

**Joseph:
Daydream Believer
Episode 4**

This is the factual account of the son of a successful Hebrew rancher in Canaan (today's Israel). To his family's disgust, young Joseph shares with them his dreams that some day he'll rule over his parents and eleven brothers. Having had enough of his arrogance, the boys sell him to a caravan of Arabian merchants en route to Egypt. There he, at 17, is sold as a slave to Potiphar, captain of Pharaoh's palace guard. When he shuns the sexual moves of his boss' wife, she has him jailed.

While in prison for three years he correctly interprets two inmates' dreams. When Pharaoh, leader of the world's superpower, wants his own dreams unraveled, he summons Joseph who informs him that soon Egypt will enjoy seven years of bumper crops, then seven of famine. **Let's read Genesis 41:41-57.**

Impressed by Joe's insight, the king promotes him to governor, the nation's #2 top dog, to pilot Egypt through this potential doomsday scenario. Joe's wife bears two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, whose names reflect God's having lifted their dad from pit to prison to palace.

Seven boon years topped off Egypt's granaries, and the drought hits. Millions of Egyptians and their panicky neighbors from Canaan, Syria and Arabia wait in long, hungry lines. Joseph, now 30, is running the Middle East's soup kitchen, deciding who gets to buy how much grain.

DISCUSS: Describe how you were unexpectedly cast into a leadership role and what, if anything, had prepared you.

"Hi! Yo Silver!"

Let's read Genesis 42:1-28.

Facing starvation, Jacob hears that neighboring Egypt is selling grain. He sends his sons, except Benjamin, his youngest, to buy some. When

they come in front of Joseph, he spots them, but after some twenty years, they don't see this Egyptian-speaking czar as their brat brother.

When they bow before Joe, he realizes that his teenage dreams have come true (Genesis 37:5-11). Trying to determine if the years had softened his tormentors, Joseph accuses them of spying. His tough talk masks his love and resentment-free compassion for them.

Placing his brothers in temporary custody, he flashes back to the cistern into which they'd tossed him. With time to reflect, the brothers opine that this is their comeuppance for being so cruel to little Joe.

The "guy" reconsiders, deciding to hold Simeon hostage and allow the others to take grain back to Canaan on one condition: bring him young Benjamin, or else he'll execute all of us brothers as spies. The brothers know this will destroy dear, ole Dad, so the finger-pointing begins: "This is what we get for selling Joe!"

Turning the knife, Joseph has his brothers' silver with which they bought grain slipped back into their sacks. When they discover the money, they're sure God has a bulls-eye tattooed on their backs.

DISCUSS: Why do some believe that God is out to get them?

Let's read Genesis 42:29-38.

Back in Canaan Jacob gets the chilling news that he'll lose all of his sons if he refuses to send Ben back to Egypt to prove that his boys are not spies. Unbeknownst to Jacob, God is arranging all these setbacks so that He may ultimately bless him and His fledgling Jewish nation (Romans 8:28). Famine will force Jacob to relocate in Egypt where for the next 400 years his current family of 70 will explode into millions.

DISCUSS: How did a time when you felt everything was going against you prepare you for what turned out to be a plus?

"My Grain Headache"

Let's read Genesis 43:1-34.

Having exhausted their supply of grain, Jacob's son, Judah, in whose line the Messiah would be born nineteen centuries later, reminds his dad of Joe's ultimatum: "Bring me Benjamin, or die as moles!" Jacob

relents and has them take twice as much silver to square the books with that hard bargain-driving czar.

Fearing the worst, they arrive in Egypt and are herded into Joseph's mansion. When they tell his steward that their silver had been returned to them, he replies, "No worries. I'm sure your God did it."

DISCUSS: Why would this Egyptian steward bring up God?

Feast and/or Famine

Again *da boyz* bow before Joseph, as in his dreams. Seeing Ben is too much for Joe who excuses himself to weep. He throws a lavish feast for his terrified guests, seating them according to birth order! They're thinking, "Whoa, what kind of crazy power does this guy have!"

Joseph could have done anything to his brothers including locking up the whole bunch, denying them more grain, or revealing his identity and giving them a nationally-televised tongue lashing. But, no, he treats them as he would like to be treated...as he had NOT been treated. He's using his authority to reunite his family, restore love and trust with them, and lay the foundation for a new Jewish nation.

DISCUSS: What is Joseph inspiring you to rethink or do?

Joe's brothers remind us that there's more than enough fear, suspicion, blame, doubt and guilt to go around. It's easy to feel like a victim. God's Son could have assumed that role, but He took all our sins to the cross, paying the price we could never pay by sacrificing His life for you and me. He suffered for us and defeated death, becoming **a Victor, not a victim** (Romans 5:1-8).

When you trust Him with your life, God credits you with His Son's win over sin (Romans 15:13). We are more than conquerors through Christ who loves us (**Romans 8:28-39**)! Let's close with a few silent moments to thank Him for sharing His victory with us.

His Deal

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