

Life and Lessons of Joseph



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The fallen nature has a human substitute for God's help and God's power concerning everything—some thing, some plan, some procedure, or some person that would take God's place; and to the extent that we would not have to deal with, or trust in God at all. But God well knows that such a course of life will take people to the Lake of Fire to suffer for ever and ever Revelation 14:11.

Any trouble in this life would pale to the suffering in Hell, so God is doing His best to warn people, and to bring them to a position of being prepared for His kingdom. There is a huge amount of work to be done in the heart of everyone, because we all began life filled to the top with human help, efforts, plans, ideas, and devices.

We must allow God to lead us away from all those things, and to where His Word will be our policy for living, and His power will accomplish what we want done. Everyone who has not given their life to God, and is not living according to His will and Word, has two deadly enemies living in them that will destroy them in this life, and eventually take them to the flames forever.

Anyone who is just living an outwardly good life as Job and Cornelius were, but is not truly converted as they later were, would go to the Lake of Fire—simply because of those two deadly enemies still controlling their life. It is not a matter of attending church and going through the motions outwardly, but a matter of whether Satan

and self are being removed from our heart—because we have asked God to remove them.

No matter how sincere we may be, or what sacrifice we may make, if self and Satan still control our life, everything else counts for nothing. If we do not have Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit abiding within, everything we say and do will not amount to anything, because every thought and deed would still be controlled by self and Satan.

God has a plan for getting rid of human strength and the sinful nature, and it is a drastic *plan*, because it takes drastic *measures* to deliver us from the grip, control, and obsession of the devil. This control of Satan is unknown to the unenlightened heart; but self and Satan are firmly entrenched in the heart of everyone from the beginning.

The average professing Christian does not know that they *are* controlled by these deadly enemies, and they do not know that it is possible to be free from them. Satan is a *soul slayer*, so we must know how serious this situation is, and allow God to reveal any of their control in us.

The life of Joseph is a divine classic. The spiritual aspect of what he went through is extremely valuable and more relevant than we realize. Joseph did not live under the Law, so he could be called a Gospel man—as Abraham. Joseph lived several hundred years before the Law was given, so he was under God's grace and power.

Joseph was a favored son. Genesis 37:4 *"When his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him."* This favoritism brought out the jealousy in the other brothers. Joseph then had a dream, which basically portrayed his parents and these brothers bowing to him. The brothers were outraged to hear of the dream and hated him all the more.

The first step in Joseph being delivered from the control of self and Satan was to be ridiculed, laughed at, and treated cruelly by his brothers. If anyone today is the recipient of the same criticism, ridicule, mocking, being left out, and made fun of—and it is met right as Joseph met it—they would also be delivered from those enemies that would eventually destroy them. Meeting such things scripturally, leads to perfection of faith in God.

These ten brothers conspired to put a stop to Joseph ever being ahead of them—they would be rid of him. It was a *human* plan to thwart *God's* plan concerning one of His children. They conspired to murder Joseph, but one of the brothers intervened and spared his life. A caravan was passing through to Egypt, so they decided to sell him as a slave—which should have ended any long-range plans of Joseph ruling them. It was a good *human* plan, but they left out God's *divine* plan; and they forgot, Romans 8:31 *"If God be for us, who can be against us?"*

After selling Joseph to slavery, they dipped the coat of many colors with animal blood, returned home, and said that they did not know what happened to Joseph, but 'We found this coat; it may be his.' Jacob thought his son was killed by a beast and grieved exceedingly. These brothers show no remorse for lying and deceiving their father in such a wicked way.

Joseph is given a job as a slave to Potiphar in Egypt—he may have been Pharaoh's personal guard. God enabled Joseph to prosper in everything, and Potiphar's house thrived because of Joseph's presence. Then Joseph met with a serious temptation that would test his loyalty to God, and by the Lord's mercy and grace, Joseph passed that test James 1:12.

The wife of his boss told a lie about him to clear herself and blame Joseph—who refused her advances. She lied and said that this new servant

tried to commit a serious crime against her. Potiphar was furious and threw Joseph into prison with an undetermined sentence.

Joseph's loyalty to God, and his good quality of wanting to do what was right, was used by the devil to land him in jail—even though he was totally innocent. While in prison, Joseph was made a foreman in charge of other prisoners; but what is prosperity in a cell? Joseph wanted his freedom; his home, and his rights. All this was permitted by God—who controlled all things.

One day Joseph notices two of the prisoners looking very depressed, so he asks them why they looked so downcast. The hand of God was in it all; and we can be sure that His hand is in all that happens *to us*, to bring the results He wants *in us*—if we will permit Him by obeying His Word when such things are met. The baker and butler explained—poison was found in the Pharaoh's food, and they did not know who was guilty, so both were placed in prison until the investigation was completed.

All these circumstances were allowed by God—Joseph going from a free citizen and favored son, to a prison cell as a disgraced convict—shamed and humiliated beyond words; and yet, not guilty of any crime. It was as unjust and contemptible a thing that could happen to anyone—but it would reveal any self or Satan hidden in his heart.

This story shows how necessary it is to get rid of those two deadly enemies, and to eliminate all plans of self to obtain what we want. Joseph had met many difficult things in a right way, but there was still some self in his heart he did not know was there.

When the butler was being released, Joseph makes a request of him—'*Don't forget the favor I did for you; tell Pharaoh that I am innocent of the charges.*' By that appeal to the butler, Joseph turned his back on God, and committed the sin of

Adam—trying to obtain his own release, by his own efforts.

Fortunately for Joseph, the butler forgot the favor. It was a very good thing that he failed to obtain Joseph's release by following his own human plan. We would never have heard of Joseph, and he would have landed in the Lake of Fire, if he had not allowed God to remove self, sin, and Satan who controlled his decision to obtain his release in a worldly way.

For two years, Joseph waited, and hoped, and longed to hear some word from Pharaoh. Every time someone came down the hall, Joseph would think that this was the message he had been waiting for. But no such word ever came; and at the end of two long years, Joseph finally gave up hope of the butler giving any help.

It was the end of his human plan to obtain his release—Satan and self were gone. There was no more of Adam's sin in his heart; no more self probing for a way out of his predicament; and no more following the world to get what he wanted. We could never compute how spiritually valuable that was; or how spiritually important it was for Joseph.

Also, how necessary it is for every human being who ever lived, to have sin, self, and Satan removed, so they can be prepared for Heaven. Jesus said *John 12:24* "*Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.*"

After those two years, Pharaoh had a dream, which led to Joseph being released, and promoted to governor of Egypt. *That* was the result of getting rid of self and the devil—from a prison cell to acting governor of a powerful kingdom!

Elihu told Job that if his heart was right with God, he would be with kings on the throne; he said to Job *Job 36:10-11* "*[God] openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity. If they obey and serve him,*

they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures." God has a throne for anyone whose heart is perfected in faith. *Proverbs 22:4* "*By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honour, and life.*"

When Joseph got rid of self and Satan, God was able to deal quickly and effectively with those ten wicked brothers, and He never took His hand off them until they truly repented, confessed their sins, and forsook the many wrongs done against Joseph. *Romans 12:19* "*Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.*"

It is a dramatic story filled with intrigue, tragedy, and victory—human souls being brought to repentance and a living hope of Heaven. There was a great family reunion—a father, who had been mourning the death of his son, discovered that this favored son was on the throne of Egypt; able to take care of his entire family through seven years of serious famine.

One person got rid of Satan's control of their heart; which took him from a dank prison cell to a position of power and influence—everything he could have wanted—all because now, *God* was in control. Everything resolves around the leading Christian in a home. If God finds one person that will allow Him to deliver them from the control of self and Satan, it can result in the salvation of their entire family! Valuable lessons from Joseph's life!



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