

References:



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<https://www.biblegateway.com/versions/New-International-Readers-Version-NIRV-Bible/>

New International Readers Version (NIRV) Bible



Equip Christian congregations to minister with adults with intellectual disabilities

Connection Ministries

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**Trust in the LORD with all your heart.
Do not depend on your own understanding.
In all your ways obey Him.**

Then He will make your paths smooth and straight.

Proverbs 3: 5-6 (NIRV)

**THE STORY OF JOSEPH
and the
SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD**



DAY 1

Genesis 37

Jacob had 12 sons. Jacob loved his wife Rachel and her sons Joseph and Benjamin more than his other sons and their mothers. He gave Joseph a gift of a beautiful, expensive robe. Joseph's older brothers were jealous. They were afraid their father would make Joseph his heir.



Benjamin more than his other sons and their mothers. He gave Joseph a gift of a beautiful, expensive robe. Joseph's older brothers were jealous. They were afraid their father would make Joseph his heir.

Joseph had a dream that he was bundling grain with his brothers. Jacob's bundle of grain was standing upright and his brothers' bundles were bowing down before him. Joseph shared the dream with his brothers, and they interpreted the dream that Joseph would rule over them and they would have to bow down before him. They hated Joseph.

Joseph had another dream about the sun, the moon and eleven stars bowing down to him. He shared this dream with his brothers and they again interpreted it to mean they would bow down to Joseph. The brothers' hatred deepened.

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Prayer

Worship

God's Word

Fellowship

Ministry Together

About Connection Ministries

In Central Indiana there are over 52,000 people with cognitive disabilities, but only a small number of churches prepared to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with them.

Our mission is to equip Christian congregations to be communities where people with intellectual disabilities learn about the love of Christ, and have an opportunity to share their spiritual gifts with the Church.

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SERMON NOTES

Sovereignty of God in Joseph's Life

1. **There are no accidents. God orchestrates everything to bring about His will.**
 - ◆ We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him. He appointed them to be saved in keeping with His purpose.
Romans 8: 28 (NIRV)
2. **If Joseph was not betrayed by his brothers, he would not have been;**
 - ◆ sold into slavery, purchased by Potiphar, betrayed by Potiphar's wife, and sent to prison.
 - ◆ God is actively involved in your life when bad things happen.
3. **His responsibilities in Potiphar's house and in prison prepared Joseph for his role in Pharaoh's house.**
 - ◆ Pharaoh recognized God's hand on Joseph, and appointed Joseph to run the national food drive, saving millions from starvation.
 - ◆ In every trial, God is preparing you for his purpose.
4. **Three times, Joseph emphasized that God was in control of his life.**
 - ◆ Joseph reassured his brothers that the Lord used their sin for good, to accomplish His sovereign purposes.
 - ◆ Where are your eyes in the midst of your trials; on the circumstance or on Jesus?

My brothers and sisters, you will face all kinds of trouble. When you do, think of it as pure joy. Your faith will be tested. You know that when this happens it will produce in you the strength to continue.

James 1: 2-3 (NIRV)

Joseph told his father Jacob about his dreams.

Jacob rebuked him. "Will your mother and I, and your brothers actually bow down to the ground before you?" Jacob thought often about the dream and pondered what it all meant.

Jacob sent Joseph to find his brothers, who were grazing their flocks in Shechem, and report back to him. Joseph arrived in Shechem but learned they moved to new pastures in Dothan.

His brothers saw him coming and plotted to kill him, throw his body in a well, and say that a wild animal killed him. Joseph's brothers grabbed him and wrestled off his rich robe. Then they threw him in a deep well. As the brothers were eating, they saw traders with their camels loaded with spices and goods they were taking to Egypt.

The brothers decided to sell Joseph to the Ishmaelite traders for 20 shekels of silver. The traders took Joseph to the slave market in Egypt and sold him to Potiphar, the Captain of the Guard.



The brothers killed a goat, and dipped Joseph's rich robe in its blood. They returned to Jacob to show him the blood-stained robe. Jacob assumed that Joseph was torn to pieces by a wild animal. **He was filled with grief, and tore his clothes.** Jacob then put on a sackcloth and cried deeply, saying that he would mourn the loss of Joseph for the rest of his life.

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him. He appointed them to be saved in keeping with His purpose.

Romans 8: 28 (NIRV)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why was it wrong for Joseph to “brag” to his brothers and his father about his dreams from God?
2. Why did the brothers dislike Joseph?
3. Instead of killing Joseph, how did his brothers get rid of him?
4. How can we celebrate success without bragging that we are better than someone else?
5. How is God sovereign and working in your life to grow your faith and trust?
6. Where do we turn to hear from God?

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

1. Like Joseph’s brothers, are you jealous of someone or dislike someone? What can you do about it?
2. What do you think Joseph would have thought about in the well?
3. What do you think about when you are in a “pit”.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER

DAY 1 (Genesis 37)

- ◆ God’s Word was not written down during Joseph’s life. In those days, God sometimes spoke to His people through dreams.
- ◆ Jesus would one day be born through Jacob’s family.

DAY 2 (Genesis 39-41)

- ◆ We learn how God carries us, and we grow through trials.
- ◆ Every trial is a lesson that prepares us for God’s plan for us.

HOW GOD DEVELOPED JOSEPH’S CHARACTER:

| | | | |
|--------------|----------|----------|-------------|
| Love | Joy | Peace | Patience |
| Kind | Good | Faithful | Gentle |
| Self Control | Hope | Strength | Forgiveness |
| Trust | Humility | Courage | Generosity |
| Perseverance | | | |

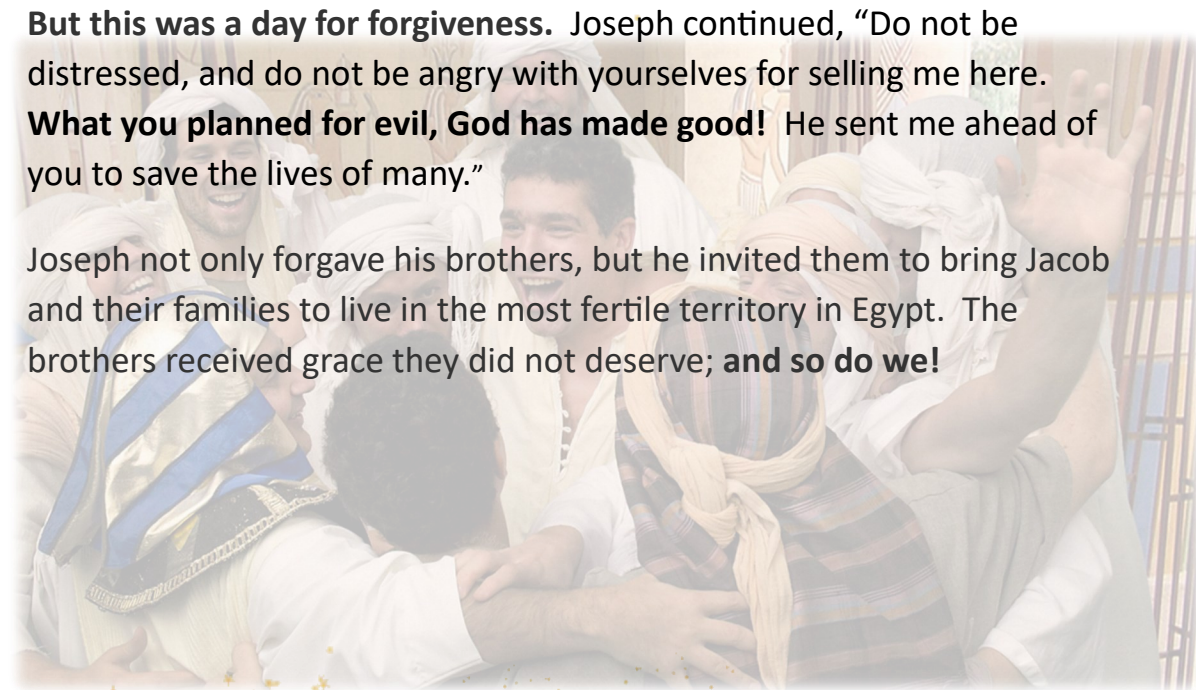
DAY 3 (Genesis 42-45)

- ◆ Forgiveness is only possible through the power of God.
- ◆ God used the circumstances in Joseph’s life to grow his faith, and trust and teach him to forgive his brothers.
- ◆ God uses the circumstances in your life to grow your faith and trust.

When Joseph heard this, he could contain himself no longer. He commanded everyone to leave his presence, except for his brothers. Then Joseph exclaimed, **“I am Joseph!”** Out of fear his brothers did not respond, having been responsible for selling Joseph into slavery.

But this was a day for forgiveness. Joseph continued, “Do not be distressed, and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here. **What you planned for evil, God has made good!** He sent me ahead of you to save the lives of many.”

Joseph not only forgave his brothers, but he invited them to bring Jacob and their families to live in the most fertile territory in Egypt. The brothers received grace they did not deserve; **and so do we!**



THOUGHT OF THE DAY

Love is patient. Love is kind. It does not want what belongs to others. It does not brag. It is not proud. It does not dishonor other people. It does not look out for its own interests. It does not easily become angry. It does not keep track of other people’s wrongs. Love is not happy with evil. But it is full of joy when the truth is spoken. It always protects. It always trusts. It always hopes. It never gives up.

1 Corinthians 13: 4-7 (NIRV)

DAY 2
Genesis 39-41



Joseph was sold as a slave to Potiphar, the captain of the guard. Joseph worked hard for his master. **God blessed Potiphar and brought success to him because of Joseph.**

Potiphar promoted Joseph to be in charge of his servants, and Joseph ran everything very well. He quickly earned Potiphar’s trust.

Joseph grew into a fine looking man, and Potiphar’s wife was attracted to him. One day she demanded, “Come to bed with me.” Joseph protested, “Your husband

trusts me and put me in charge of his household. **How could I do such a wicked thing and disobey God?”**



She continued to tempt Joseph. One day, the other servants were gone and Potiphar's wife saw another opportunity to tempt Joseph. She grabbed Joseph, who struggled to get free. **He ran off leaving Potiphar's wife holding his cloak.**

When Potiphar returned, she showed him Joseph's cloak. "That Hebrew slave tried to seduce me. I screamed, and he ran off leaving his cloak behind." Potiphar was furious, and sent Joseph to prison. **Life was unfair for Joseph, but the Lord was with him.**

The prison warden was pleased with Joseph, and promoted him to be in charge of the other prisoners. **God gave Joseph success in all he did in prison.**

At Pharaoh's palace, there was a cupbearer who served Pharaoh his drinks to make sure no one poisoned the Pharaoh. The cupbearer upset Pharaoh one day and he was sent to prison.



The Pharaoh's baker also upset the Pharaoh and he was sent to prison. Joseph was responsible for both of them. One day, Joseph saw they were looking sad, and he asked them why. **"We both had dreams, but we don't understand them," they said.**

"God can interpret dreams," Joseph told them. "Tell me your dreams."

The brothers packed gifts of balm, honey, gum, aromatic resin and nuts. Then they headed off to Egypt.

They appeared before Joseph and bowed down before him. **To their surprise, Joseph hosted an elaborate dinner in their honor.** While they enjoyed the banquet, Joseph watched his brothers, looking for signs of hatred and jealousy for Benjamin. Instead of hatred, he heard sorrow in their voices. **They regretted what they had done to Joseph, and expressed remorse for the pain they had caused their father.**

Joseph devised one final test. His officials loaded their donkeys with grain, and returned their money in each man's sack. **However, they hid an expensive cup in Benjamin's sack.**

As Joseph's brothers left the city, they were stopped by Egyptian officials who suspected thievery. They were searched, and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack of grain. **He was arrested and threatened to a life of slavery.**

Joseph framed Benjamin to see if his brothers would sacrifice their younger brother, and save themselves from punishment. However,



Judah remembered his promise to Jacob, and begged Joseph to release Benjamin. "Your servant guaranteed the boy's safety to my father.

Keep me here as a slave in place of the boy, and let him return home. Do not let me see the misery that would come upon my father."

When they arrived, they appeared before the official in charge of selling grain to foreigners. **However, they didn't recognize their brother Joseph.** They bowed before him with their faces to the ground.

Joseph pretended not to know them. He played the part of a suspicious Egyptian official, as a test to see if they had changed. He also wanted to know if Benjamin had fallen prey to their hatred. So Joseph held Simeon captive and sent the others home with grain, **demanding they return with their youngest brother.**



At first, Jacob refused to let Benjamin go to Egypt, choosing instead to leave Simeon captive. But soon their supply of grain ran low, and they needed to make another journey to Egypt. **Judah made his father a vow.**

"Send the boy along with me so that our families may live. I will guarantee his safety. If I do not bring him back to you, **I will bear the blame before you all my life.**"



The cupbearer went first. "In my dream I saw a grapevine with three branches. **The grapes ripened and I squeezed the grapes into Pharaoh's cup.** Then I put the cup in Pharaoh's hand."

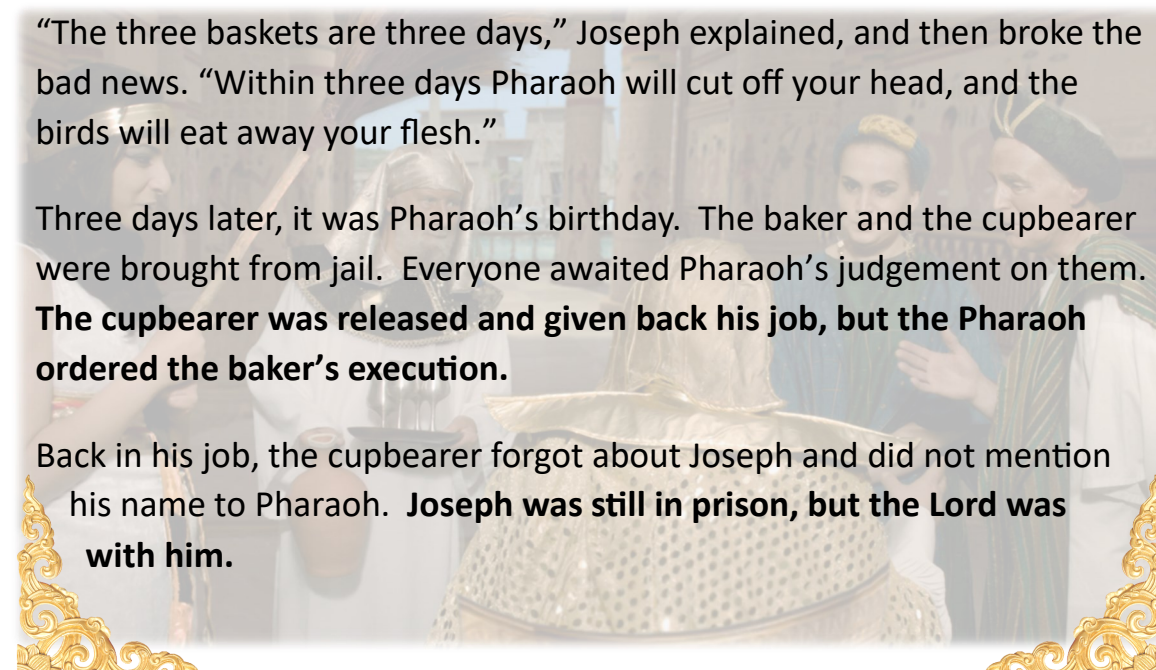
"This is what it means," Joseph told him. "The three branches are three days. In three days, Pharaoh will release you and give you back your job." Joseph then asked the cupbearer to do him a favor. **"When you get your job back, please mention me to Pharaoh."**

The baker then told his dream. **"On my head were three baskets of bread.** In the top basket were all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, but the **birds were eating the baked goods** out of the baskets."

"The three baskets are three days," Joseph explained, and then broke the bad news. "Within three days Pharaoh will cut off your head, and the birds will eat away your flesh."

Three days later, it was Pharaoh's birthday. The baker and the cupbearer were brought from jail. Everyone awaited Pharaoh's judgement on them. **The cupbearer was released and given back his job, but the Pharaoh ordered the baker's execution.**

Back in his job, the cupbearer forgot about Joseph and did not mention his name to Pharaoh. **Joseph was still in prison, but the Lord was with him.**





Two years later, Pharaoh had a dream. He was standing by the Nile River when seven fat cows came up out of the water and began to feed on the grass. **Then, seven skinny cows came out of the river and ate the fat cows.**



Pharaoh also had a second dream. He saw seven heads of grain, healthy and good growing on a single stalk. Then, seven more heads of grain sprouted. They were thin and scorched by the wind. **These thin**

heads of grain swallowed the healthy ones. Pharaoh was disturbed by his dreams, and sent for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt. However, no one could explain his dream.

DAY 3

Genesis 42-45

Pharaoh appointed Joseph as his second in command, and just as Joseph had predicted, there were seven years of plentiful harvests in Egypt.

During these years, Joseph saved a portion of all the crops grown, and stored them in storehouses. **After seven years there was more grain stored than they could measure.**



Then the seven years of famine began, just as Joseph had warned. **There were crop failures in all the world, but only in Egypt was there plenty of grain.** Joseph opened up the storehouses and sold grain to the Egyptians. Grain was also sold to those from other lands who came to Egypt in search of food.

Twenty years had passed since Joseph had been sold into slavery.

The famine was also hard on Jacob's family, so he sent Joseph's brothers into Egypt for food. But Jacob did not send Benjamin, for fear that harm might come to him. **He did not want to lose another favored son.**

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

...We are full of joy even when we suffer. We know that our suffering gives us the strength to go on. The strength to go on produces character. Character produces hope. And hope will never bring us shame. That's because God's love has been poured into our hearts....

Romans 5: 3-5 (NIRV)

OTHERS SEE OUR CHARACTER BY THE WAY WE RESPOND TO CHALLENGES

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What things happened in Joseph's life that showed God was with him?
2. How did Joseph respond to the bad things that were happening in his life?
3. Where did Joseph give credit for interpreting Pharaoh's dream?

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

1. How can you give God the glory for the things that happen to you?
2. Does being a Christian and leading a good life mean bad things will never happen to us?
3. How do you respond when people say hurtful things about you?
4. Where do you find help trusting God in tough times?
5. How do you respond to trials? Do you put your focus to the circumstances or on God?

The cupbearer remembered Joseph, and told Pharaoh about Joseph's ability to interpret dreams. The Pharaoh sent for Joseph and told him, "I have had dreams that no one can explain."

"I cannot interpret dreams," Joseph replied, "but God can." Pharaoh told Joseph his dreams.



"The two dreams mean the same thing," Joseph explained. "The seven fat cows are seven years, and the seven full heads of grain are also seven years. **There will be seven years of great plenty in all of Egypt.**"

"The seven thin cows and the seven thin heads of grain are seven years that will follow. **These will be seven years of terrible famine and hunger.**

You must choose a man with wisdom, and put him in charge of the country. During the seven years of plenty, take a fifth of the crops and store the grain in cities under guard. During the seven years of famine, use the stored grain so the people will not starve."

Pharaoh liked this plan and said, "**We will never find a wiser man than Joseph, a man who has God's spirit in him.**" Pharaoh put his ring engraved with the royal seal on Joseph's finger, making Joseph the second most powerful man in the kingdom.