

## The Story Week 3



### Joseph: From Slave to Deputy Pharaoh

In this account we have the Great-Grandson of Abraham, who because of the machinations of his father was the favored son, but not the firstborn. The effects of choices we make have consequences which are shared with those who are closest to us.

Joseph's experiences with dreams and the favored treatment he receives from Jacob were coupled together to produce a toxic dynamic in the 'home' (*tents*) which ultimately resulted in mistreatment, slavery, and a harsh and hasty coverup.

Joseph despite his experiences (*or because of his early training*) landed on his feet. After suffering for years, first as a slave. *Joseph was arguably the original #metoo, but on the other sandal in his case.* Unbelieved he was thrown into prison & rose to the top of a very small heap.

Out of this God called Joseph to first interpret Pharaoh's dream then to prepare for the prophesied famine. When the famine struck it was shown that God, behind ALL of this, provided a way of salvation not just for Joseph, but his whole family, the nascent nation of Israel's Children.

What God means for good no one can oppose. The brothers found this out and found forgiveness and redemption, Jacob found renewed joy in his last years and Joseph personified the grace that God gives to those who would trust in Him.

The story is furthering along and becoming sharply defined as one of Redemption for a group of people whom God has chosen and desires to work through – despite their protests and even best efforts to sabotage... (*sound familiar?*)

Where do you see yourself in this story?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What would it be like to be in a family with Eleven siblings?
2. What kinds of stories would Jacob have told his children about 'Uncle Esau' & 'Grandpa Isaac'?
3. Have you ever been the favorite? Or have you ever been the one who was not favored? What kinds of feelings would both experience?
4. What kind of family dynamic (dysfunction) was normal in Jacob's household? Why did Joseph's brothers want to get rid of him?
5. What was Jacob's reaction to the bad news he received about Joseph? How do you think that affected the family after that?
6. What reasons does scripture give why God allows hurtful things to happen to people?
7. What kinds of temptations did Joseph face as head of Potiphar's household? What was his response to this?
8. It's been said recently that sacrificing everything and reward do/don't go hand in hand. Joseph did the right thing and what meager status he had attained was taken from him.
  - a. How would you handle that kind of relentless pressure to do wrong?
  - b. How would you react when lies are believed about you?
9. What does Joseph's actions/status in prison reveal about his character?
10. Who got the responsibility and glory for Joseph's dream interpretations?
11. What was Joseph's job description as "deputy pharaoh"?
12. What were the positive effects of Joseph's being sold into slavery?
13. When Joseph's brothers came to get food in Egypt what kind of initial reaction do you think Joseph had? What kind of reaction would you have had? (*what would 99% of the population have done to these brothers?*)
14. What was Joseph's main concern when he was questioning his brothers?
15. Joseph wanted to test his brothers and wasn't above playing mind games on his brothers – what were some of the things he did to them? What kind of reaction would you have had in those situations?
16. What was the tipping point to cause Joseph to breakdown and reveal who he really was to his brothers? Why do you believe this caused such a reaction?
17. When Joseph did reveal himself what was the reaction of the brothers? Was this warranted? What do you think they expected to happen next?
18. Why did Joseph choose grace over revenge?
19. What does Joseph's statement "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good," tell you about God's character and power?
20. In what ways have you seen God work through bleak and hopeless situations to bring about good?
21. God redeemed a family despite the sinful actions of the brothers. Ultimately there was real forgiveness for the family God had chosen to work in and through. Does this parallel the experiences you have had personally and/or within the church? If so, in what ways?