

## Friday – Be Like Jesus

*“Be imitators of God, therefore, as beloved children, and walk in love, just as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us as a fragrant sacrificial offering to God.”* (Ephesians 5:1) It is nearly impossible to examine the life of Joseph in the Old Testament and not see the similarities of the events in the life of Christ. There are many “types” of Christ in the Old Testament that foreshadow Jesus Christ, and perhaps the life of Joseph is the clearest picture of Christ in many (no less than 75) ways. For example(s): Their inexplicable births (see Genesis 30:22-24 and 37:3 and Luke 31); both tempted without sin (see Genesis 39:6-20 and Matthew 4:1-11); and both were destined to be kings (see Genesis 37:8 and John 18:37), to name just a few, and the parallels go on and on. Joseph gives us one more example to study, that we may see the qualities and glory of our Lord Jesus. Even though he lived long before Jesus, he gives one more pattern that we as Christians can emulate to become more Christ-like, and have an intimate relationship with our God.

## Saturday – Living a Life of Forgiveness

*“Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, ‘Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?’ Jesus answered, ‘I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.’”* (Matthew 18:21-22) We now come to the most important and key part of Joseph’s story. It was nine years from the time Joseph was placed in power before his brothers came to Egypt looking for help. Joseph had a very long time to think about what they had done to him. Think of the options that were available to Joseph. If he wanted revenge, he could have taken it. He could have acted in pride and vengeance and humiliated his father and brothers, and then forced them to bow before him. And after reading Joseph’s story, we could almost overlook a little revenge dished out by Joseph. The old saying is “Don’t get mad, get even” ... right? But Joseph did nothing. How many of us would have exercised that kind of restraint? In fact, he did the exact opposite; he approached his brothers with love and caring in his heart, and most of all, forgiveness. Joseph could even see the blessings out of all the hurt and suffering when he told his brothers, *“And now, do not be distressed or angry with yourselves that you sold me into this place, because it was to save lives that God sent me before you.”* Through Joseph’s example, we are able to recognize the importance of seeking God when in hardship, but even more so when things are going well. Prosperity often causes people to lose sight of God or to attempt to take control of our circumstances through their own natural ability, leaving God out of the equation. But Joseph, even with extreme wealth and power at his disposal, waited on the Lord and watched in faith as God brought the dream from so many years ago to fulfillment! *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, do not rely on your own understanding. Seek His will in all that you do, and He will show you what path to take!”* (Proverbs 3:5-6) Thanks be to God! Amen!!

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This week’s *Bring it Home* devotions were written by Mike Zsolczai.

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# Bring It Home



Devotions for  
the week of  
August 9, 2020

## What Now?

Have some fun with the Joseph story this week and watch the movie, “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat,” and then talk some more about the implications of this powerful story for our lives today.

## **Monday – Lead by Example**

*“These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come.”* (1 Corinthians 10:11) (Genesis chapters 37-50 is one the most beautiful and poignant stories in the Bible, the story of Joseph. I hope you find time to read it all at some point this week.) How many of life’s lessons have you learned through the “school of hard knocks”? I know that I have certainly learned a few that way. They make great stories—if you survive them! But there’s a much better way! God’s Word is full of the good and bad experiences of the men and women in the Bible, placed there as examples for you and me. Other than Jesus, Joseph is one of my favorite characters in the Bible. Next to Jesus, Joseph may be the greatest example of godly character and integrity. Joseph’s story began with a dream at the age of seventeen. He knew the dreams he was having were from the Lord and that they revealed God’s purpose and plans for his life. Genesis 37:6-7, 9 says, “He (Joseph) said to them (Jacob and his brothers), ‘Listen to this dream I had: We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it.’ And his brothers hated him that he would insinuate that they would ever bow to him, and they took steps to make sure that would never happen.” This week, we will meditate on how Joseph approached the hardships that were to come, and what the source of his strength was in the darkest of his days. Pray to God that through this narrative of Joseph, that we may gain the wisdom and understanding to make decisions that allow us to avoid many of the hard knocks that come through trial and error, or sometimes just from life itself.

## **Tuesday – Betrayal, but God has a Plan**

*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”* (Jeremiah 29:11) If you have seen “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat,” raise your hand. I raised mine, and I imagine that many of you did, too. Joseph’s father, Jacob, loved Joseph so much that he had a special, ornate, beautifully colored robe made just for him, and his brothers were jealous. *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) They hated him so much that when the opportunity to get rid of “the dreamer” presented itself, they jumped on it – and they jumped on him! You have to wonder what was going through Joseph’s mind as his brothers, his own flesh and blood, stripped him of his ornate robe, threw him into an empty cistern, and ultimately sold him into slavery for a mere 20 shekels of silver. Did he feel despair, anger, hopelessness, or that he’d been deserted? Scripture doesn’t say. I believe that Joseph has such an intimate relationship with God that he felt none of those things. Joseph had faith in God, and knew that He had a plan for him (as we shall see later). Where are you right now? Are you trapped in a cistern of hopelessness, feeling like you have been deserted and betrayed? Today, we are experiencing some of the most unprecedented traumatic events in our country and our world. But in the

midst of all of it, God has a plan for you and me, just like He did for Joseph. God calls on us to trust Him and have faith in Him, and He will walk with us out of this valley of chaos and into His loving arms.

## **Wednesday – Finding Wealth in Poverty**

*“Furthermore, God has given riches and wealth to every man, and He has enabled him to enjoy them, to accept his lot, and to rejoice in his labor. This is a gift from God.”* (Ecclesiastes 5:19) Joseph was standing on auction block – his robe, his wealth, his family, even his clothes taken away. His new master Potiphar, one of the most elite and powerful men in Egypt standing near, yet Scripture says that the Lord was with Joseph and “he” was the one that was prosperous (see Genesis 39:2). Although Joseph’s situation in life had changed dramatically, God’s relationship with him had remained unchanged. Joseph believed he was prosperous because he knew prosperity came from God, not man. He had an image on the inside that was not affected by his circumstance, and it enabled Joseph to operate in faith. Instead of being dejected and complaining, Joseph served others and ministered wholeheartedly. As he diligently labored, God blessed the work of his hands. Today, as we soar above mountaintops, or slog through the muck of the valleys, God calls us to do our best in either of these situations, whether slave or free, wealthy or poor, whatever our circumstance. As people of faith, He promises to bless us and pour out His grace, so that we may faithfully go through all of life’s challenges or triumphs, assured that He is with us.

## **Thursday – Integrity Wins Over Temptation**

*“Because of my integrity you uphold me and set me in your presence forever. Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting.”* (Psalm 41:12-13) There is an old saying that adversity in one’s life does not develop one’s character, it reveals it. Joseph’s integrity is one of the most telling features of the quality of his character, faith, and where he put emphasis in things of his life. Recognizing the favor and presence of God in Joseph’s life, Potiphar soon appointed him manager over his entire house (see Genesis 39:6). Potiphar trusted Joseph completely! However, the master’s wife began to solicit this handsome young Joseph to lie with her. This had to be very tempting for a slave in his position, but Joseph refused to give in—no matter what the cost! He maintained his integrity, but it was not rewarded. In fact, he got just the opposite. In her anger at Joseph’s rejection, Potiphar’s wife lied, and Potiphar threw Joseph into prison (see Genesis 39:19-20). Joseph was able to maintain his integrity because he was not concerned with what man thought. He did not consider the benefits or consequences of his actions based on what Potiphar, his master, might do. Notice his reasoning in Genesis 39:9. It says, *“How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?”* His main concern was what God would think. He understood that he was accountable to God and that the fulfillment of his dream was completely dependent upon God.