over them. They sell him to Ishmaelite traders because God wants him in Egypt to rescue the Messiah's bloodline. The brothers' wicked deed will ironically save their lives! God can even permit evil, using the worst to accomplish the best (**1 Samuel 2:6-10**)!

Joseph is sold as a slave to an Egyptian official who promotes him to run his estate. When Joe's boss' wife fails to seduce Joe, she blames Joe. This lands him in jail where he's promoted and accurately interprets two inmates' dreams. Later he says Pharaoh's dreams mean that Egypt is in for seven years of huge harvests, then seven of stark famine. Again Joseph is elevated, this time to Vice Pharaoh.

DISCUSS: In your sphere of influence how can you use your God-given strengths to fulfill His purpose in and through your life?

Jacob dispatches his lads to Egypt to buy grain. They meet the Governor, unaware that he's Joseph! He plants a silver cup in the sack of his little brother, Benjamin, then accuses him of stealing it. Judah begs Joe to imprison the brothers but set Ben *free*. Touched by their new contrition, Joe reveals his identity. After twenty-two years he and his dad reunite.

Slavery, prison, a foreign country, new language, separated from family. Joseph could be the cover boy for *REVENGE* magazine. He needed to learn how to forgive, to face injustice, to know that "God meant it for good."

DISCUSS: How did God turn a bummer into a blessing for you?

A Mixed Blessing

Let's read Genesis 48:1-22.

Jacob is failing, so Joseph brings his sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, to receive their grandfather's blessing before he dies. Jacob adopts them as his own sons. When the Israelites reach the Promised Land some five centuries later, Levi's descendants have become priests and, unlike the families of Manasseh and Ephraim, were given no territory of their own. That essentially honors Joseph with a double portion of land in recognition of his having saved the Hebrew race from starvation in Egypt.

Normally a patriarch gives the preferred blessing to the elder son, but Jacob places his right hand on Ephraim, the younger, extending this generational pattern: Isaac over Ishmael, Jacob over Esau, Joseph over Reuben, Ephraim over Manasseh (Hebrews 11:21).

DISCUSS: How has someone's being given an unfair advantage over you affected your outlook and life?

Let's read Genesis 49:1-28.

Jacob speaks a prophetic word to each son. Judah's offspring include King David and Jesus, the "Lion of the tribe of Judah," who, as King of kings and Lord of lords, will rule the earth starting with the 1,000-year Millennium (Revelation 5:5, 20:1-6).

Finishing Well

Let's read Genesis 49:29-50:21.

At age 147 Jacob is buried 300 miles away with his ancestors in Canaan. The brothers fear that with dad gone, Joe might get even with them for their treachery. Rather than apologizing and asking for his forgiveness, they get word to Joe that Jacob wanted *him* to forgive *them*!

Joe bears no animosity, realizing that a greater Power is at work for those who love and trust Him. Even when God seems to ignore you, He's taking everything, even your pain, and turning it into your gain (Romans 8:28). Joe's grace-filled response to his siblings is, "You *sold* me, but God *sent* me to save many lives." Joseph's story is much like our Lord's.

DISCUSS: Joe concludes his life bitterness-free and enters eternity on good terms with both God and man. What unfinished business do you have in order to be in this position?

Let's read Genesis 50:22-26.

Having ruled Egypt for eighty years, Joseph dies at 110 after reminding his family that God will be with them in Egypt come what may, and will take their offspring to the land God had promised their ancestors. Joe's mummified corpse would be in that wide-screen Exodus 400 years hence.

Dying to Forgive

Gary Ridgway, the "Green River Killer," slaughtered forty-nine women. In court he met their grieving, angry families. Robert Rule, whose 16-year-old daughter Ridgway had violated and murdered, spoke: "*Mr. Ridgway, there are people here that hate you. I'm not one of them. You've made it difficult to live up to what I believe, and that is what God says to do, and that's to forgive. You are forgiven, sir.*" The stony-faced killer finally shed a tear at this unexpected forgiveness.

Families of those killed in 2015 at a South Carolina church were allowed to speak to the alleged shooter, Dylann Roof. One woman said, "You took something precious from me, but if God forgives you, I forgive you."

Before the cross Jesus said God won't forgive us unless we forgive others (**Matthew 6:14-15**). However, **after** the cross Jesus has a **different** message for us via Paul (**Ephesians 4:32**). As we get to know God and how much He loves us, we find it possible to forgive (**Romans 12:9-21**).

In God's sight sin is sin. None of it is admitted into His presence. Because He loves you so, on a hill outside Jerusalem His Son took ALL sin on His

holy shoulders, paying the awful debt you and I could never pay. All of your sins – past, present, future – God the Father has forever forgiven (1 John 5:11-13)! But His pardon, like an uncashed check, is not yours until you accept it by faith. We'll take a silent moment now in case you've never done that. If you have, this is a time to say "Thank You." Amen.

His Deal

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