

The Forging of Character: Living Beyond Success

Genesis 37-50

Introduction

Behind every dream is a desire. What was the desire that prompted God's dream?

[God] saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus.

2 Tim. 1:9-10

He chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ...making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time. Eph. 1:4-5, 9-10

...you were redeemed...with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. 1 Pet. 1:18-20

... this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. Eph. 3: 9-11

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. Luke 24:27

The Bible as one continuing story of God and his people includes three parts:

- **Upper story** – God desired to display His glory, so He created a place and a people to showcase his presence through the grace and mercy of salvation in Christ.
- **Lower Story** – God's specific work in history as revealed in the pages of the Bible
 - Chapter 1 - Creation: The beginning of life as we know it
 - Chapter 2 - The forming of a new nation
 - Chapter 3 - Joseph – From slave to deputy Pharaoh
 - Joseph and his dreams – Gen. 37:1-11 Overview of an Overcomer
 - Joseph sold by His brothers – Gen. 37:12-36 Overcoming a Dysfunctional Family
 - Joseph and Potiphar's wife – Gen. 39 Overcoming Sexual Temptation
 - Success and dreams in jail – Gen. 40 Overcoming Injustice

Key Verse: As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. Gen. 50:20

- **"MY STORY"** Personal Application: The belief that God is in charge frees me to forgive others and to have confidence that He has a greater plan for my life.

1. Joseph is called out of prison – Gen. 41:9-14

Application: Personal growth always precedes promotion

2. Pharaoh's dream is interpreted – Gen. 41:14-16

Application: Turning points will test our convictions

3. Joseph is promoted - Gen. 41:37-40

Application: The temptations of success will prove our character

4. Joseph's brothers come to Egypt - Gen. 45:1-8

Application: The belief that God is in charge frees me to forgive others and to have confidence that He has a greater plan for my life.

CONCLUSION

Discussion Questions

- Share any dream you can remember. Was there a deeper desire (or fear) connected to it?
- What observations or questions stand out to you from Gen. 37-50?
- Can you think of a time in the past when God prepared you for a greater task even though you didn't see it at the time? Was it in a "dungeon" or a "palace"?
- What do you think was going through Joseph's mind when he was standing in front of Pharaoh? Or in front of his brothers? What might have been going through YOUR mind?
- What are the traps and temptations of prosperity and power that tempt people away from God?
- Talk about the theme: "The belief that God is in charge frees me to forgive others and to have confidence that He has a greater plan for my life." Do you agree? When has this happened in your life?
- Joseph had a dream that went beyond the boundaries of his own life. (Read Gen. 50:25 and Heb. 11:22) Why was this dream significant? (Hint: Gen. 12:7) What's your dream for the future?