



## REDEMPTION BIBLE STUDY – #4

### THE LIFE OF A DREAMER

The Redemption of Joseph

### The Story

Genesis 37:5-8

Then Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. <sup>6</sup>He said to them, "Please listen to this dream which I have had; <sup>7</sup>for behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and behold, my sheaf stood up and also remained standing; and behold, your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf." <sup>8</sup>Then his brothers said to him, "Are you actually going to reign over us? Or are you really going to rule over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

Joseph was a dreamer, but his dreams were provided directly from God Himself. It took many years but Joseph's dreams played out before his eyes and the eyes of his family. Through it we can learn how God watches out for us and sees us through the worst of times and that He is always with us through the obstacles of life.

If I asked who the GOAT (greatest of all time) in the world of is, there would be little argument that Michael Jordan would be the answer. Jordan still holds many records from his time on the court. And more than the numbers, he was always a quality player. A team player that didn't really seem like he cared about the records, but wanted to do his job the best he could and support his teammates that were around him.

When Michael had made his mark on the NBA world his mother began writing children's books. She wrote about family values and more. In one of her books, Big Dream, near the end of the book she wrote, "Saying you want something is fine and well; a good start. Doing something about it is what really counts." At the very end of the books, when the mother puts her son to bed after his first successful basketball game she tells he son with pride, "I guess you aren't just a dreamer, but a doer Michael".

Like Joseph, Michael Jordan was a dreamer. Growing up in the poor southern farm country of Wilmington, North Carolina he dreamt about someday being a basketball star. Like many other young boys all over the world he stood on the court and counted down... "3, 2, 1..." and throws the ball up on "1" and wins the championship game for his team. He was a dreamer.

But as much as he dreamed of stardom, Michael ran into a few roadblocks along the way. From the day he was given his first basketball until the last famous appearance when he was awarded the Presidential



Medal of Freedom, Michael has never lost sight of his dreams. He has been one of the hardest working athletes of all time and is always trying to fulfill the dreams given him.

When you see Jordan holding a trophy, he is not usually showing it off, He is cradling it, and almost like he and his achieved dreams are one... and they are. This is true of all of us.

When Jordan was a sophomore in high school he tried out for the varsity team. This GOAT should have been good enough... But the coach cut him from the varsity team and sent him down to play jr. varsity. I'm sure that his dream was in question, but still he pushed on.

Despite the obstacles that came his way, Jordan did achieve his dream. His fans remember the highlights, the game he played a horrific case of the flu, and his dunks here he left from the foul line, his no-look shots that hit nothing but net and many more.

We tend to forget about the failures that happened along the way. Michael Jordan, the greatest basketball player of all time explained reaching his dreams while traversing life's rocky roads this way...

"I've missed more than 9000 shots in my [career](#). I've lost almost 300 games. 26 times I've been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed." This is the same for all of us working to attain our dreams

Proverbs 3:6 tells us, "In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight."

You see that God will make our paths straight when we acknowledge Him in all things. What it doesn't say is that there won't be obstacles along the way. He did say that no matter where our path takes us, He will always be with us. The story of Michael Jordan was not easy... the story of Joseph wasn't easy either, but God knew right where his paths would take him and He went before Joseph through every high and low.

If we just look at the middle and end of the story of Joseph (or Jordan) we will see all of the glory and rewards. However, starting at the beginning and looking at the obstacles we see a different story. I challenge you to read the entire story of Joseph before moving forward with this study. Read Genesis 37 – 50.



## **DIGGING DEEPER**

1) How have you been treated like Joseph was as a boy?

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2) How have you seen God's hand in the redemption from your youthful choices?

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3) Are there others that you need to go to and confess that you acted like Joseph's brothers? Who? Are you ready to go to them?

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4) What did you see in Joseph's life that speaks to you about your need to change up your life?

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5) Having been hurt in life, are there those that you need to forgive? Make a plan to move on this.

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## **PRAYER**

Heavenly Father, I thank you for the promise that we have that everything that we face and go through is for our growth and your glory. May I always be ready for those things that will come against me and may I always look to you for your ability to carry me through these tough times. I pray that you will continue to show me how much you love me in the good times and the tough times and may I always be attentive to your calling on my life. In Jesus name, Amen.



## WHAT HAPPENED TO JOSEPH TO AND HIS FAMILY

### **WHAT DID IT MEAN TO THEM**

#### **1) Joseph His Father's Favorite**

The redemption story of Joseph begins and ends with his family. The years between the start and finish are laced with strands of obstacles and disasters. Born to his father, Jacob, in his old age, the Bible tells us that Joseph was his father's favorite (Gen 37:3). Joseph was already hated by his brothers for this fact alone. But then one day Joseph had a dream and he shared with his brothers. Genesis 37:5-8 is the verse at the beginning of this study. So when Joseph shared this dream with his brothers they hated him even more.

Joseph is so hated by his brothers that they plan to kill him. However at the last minute his oldest brother, Reuben stepped in and argued that they shouldn't kill him, but instead they should throw him in an open pit. While the brothers were sitting having lunch a caravan came by and they made a deal with the people traveling to have them buy Joseph as a slave. They thought that this would be the end of the "dreamer".

#### **2) Continuation of Joseph's Troubles**

The Ishmaelites that bought Joseph took him to Egypt where they sold him to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh. (Genesis 39:1). Even as a slave Joseph never forgot his dreams and he worked hard. Like Michael Jordan with his dream the road wasn't easy. After a while Joseph found favor in Potiphar's eyes. He worked his way up until he was the head of all of Potiphar's household. God was looking out for Joseph and blessing him for his loyalty to Him. There were many servants and much business that all fell under the manager's responsibilities of "The Dreamer".

In the book of Genesis, Chapter 39, we can read that Joseph had eventually taken over all of the work of Potiphar responsibilities and it is said that Potiphar "did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate." (Vs 6). There was only one thing that Joseph was to have no part in and that was Potiphar's wife. However, his wife was attracted to Joseph and invited him into her bedroom, but Joseph refused her. Day after day she propositioned Joseph and each time he refused.

Genesis 39:8-9 But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. 9There is no one greater in this

house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

One day when Joseph was in the house and Potiphar's wife was the only other one home he was close to her and again she propositioned him. As he turned to run she got a hold of his outer garment and pulled it off of him. He had to run off without his garment.

Jonah 39:17-18 When Potiphar came home she told him, "The Hebrew servant whom you brought to us came in to me to mock me; so it happened, as I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me and fled outside." Potiphar's anger raged and without asking Joseph his side of the story he had him send into prison.

### 3) **One step forward and two steps back... and forward again**

When Joseph got to the prison where Pharaoh's prisoners were held again he found favor in the eyes of the one in charge. Before long he was in charge of the other prisoner's in the prison. One day the cupbearer and the baker for Pharaoh were sent to the prison by their master. A while later both the cupbearer and the baker had dreams that worried them. They couldn't find anyone to interpret their dreams until Joseph (the "dreamer") told them that with God's help he could interpret them.

He explained that the cupbearer would be restored to his original position in 3 days and that the baker would be killed and eaten by the birds in three days. Joseph asked the cupbearer to remember him when he was restored. Unfortunately the cupbearer completely forgot about Joseph.

Two years later Joseph was still in prison and Pharaoh had two dreams and called on everyone he could find to interpret them. When he couldn't find anyone the cupbearer remembered Joseph in prison and told Pharaoh about him. He called Joseph up out of prison and was happy with him and his interpretation.

Genesis 41:17-32

So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "In my dream, there I was, standing on the bank of the Nile; <sup>18</sup> and behold, seven cows, fat and fine-looking came up out of the Nile, and they grazed in the marsh grass. <sup>19</sup> Then behold, seven other cows came up after them, poor and very ugly and thin, such as I had never seen for ugliness in all the land of Egypt; <sup>20</sup> and the thin and ugly cows ate the first seven fat cows. <sup>21</sup> Yet when they had devoured them, it could not be detected that they had devoured them, for they were just as ugly as before. Then I awoke. <sup>22</sup> I saw also in my dream, and behold, seven ears of grain, full and good, came up on a single stalk; <sup>23</sup> and behold, seven ears, withered, thin, *and* scorched by the east wind sprouted up after them; <sup>24</sup> and the thin ears swallowed the seven good ears. Then I told it to the soothsayer priests, but there was no one who could explain it to me."

<sup>25</sup> And Joseph said to Pharaoh, “Pharaoh’s dreams are one *and the same*; God has told to Pharaoh what He is about to do. <sup>26</sup> The seven good cows are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years; the dreams are one *and the same*. <sup>27</sup> The seven thin and ugly cows that came up after them are seven years, and the seven thin ears scorched by the east wind will be seven years of famine. <sup>28</sup> It is as I have spoken to Pharaoh: God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do. <sup>29</sup> Behold, seven years of great abundance are coming in all the land of Egypt; <sup>30</sup> and after them seven years of famine will come, and all the abundance will be forgotten in the land of Egypt, and the famine will ravage the land. <sup>31</sup> So the abundance will be unknown in the land because of that subsequent famine; for it *will be* very severe. <sup>32</sup> Now as for the repeating of the dream to Pharaoh twice, *it means* that the matter is confirmed by God, and God will quickly bring it about.

Joseph told Pharaoh what he should do to prepare for the 7 years of drought, by taking advantage of the 7 years of abundance. Pharaoh was very pleased with Joseph and considered him the godliest and wisest of all the men in Egypt and put him in charge running everything in all of Egypt.

Genesis 41:39-40

Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you.”

#### 4) God’s Timing

Even at this point we can see that God has had a plan all along for Joseph. From the time that Joseph had his dreams as a boy God has moved ahead of him in all he came up against. From favorite son to being thrown into the pit, from the pit to a slave in Egypt to running the entire affairs and household of Potiphar, from prison to becoming the one in charge all of the prisoners, from a dream interpreter of the baker and cupbearer to two more years of prison, from interpreter of Pharaoh’s dreams to running the entire nation... through it all God was redeeming Joseph over and over again. But the best is yet to come.

#### 5) Fulfillment of the dreams

It is amazing how dreams play a part in nearly all of Joseph’s life. So far all of the dreams that Joseph has been involved in have seen God’s hand working to His glory through the life of Joseph. Through all of these years since he was sold by his brothers, Joseph has not forgotten the dreams he had as a boy. He has waiting on the Lord through it all.

If we fast forward through the 7 years of plenty and into the 7 years of want, we see God’s hand again at work to fulfill the dreams of Joseph.

#### Genesis 41:56-57

When the famine had spread over the whole country, Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold grain to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe throughout Egypt. <sup>57</sup> And all the world came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe everywhere. The stage is set for Joseph and his family that he has been separated from for many years.

Joseph's father, Jacob, sent his remaining sons to Egypt to get food so that they didn't starve to death. When they arrive Joseph recognized them but they did not recognize Joseph. He tested them over and over again and found that they were different than they had been when he was a boy. When they had arrived in front of Joseph the dream that Joseph had dreamed as a boy was fulfilled.

#### Genesis 42:6

Now Joseph was the governor of the land, the person who sold grain to all its people. So when Joseph's brothers arrived, they bowed down to him with their faces to the ground.

At the end of the story of Jacob, Joseph and his brothers there is a verse that speaks to the entire story of Joseph. God had been faithful to Joseph, because Joseph had remained faithful to God. Joseph forgave his brothers because he believed the words he gave his brothers.

#### Genesis 50:19-21

But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? <sup>20</sup> You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. <sup>21</sup> So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.



## **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO US**

There are many things that we can gather from the story of Joseph. He was a man of amazing character, faith and forgiveness. Let's take a look at those things that we should take away from this great example of what God wants from each of us.

### **1) The evil of hatred and jealousy**

When Joseph's brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him. (Genesis 37: 4)

Driven by hatred jealousy, Joseph's brothers planned to do him harm and sold him as a slave. To explain Joseph's absence to their father, they soaked his beautiful coat (a gift from his father) in blood and gave it to Jacob. He believed that his favorite son had been killed and eaten by a wild animal.

In today's world we can turn on the TV and see reports of murders because of envy and jealousy. The Bible tells us this about fights and envy.

"What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want." (James 4:1)

This issue is nothing new in our civilization, it has been here since Cain and Able and will not end until we are all one day in heaven.

### **2) The importance of honesty**

The Lord was with Joseph; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there. The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care because the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did. (Genesis 39: 21-23)

Joseph was blessed by God and he was an upstanding young man, when tempted by Potiphar's wife he remained strong and did not give in to her, but he was unfairly imprisoned for his her lies. Sometimes, we will pay a high price to maintain our Christian integrity in a world whose system is seemingly being controlled but satan himself but God is with His children as he was with Joseph.

God had a plan and released Joseph from prison because of the gift the Lord had given him to interpret dreams. After having interpreted Pharaoh's dream and then explaining what the course of action should be followed Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of the entire nation.





“You will be over my house, and your mouth will rule over my people, only on the throne I will be greater than you”. (Genesis 41:40)

This shows the importance of staying the course and staying strong even in the midst of what seems like a disaster. God does not forget us and we can rest assured that when we remain loyal to Him our reward will one day come. If we keep God first in all we do and rest on Him in the good times and bad, all of what we do will succeed.

### **3) Forgiveness has the power to restore**

Then Joseph said to his brothers, “Come close to me.” When they had done so, he said, “I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. (Genesis 45: 4-5)

Even before revealing his true identity to his brothers, In Genesis 42:21, they confessed the evil they did, twenty years later after selling their brother as a slave, they still felt remorse for what they had done, and Joseph, after tested them to confirm that they were truly sorry. Once he was convinced, he forgave them without any reservation. It was then that he saw the way that God had worked through their evil and his struggles to finish His work.

We must always be willing to forgive those that hurt us; in doing so we will be fulfilling His plans. God is always at work in our lives even in the most painful situations.

As for you, you meant evil against me, *but* God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to keep many people alive. (Genesis 50:20)

### **4) Knowing our purpose is important**

But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

*Genesis 45: 7*

From the beginning of Joseph’s story, we can see how he had faith and knew what his mission was – serving God and others – that kept him steady even in trials and the one who went through so many misfortunes became the second most important man in Egypt. José’s story shows that even in adverse situations we must do our best and when we know our purpose and who is on our side we have nothing to fear. We must learn to identify blessings in the guise of trials.