

**Joseph:  
Daydream Believer  
Episode 3**

**M**aybe you've noticed that life isn't always fair. Here's a small consolation: *"When you fall, I'll be there to catch you. With love, the floor."* Then there's this request that arrived at the North Pole: *"Dear Santa: I've been good all year. Okay, most of the time. Well, once in a while. Forget it, I'll buy my own stuff."*

Fairness is the cornerstone of our judicial system of "blind justice." Does God deal with us fairly? The late Brennan Manning testified,

*"My trust in God flows out of the experience of His loving me, day in and day out, whether the day is stormy or fair, whether I'm sick or in good health, whether I'm in a state of grace or disgrace. He comes to me where I live and loves me as I am."*

Some 19 centuries before Christ, Jacob's favorite son, Joseph, is kidnapped, sold by his brothers into slavery and tossed into prison, wrongfully accused by his boss' horny wife of attempted rape. Yet he relies on God's promise -- in two dreams -- that will one day find him ruling over his parents and siblings. Until then Joe needs to experience God's humbling process of training for maturity.

***Kitchen Aides***

**Let's read Genesis 40:1-23.**

Jacob's fellow inmates include Pharaoh's butler who'd had a huge staff at the royal vineyards and wine cellar, and Pharaoh's chief baker. One night both of these high-ranking servants each has a puzzling dream. Joseph senses their anxious yearning for an explanation. But first, He acknowledges God as the sole interpreter of dreams.

The king's butler dreamed of a vine with three branches. He crushes its grapes into a cup for Pharaoh. Joe's interpretation: "In three days Pharaoh will liberate and reinstate you." Seizing this propitious opening, Joseph implores the butler to ask Pharaoh to pardon him also, especially since he's innocent of a bum rap.

Hoping for an equally positive translation, the chief baker recaps his dream in which he had three baskets of bread on his head. Birds feasted on the top basket. With God's insight Joseph explains that in three days Pharaoh will have him beheaded and skewered.

Three days pass and the king restores his butler and has the baker impaled. As for putting in a good word for Joe, the butler *drops the ball*. That costs Joseph a pardon. Nonetheless, he feels honored to be speaking for God, refusing to let grim circumstances get him down. ***Let's read Romans 12:15-21; Philippians 2:3-11.***

**DISCUSS: Describe a time when someone you trusted failed you by not doing what they had promised ... and how God has used this in your life.**

### ***Pharaoh Rolls 7's***

#### **Let's read Genesis 41:1-45.**

Two more long years of incarceration after being forgotten by the butler are God's plan for preparing Joseph's character for his next assignment. Joseph was 17 when sold into slavery and spent thirteen years serving Potiphar and in jail.

Pharaoh has two unsettling dreams. His soothsayers have no clue, creating a vacuum for God to use an Israelite slave to embarrass Egypt's clairvoyants. Now 30, Joe is sprung from prison when the butler finally mentions Joe to Pharaoh. The king calls for Joseph, informed of his reputation for translating the message tucked into dreams, one of God's gifts to him.

Some 13 centuries later Babylon's top seers failed to interpret King Nebuchadnezzar's dream. God would use a Hebrew slave, Daniel, to translate, demonstrating that God's sovereign power humbles even the world's mightiest nations (Daniel 2:29-30). Imagine standing before the planet's most intimidating ruler, having just emerged from a dank, primitive dungeon.

In Pharaoh's first vision seven healthy cows emerge from Egypt's life-sustaining Nile where they'd sought refuge from the heat and flies, but while grazing they're devoured by seven scrawny cows. In his second dream seven ears of wheat are growing on one stalk and are eaten by seven measly ears.

Joe informs Pharaoh that having *two* dreams proves that God is stressing the certain, speedy arrival of seven years of record-breaking crops followed by a deadly, 7-year drought.

Joseph advises the king to select a wise overseer to bank much of the bumper crop for the dry years, a strategy that would prevent the kingdom's annihilation. The king puts Joe in charge of managing Egypt's ag department, capping off a meteoric rise to the nation's second highest ranking official. As a foreigner, slave and ex-convict, Joe's life is a visual aid for the one true God. Centuries later Daniel is promoted to #3 in Babylon for the same reason (Daniel 5:7, 16).

Hungry grain buyers converge on Egypt from Canaan, Syria and Arabia, but Joseph has scrupulously planned for enough grain for his adopted country's families as well as for some neighboring, drought-wracked countries.

**DISCUSS: What is speaking to you from Joseph's story so far?**

Faithful in little things, Joe is promoted to political prominence, given a new name ("revealer of secrets," "a wise man fleeing from pollution" and "savior of the land"), a new wife and a new life! Pharaoh sees that Joseph is wise, slow to panic and loyal to his God. With the ruler's ring, new bling, linen duds, fame and his own chariot, Joe has all the perks of the privileged, even as a naturalized citizen of Egypt. Yet he remains intent on being God's man.

**DISCUSS: Joseph's situation swerves abruptly from prison to power. How can we be anchored to face life's ups and downs?**

Hardships need not discourage us. Horrid memories need not embitter us. Our past need not bar us from what God has for us.

***FEAST AND FAMINE***

Joseph's plan to save Egypt was pure genius. God's plan for you is both genius and loving. As Paul put it, "You know the generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, so that by His poverty He could make you rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9).

Christ's death on the cross made peace with all of us, setting **every** person right with God! Our sins are **forever forgiven**. But to **claim** your forgiveness you must take a step of faith and **receive** God's incredible gift. If you have not yet done that, now is the perfect time. If you've already taken that step, who can you encourage to do the same and find the hope and freedom of knowing Jesus? Let's take a few quiet seconds. ....Amen.

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