

Finding Your Meaning and Purpose in the Journey

The Life of Joseph the Dreamer, Discovering God's Purpose Every Day

1) Genesis 37: 3 – 11 NLT

Jacob loved Joseph more than any of his other children because Joseph had been born to him in his old age. So one day Jacob had a special gift made for Joseph—a beautiful robe. ⁴ But his brothers hated Joseph because their father loved him more than the rest of them. They couldn't say a kind word to him.

⁵ One night Joseph had a dream, and when he told his brothers about it, they hated him more than ever. ⁶ "Listen to this dream," he said. ⁷ "We were out in the field, tying up bundles of grain. Suddenly my bundle stood up, and your bundles all gathered around and bowed low before mine!"

⁸ His brothers responded, "So you think you will be our king, do you? Do you actually think you will reign over us?" And they hated him all the more because of his dreams and the way he talked about them.

⁹ Soon Joseph had another dream, and again he told his brothers about it. "Listen, I have had another dream," he said. "The sun, moon, and eleven stars bowed low before me!"

¹⁰ This time he told the dream to his father as well as to his brothers, but his father scolded him. "What kind of dream is that?" he asked. "Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow to the ground before you?" ¹¹ But while his brothers were jealous of Joseph, his father wondered what the dreams meant.

1. Do you think the fact that Jacob loved Joseph more than his other sons created problems within their family?

2. What is the significance of the robe Jacob gave Joseph?

3. What do you think God is telling Joseph through these dream-visions?

2) Genesis 37: 26 – 28, 36

²⁶ Judah said to his brothers, "What will we gain by killing our brother? We'd have to cover up the crime."²⁷ Instead of hurting him, let's sell him to those Ishmaelite traders. After all, he is our brother—our own flesh and blood!" And his brothers agreed.

²⁸ So when the Ishmaelites, who were Midianite traders, came by, Joseph's brothers pulled him out of the cistern and sold him to them for twenty pieces of silver. And the traders took him to Egypt.

³⁶ Meanwhile, the Midianite traders arrived in Egypt, where they sold Joseph to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Potiphar was captain of the palace guard.

1. Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers for 20 pieces of silver. Who else was betrayed for pieces of silver?

2. Who was Joseph sold to in Egypt?

3) Genesis 38: 1 – 23 NLT

When Joseph was taken to Egypt by the Ishmaelite traders, he was purchased by Potiphar, an Egyptian officer. Potiphar was captain of the guard for Pharaoh, the king of Egypt.

² The Lord was with Joseph, so he succeeded in everything he did as he served in the home of his Egyptian master. ³ Potiphar noticed this and realized that the Lord was with Joseph, giving him success in everything he did. ⁴ This pleased Potiphar, so he soon made Joseph his personal attendant. He put him in charge of his entire household and everything he owned. ⁵ From the day Joseph was put in charge of his master's household and property, the Lord began to bless Potiphar's household for Joseph's sake. All his household affairs ran smoothly, and his crops and livestock flourished. ⁶ So Potiphar gave Joseph complete administrative responsibility over everything he owned. With Joseph there, he didn't worry about a thing—except what kind of food to eat!

Joseph was a very handsome and well-built young man, ⁷ and Potiphar's wife soon began to look at him lustfully. "Come and sleep with me," she demanded.

⁸ But Joseph refused. "Look," he told her, "my master trusts me with everything in his entire household. ⁹ No one here has more authority than I do. He has held back nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How could I do such a wicked thing? It would be a great sin against God."

¹⁰ She kept putting pressure on Joseph day after day, but he refused to sleep with her, and he kept out of her way as much as possible. ¹¹ One day, however, no one else was around when he went in to do his work. ¹² She came and grabbed him by his cloak, demanding, "Come on, sleep with me!" Joseph tore himself away, but he left his cloak in her hand as he ran from the house.

¹³ When she saw that she was holding his cloak and he had fled, ¹⁴ she called out to her servants. Soon all the men came running. "Look!" she said. "My husband has brought this Hebrew slave here to make fools of us! He came into my room to rape me, but I screamed. ¹⁵ When he heard me scream, he ran outside and got away, but he left his cloak behind with me."

¹⁶ She kept the cloak with her until her husband came home. ¹⁷ Then she told him her story. “That Hebrew slave you’ve brought into our house tried to come in and fool around with me,” she said. ¹⁸ “But when I screamed, he ran outside, leaving his cloak with me!”

¹⁹ Potiphar was furious when he heard his wife’s story about how Joseph had treated her. ²⁰ So he took Joseph and threw him into the prison where the king’s prisoners were held, and there he remained. ²¹ But the Lord was with Joseph in the prison and showed him his faithful love. And the Lord made Joseph a favorite with the prison warden.

²² Before long, the warden put Joseph in charge of all the other prisoners and over everything that happened in the prison. ²³ The warden had no more worries, because Joseph took care of everything. The Lord was with him and caused everything he did to succeed.

1. What does verse 2 here tell us about the meaning of life?
2. What did Potiphar notice about Joseph, and what does this tell us about our daily lives?
3. What does verse 9 tell us about Joseph’s awareness of the presence of God with him?
4. What does verse 21 tell us about God’s relationship with Joseph, and what does this mean for us?
5. How did Joseph prosper in prison, and what does this tell us about our finding meaning and purpose even in difficult circumstances?
6. Both Potiphar and the Warden trusted Joseph. What was the foundation of that trust? Does being trustworthy always make life easier? Does it make it more meaningful?
7. Did the trustworthiness Joseph learned in the tough times prepare him for the responsibilities that would be required to save the world during the seven-year famine? What does that mean for us?

4) Genesis 41: 14 – 16, 37 – 41 NLT

¹⁴ Pharaoh sent for Joseph at once, and he was quickly brought from the prison. After he shaved and changed his clothes, he went in and stood before Pharaoh. ¹⁵ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I had a dream last night, and no one here can tell me what it means. But I have heard that when you hear about a dream you can interpret it.”

¹⁶ “It is beyond my power to do this,” Joseph replied. “But God can tell you what it means and set you at ease.”

³⁷ Joseph’s suggestions were well received by Pharaoh and his officials. ³⁸ So Pharaoh asked his officials, “Can we find anyone else like this man so obviously filled with the spirit of God?” ³⁹ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has revealed the meaning of the dreams to you, clearly no one else is as intelligent or wise as you are. ⁴⁰ You will be in charge of my court, and all my people will take orders from you. Only I, sitting on my throne, will have a rank higher than yours.”

⁴¹ Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I hereby put you in charge of the entire land of Egypt.”

1. Did Joseph eventually see the dream God gave him fulfilled?
2. Did Joseph say where the true meaning of prophetic dreams and visions comes from?