

## **Joseph: Daydream Believer Episode 5**

**G**enesis sets the Bible's theme: "Man is incomplete without an intimate, Father/son relationship with God." Understanding and wisdom begin with knowing Him. "*Without faith it's impossible to please God*" (Hebrews 11:6). No one illustrates this better than a guy named Joe who lived between 2000 and 1600 B.C., a golden age called Egypt's Middle Kingdom. Before Babylon rises to dominance under Hammurabi, Egypt is the world's superpower, its first major civilization. Seostris II and III likely reigned as Pharaohs in Joseph's time.

The largest pyramid dates to c. 2550 B.C., some 500 years before Joe comes to Egypt. Archeologists say skilled laborers, not slaves, built these massive monuments in a feudal-like system wherein each citizen owed service to a lord.

### **Not Your Average Joe**

Unlike larger-than-life, biblical heroes who survived a universal flood, slew lions bare-handed, parted a sea, and demolished city walls with trumpets and shouts, Joseph is remembered for his unsinkable resilience. Amazingly, his years in slavery and prison do not produce animus for his conspirators. To the contrary, he learns to employ God's counter-culture strategy to deal with an enemy. **Let's read Ephesians 6:10-20 and Galatians 5:22-23.**

When facing adversaries, Graham Cooke\* explains how to deploy the facets of God's nature residing in all believers, arming us to be overcomers (John 16:33).

- Exhaust your enemy by **LOVING** him (Luke 6:27-28)!
- Depress him by radiating **JOY** (1 Thessalonians 5:16).
- Immobilize him by being **PEACEFUL** (John 14:27; 2 Thessalonians 3:16). (You can't trust the Lord and worry at the same time. Choose one.)
- Demoralize him with **PATIENCE** (1 Corinthians 13:4).
- Discourage him with **KINDNESS** (Romans 12:20; 2 Timothy 2:24).
- Overcome him with **GOODNESS** (Romans 2:4).
- Disturb him with **GENTLENESS** (2 Timothy 2:25).
- Depress him by using **FAITH** (Galatians 5:6).
- Befuddle him with **SELF-CONTROL** (2 Timothy 1:7).

\* Graham Cooke: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sGLOeylK1w>

**DISCUSS:** Describe your best/worst ways of dealing with difficult people.

## ***Clouded By A Silver Lining***

### **Let's read Genesis 44:1-34 .**

Preparing to return to their father Jacob, the brothers are clueless that Zaphenath-Paneah, Egypt's second highest-ranking official, is, in reality, their brother Joe. Once more he has their silver (which they used to buy their second load of grain) stowed back in their feed sacks. To test their love for their youngest brother, Benjamin, Joseph has his personal silver goblet stashed in Ben's bag.

Barely out of town, the brothers are overtaken by Joe's messenger who accuses them of thievery. Aghast, they defend their innocence and offer themselves as Pharaoh's slaves if the silver is found on them. Further, they suggest that the one in whose sack the cup might be found would be executed. When the search turns up the alleged booty, the brothers are devastated, showing Joseph that they truly had acquired at least a modicum of humanness and compassion.

Hauled into Joseph's presence to face the music, his brothers offer to be his servants. Joe declines, ordering them to return home but leave Benjamin behind. Judah, the oldest, explains that having one son (Joseph) already presumed dead, their dad would hysterically fear losing Benjamin also. So Judah humbly offers to be Joe's slave if only young Ben can go home.

**DISCUSS: What are some symptoms and effects of long-term guilt?**

### ***“He Ain't The Heavy, He's My Brother!”***

### **Let's read Genesis 45:1-28.**

Having stoically withheld his identity long enough, and now pleased with his brothers' new humility, he announces, “Come close to me. It's me -- Joseph!” With emotions racing, they're thinking, “The Governor of Egypt, the second most powerful guy in the world, is the kid we sold into bondage! We are toast!”

To quell their twenty years of guilt-driven panic, Joe responds with pure grace. Having seen God flip his own agony into ecstasy, he reveals God's perspective: ***“Don't get mad at yourselves for what you did to me because God wanted me to go ahead of you into Egypt in order to save lives”*** (Genesis 50:20).

Let's recall that God had promised Joe's great grandpa Abraham that he would father a great nation (Genesis 12:1-3). As a major player in how God is keeping that promise, Joseph models genuine, unconditional, supernatural forgiveness.

Joe gets it that had his brothers *not* sold him into slavery, he wouldn't have been imprisoned nor commanded to decipher Pharaoh's dreams nor elevated to prime minister! He realizes *God* sent him to Egypt, *not* his cruel brothers!

**DISCUSS:** How could this relate to what God may be doing in your life?

## ***Egypt: Easier To Enter Than Exit***

Joseph sends da boyz back to Jacob to report what they've learned, and to move their families from Canaan to Egypt's fertile Nile delta to wait out the remaining five years of famine. There's hugging, kissing and an unexpected, healing reunion. All ill feelings vanish. Pharaoh promises Joe's kin prime real estate, new furnishings, clothing, anything they'll need! Aware that his father will soon discover his sons' fib about Joseph's fictitious mauling by a wild animal, Joe adds, "And don't mess with each other on your way home!"

Jacob is relieved to see Ben and hear that his Joe is alive and ruling Egypt, and that he'll finish his life there with his family. This fulfills God's prediction to Abraham generations earlier that the Jews would go to a foreign country while retaining their identity: *"Know for certain that for four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there. But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions"* (Genesis 15:13-14).

Circa 1876 B.C. Jacob, son of Isaac and grandson of Abraham, moves his family of 70 from Canaan to Egypt. Four centuries later their headcount will be more than 2,000,000 Israelites whom Moses will lead out of Egypt (Exodus 12:40).

Is Joseph's journey your journey? Is God leading you through minefields of hard lessons? Are you at peace, certain that God is with you in your darkest hour, experiencing His very presence at your side? What God's **power** can change instantly, sometimes His **wisdom** allows. So we trust Him. If you're already trusting Him, or if, from now on, you want to put your trust in Him and accept His permanent, complete forgiveness for your sin, we'll take a silent moment now as you verbalize this quietly to God. He longs to hear from you.

His Deal

[www.HisDeal.org](http://www.HisDeal.org)

[george@HisDeal.org](mailto:george@HisDeal.org)

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