

# JOSEPH

## SERIES

### Twelve Weeks of Life-Changing Character Studies on Joseph

*by*

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# The Owner of a Dream

## Genesis 37:1-36

**LIFE PRINCIPLE:** *God entrusts His children with dreams and visions of accomplishing great things for God's kingdom. Those who follow God's dream for their lives have received one of God's highest blessings.*

**INTRODUCTION:** Our story takes place during the "Hyksos Dynasty" of Egypt. The saga of Joseph began during the early years of this dynasty noted for its friendliness to foreigners. The time was about 1720 B.C.

Joseph was a dreamer. When his brothers saw him coming to check on them in the fields, they literally said, "Behold, the owner of a dream cometh" (Genesis 37:19). They were not glad to see him by any means, and they applied that term to him with envy and disdain in their hearts. But, regardless, Joseph did have a God-given dream for his life and he could not and would not deny it.

Webster's Dictionary says that a "dreamer" is someone who "has ideas or schemes considered impractical." In a real sense a dreamer is someone who is not satisfied with things the way they are and believes that he can see a better way and brighter future. We certainly need some dreamers. We need people who can envision a better tomorrow.

We also need spiritual Christians who can dream God's dream for their lives. When we allow Christ to live His life through us, we can make this world a better place. Joseph was a man who allowed God to flow through him and as a result, he touched the lives of hundreds of thousands of people. Nations were impacted for God because of Joseph's testimony and dream.

I want you to see with me four important Biblical insights about owning a dream for your life—a God-given dream.

### **I. THE OWNER OF A DREAM IS WONDERFULLY CHOSEN OF GOD (Genesis 37:5-6, 9)**

A. Joseph was from a family of dreamers.

1. Abraham dreamed of a great nation (Genesis 15:1-7).
  2. Jacob dreamed of a ladder at Bethel (Genesis 28:10-22).
  3. The truth is, without a dream for our lives, we are dead already and can accomplish nothing for God's kingdom.
- B. If God has given you a dream to do something with your life, don't neglect the dream. Do you have a compelling vision from God?

*"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions." (Joel 2:28)*

- C. There is a sense in which God has given every believer a special calling and dream—to be molded into the "image" of Christ. The dream of every believer should be to become Christ-like in our daily walk.

*"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren." (Romans 8:28-29)*

## **II. THE OWNER OF A DREAM WILL SURELY BE MISUNDERSTOOD**

- A. Joseph's brothers not only misunderstood him and what God was doing in his life, but they also hated him for the dream that God had given him.
- B. Joseph's brothers hated him because:
1. He was righteous (Genesis 37:2; I John 3:12).

*"Those that hate to be reformed hate those that would reform them." –Matthew Henry*

2. He was loved by his father (Genesis 37:3-4).
3. He had a dream for his life (Genesis 37:5-10).
4. He was the object of their envy (Genesis 37:11).

### III. THE OWNER OF A DREAM WILL SUFFER PERSECUTION (Genesis 37:18-36)

God is going to test us all. According to J. Robert Clinton in his book *The Making of a Leader*, we must pass three tests if we are going to be greatly used (I Peter 1:7).

1. Integrity Test—God cannot and will not bless those who are without integrity. (Integrity means to be the same in the dark as you are in the light.)
  2. Obedience Test—If we have a consistent pattern of obedience to God's will, we qualify for greater use.
  3. Word Test (Romans 10:17)—When God speaks to us through His Word, He expects us to share it with others just as Joseph did.
- A. Persecution is to be expected if you are going to dream a dream for God.
  - B. The Apostle Paul suffered untold persecution.
  - C. Jesus was persecuted unto death. Jesus warned us to expect the same thing in the following verses:

*"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets..."* (Matthew 5:10-12)

*"If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you"*  
(John 15:20)

#### IV. THE OWNER OF A DREAM WILL SEE THE DREAM DIE BEFORE IT LIVES (Genesis 37:9, 36, 39:20)

- A. Joseph's dream died as a slave and prisoner in Egypt. Imagine what must have been going through his mind during those years. He probably said, "God, why give me dreams for my life if all I'm ever going to do is rot in this prison?"
- B. DO NOT give up if it seems that your dream has died. The way of life is through death. Jesus said:

*"Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."*  
(John 12:24)

- C. Think of all the men whose dreams died before they were fulfilled:
1. Abraham dreamed of a son, but it did not happen until Sarah's womb had died.
  2. Adam and Eve dreamed of having a son who would be the "promised one," but Cain came and was a murderer.
  3. Moses dreamed of delivering Israel from bondage, but he spent 40 years on the back side of the desert where his dream died.
  4. Even Christ dreamed of delivering the world from sin, but He had to spend three days and nights of death in the earth.

#### CALL TO ACTION:

What should you do if your dream has not been fulfilled and it seems that no one understands or cares?

1. Continue to dream.
2. Continue to obey God.

3. Continue to believe God.

### **One Day I Dreamed**

One day as I was fast asleep  
I had this stirring dream;  
I was caught up to be with God.  
With angels it did seem.  
And while up there, I met God's saints  
From many parts of earth.  
Now some were great and famous men.  
And some of humble birth.  
I talked to one great saint of God,  
The first one I had met.  
He told me how he died for Christ.  
His words I can't forget.  
He lived, he said, in Bible days  
And died at Nero's stake.  
"It was a joy to give my all  
And burn for Jesus' sake."  
"I was so glad to die for Christ."  
With humble words he said.  
But as I listened to it all.  
I bowed my guilty head.  
Another man then gently spoke,  
"Here is my story, friend.  
'Twas Cannibals that took my life,  
Because I would not bend.  
I tried to tell those heathens  
Of Christ who came to die.  
They ate my flesh and drank my blood.  
But sent my soul on high.  
Of course up here are millions more  
With stories rare and true.  
But friend, before I tell you more,  
Let's hear your story too."  
I am ashamed of how I've failed.  
I've known no sacrifice.  
I am ashamed of how I've failed,

I've paid such little price.  
I've never even given funds  
To send the gospel out,  
I've lived a life of luxury  
And never done without.  
Those costly cars, those extra clothes  
Seem needless now, and vain;  
The very thought of how I've lived  
Now fills my heart with pain.  
Just then it seemed that Jesus said,  
"Take up my cross today;  
I'll give to you another chance  
To work and give and pray."  
My guilty heart began to burn,  
My nervous body shake.  
Then I awoke with tear-filled eyes  
With new resolves to make.  
I told the Lord from that day forth  
My best, my all I'd give  
To win the lost in every place,  
For this alone I'd live.  
I told the Lord that from then on  
I would not waste a dime;  
That I would give myself to prayer  
And really use my time.  
That I would seek with all my heart  
That power from above  
To help me tell a heathen world  
Of Jesus' grace and love.  
—*Pilgrim Gospel Messenger*

# Joseph—A Man with God-Given Success

## Genesis 39:1-6

**LIFE PRINCIPLE:** *God-given success begins with God's presence, blesses those around us, and glorifies God in this world.*

**INTRODUCTION:** The name *Joseph* means “Jehovah has added.” All through his life, God was blessing Joseph and adding to his success. He was a man that exemplifies the character of Christ, and is thought by many to be a type of Christ. His character was flawless; even in the midst of the most adverse circumstances, you can see in Joseph’s life the supernatural blessing of God. Joseph had the indomitable spirit of a man who loved God and would not yield to those who invited him to lower his standard.

We find him in this narrative a purchased slave. However, in his heart he is the servant of the King of Kings—not Potiphar. Joseph knows that whatever his station in life, he still belongs to God. Although others may think they are in control, there is a sovereign Lord who rules in the affairs of men. Joseph’s life is a testimony to the fact that a Christian can receive the blessing of God whether he is the chief executive officer of a major company or the lowliest clerk on the bottom rung of the corporate ladder.

I want you to see four major spiritual insights concerning God-given success.

### I. GOD-GIVEN SUCCESS BEGINS WITH THE PRESENCE OF GOD IN YOUR LIFE (Genesis 39:1-2)

- A. God’s presence in our lives is the greatest success of all (Jeremiah 9:23-24).
- B. If you do not know Jesus Christ personally you can never be a real success (John 5:24).

- C. Real success extends beyond our few short years on this earth. Real success will last for eternity.

## II. GOD-GIVEN SUCCESS IS MEASURED BY THE GLORY YOUR LIFE GIVES TO GOD (Genesis 39:3-4)

- A. Joseph's life was a visible display of the presence of God (I Corinthians 10:31).
- B. Others could see God in the way Joseph lived his life. The greatest success you will ever find will happen in your life when others say, "I saw God in his life!"
- C. Success is not measured by your station in life. It is measured by the Christ-like character you possess.

"It is not great talent God blesses, but great likeness to Christ." —Robert Murrey-McCheyn

## III. GOD-GIVEN SUCCESS BRINGS GOD'S BLESSING UPON THE WORLD AROUND US (Genesis 39:5)

- A. I believe that God blesses corporations and governments because Christians are involved in their businesses. I believe this is why God has blessed America. Joseph was appointed overseer in Egypt, which means "chief accountant" (Genesis 39:4-5; Psalm 75:6-7). As a result, God even blessed the unsaved men for whom Joseph worked.
- B. I wonder how many have been blessed through the ages because Christians were present. God would have even blessed and spared Sodom and Gomorrah if they had been willing. This is a principle of Scripture:
  1. God blessed Laban because of Jacob (Genesis 30:27).
  2. You have no idea how many are being blessed around you because you are a Christian.

3. The unsaved get in on the fallout from the explosion of blessings on Christians.

#### **IV. GOD-GIVEN SUCCESS IS BESTOWED UPON LIVES THAT ARE LIVING TESTIMONIES (Genesis 39:3, 6)**

- A. The blessings of God are earned. They are not free. Joseph earned his blessing through godliness and integrity.
- B. Some of the blessings of God are earned through suffering. This is exemplified in Joseph's life.

“Success and suffering are vitally and organically linked. If you succeed without suffering, it is because someone else has suffered before you; if you suffer without succeeding, it is that someone else may succeed after you.”—Edward Judson.

- C. How effective is your testimony? Do you have a dynamic testimony? (Acts 4:13)
- D. God-given success has a price. You must walk with God. How is your testimony in the world and at work?

#### **CALL TO ACTION:**

What kind of successes are you striving for?

If you have God's blessing on your life, it does not matter what your occupation or status in life—you are success in the eyes of God.

You will never know real success until you know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior.