

# Stark Road Gospel Hall

## Bimonthly Bible Readings

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### Character Attributes That Shaped and Governed the Life of Joseph

#### Joseph's background - A less than ideal home-life.

- a) Joseph never used a dysfunctional home as an excuse for not fulfilling God's purpose in his life. Strife and jealousy between the four women in the home led to a division between the children "Is this your son's coat?" Demonstrated favoritism in the home led to jealousy between siblings. (Gen 37:4)
- b) God actually used the strife in the family for His own purposes.
- c) There is no perfect home because all homes are made up of sinners. Parents do their best (Heb 12:9-10) "Our earthly fathers disciplined us as they thought best..."
- d) God is in control of all the circumstances around us; He can use us to fulfill His purposes in and for our lives, not regardless of, but because of our background! "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." (Ro 8:28)

#### I. A God-Focused Perspective on Life

- a) Joseph's "life view" or sometimes referred to as "World view" focused on God's purposes and God's movements - "God sent me before you to preserve life" (45:5) "God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth" (45:7) "It was not you who sent me here, but God" (45:8)
- b) We must not view our lives as simply a series of reactions to external circumstances. It's not even enough to view our lives as what "we are going to do for God". We must view our lives as what "God is wanting to do through us". "That I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." (Php 3:12) (If by any means I might get a grip of the purpose for which He laid hold of me).
- c) Am I fulfilling my purpose? Am I a functioning member of the body? (1 Cor 12), "Stirring up the gift?" (2Tim 1:6)
- d) Joseph's dreams represent divine revelation as to the purpose for life. Also (Psalm 73) "Until I went into the sanctuary of God; *then* understood I their end."
- e) Some good life-focus issues for the Believer.
  - 1. "That I might know him" (Php 3:10) ... A relationship to build.
  - 2. "Worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him." (John 4:23)... A God to worship.
  - 3. "Ye were called ...that ye should follow his (*Christ's*) steps:" (1Pe 2:21) ... A model to follow.
  - 4. "I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17)... A life work to accomplish.
  - 5. "Let your light so shine before men (Mat 5:16)... A personal testimony to display.
  - 6. "That the world may know"(John 17:23)... A Corporate (Assembly) testimony to maintain.
  - 7. "Glorify God in your body and in your spirit" (1Cor 6:20)... Personal holiness to guard.
  - 8. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel"(Mark 16:15)... A treasure to distribute.

#### II. A Healthy Perspective on Sin

- a) This was seen in chapter 39 in Potiphar's house, but wasn't developed there - a correct perspective on sin is not developed in a moment of crisis - it's nurtured and developed before a crisis develops and then governs our behavior in the crisis.
- b) All sin is against God "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" (Gen 39:9); David, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done *this* evil in thy sight" (Ps 51:4)
- c) One of the greatest preservatives in life is to see sin the way God sees it - it strips away any sense of attractiveness, allurements, or appeal and shows sin for the ugly, destructive thing it really is. God sees sin as Cancer, filth, rot.
- d) Joseph characterizes perhaps better than any other old testament character, the truth of (1Co 6:18) "Flee fornication." (2Ti 2:22) "Flee also youthful lusts" Run from it! Get away! Whatever it takes, do not leave yourself in a position of vulnerability where it may be easy to fall.

### III. A Strong Spirit of Perseverance, Patience and Consistency

- a) We see the "highlights" of Joseph's life - the movement to Egypt, the rise to prominence in Potiphar's house, the movement into prison, the rise to favor with the keeper of the prison, the move to Pharaoh's palace, the rise to prominence in the administration of Egypt, but we mustn't miss that there were extended periods of "waiting" which separated these events.
- b) There were years as a shepherd, as Potiphar's servant, in prison. However, in all these times "The Lord was with Joseph".
- c) Joseph's experience of obscurity and training is common to Jacob, Moses, David, and the apostle Paul. All these men learned God before they performed any exploits or public service.
- d) New testament principles would include – Patience (waiting God's time), Steadfastness (not wavering), Endurance (sticking with it).
  1. "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience (undistracted endurance) the race that is set before us" (Heb 12:1)
  2. "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope." (Rom 8:25)
  3. "But if we hope for (have confidence in) that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." (Rom 8:25)
  4. "For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." Heb 10:36
  5. "Knowing *this*, that the trying (testing) of your faith worketh patience." Jas 1:3
  6. "But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Jas 1:4

### IV. A Forgiving Spirit

- a) (Gen 45:14-15) "And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him." *All his brethren!*
- b) Progress in divine things demands a correct attitude towards others, and a willingness to lay down my own claims and leave them with God
- c) An unforgiving spirit, or a spirit of feeling "wronged", or a spirit of harboring some injustice that I feel others have done to me is absolutely crippling in progressing for God. "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled" (Heb 12:15)
- d) One of the secrets to Joseph's life of consistent faithfulness is that he must have found grace to "lay aside" his own mistreatment and leave it all with God. Not only from his brethren, but also later from Potiphar's wife (who wrongly accused him) and even from the Butler (who forgot him).
  1. "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." (Eph 4:32)
  2. "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven." (Mat 18:21-22)
  3. "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously." (1Pet 2:23)

### V. A Sense of Personal Humility

Joseph always attributed his abilities and successes to God's power and plan.

- a) "And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, *It is* not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer." (Ge 41:16) "God hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt." (Gen 45:8)
- b) "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all *of you* be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." (1Pe 5:5)

### VI. Faithfulness and Integrity in Secular Service

- a) Joseph was faithful whether keeping his father's sheep, doing his father's bidding in taking provisions to his brethren that despised him. He worked as a trusted servant in Potiphar's house, served the keeper of the prison, and ultimately served as second-in-command to Pharaoh.
- b) "Serving God" is not just confined to what we would consider "spiritual activity" such as preaching, speaking to others of Christ, assembly life, etc. - "serving God" involves every activity, in every sphere of life.
  1. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (1Co 10:31)
  2. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. (Col 3:17)
  3. "Servants, obey in all things *your* masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men." (Col 3:22-23)