

# JOSEPH: FAITH AMID INJUSTICES

## GOLDEN TEXT

“The Lord was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master” (Genesis 39:2).

## USEFUL PRACTICE

In the face of a crisis, divine wisdom is indispensable.

## SCRIPTURE READING

### Genesis 37:1-11

1 - Jacob lived in the land where his father had stayed, the land of Canaan.

2 -This is the account of Jacob's family line.

Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives, and he brought their father a bad report about them.

3 -Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate robe for him.

4 -When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.

5 -Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more.

6 - He said to them, “Listen to this dream I had:

7 -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.”

8 - His brothers said to him, "Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?" And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said.

9 -Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. "Listen," he said, "I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me."

10 -When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, "What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?"

11 - His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

## **GENERAL OBJECTIVE**

To emphasize that God gave Joseph wisdom to manage the famine crisis in Egypt.

## **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

- I. To point** out the dreams of Joseph and the crises he had to face;
- II. Highlight** the crisis of the den and slavery in the life of Joseph;
- III. To emphasize** Joseph's wisdom to manage the crises.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The story of Joseph is one of the most beautiful ones recorded in the Scriptures. It is a story that shows the love of a father, the rejection and jealousy of his brothers and the beauty of the dreams of a young man. It is about 13 chapters that reveal God's purposes in Israel's history. In this lesson, we will study the crises faced by Joseph and his attitudes toward each of them. We will see that Joseph left us precious lessons that teach us how to behave in the most difficult situations. The adversities in the life of Joseph contributed for the promises made to Abraham to being faithfully fulfilled (Gen. 13).

## **I - TWO DREAMS AND MANY CRISES**

**1. The family of Joseph.** Jacob was the father of Joseph and his family

was made up of the sons of Leah and the two sons of Rachel, Joseph and Benjamin (Gen. 30:22-24, 35:16-18). Let us also take into account the sons of the female servants Zilpah and Bilhah. Jacob loved Joseph and presented him with a cloak of many colors. This cloak of many colors revealed a favoritism position (Gen. 37.3). The favoritism of Jacob for Joseph generated some crises in the family. A divided family cannot withstand the crises. Therefore, love your children unselfishly, and equally, avoiding any kind of preference.

**2. The jealousy of Joseph's brothers.** What caused Joseph's brothers to be taken by jealousy and hatred? There are two main reasons. The first one is in the fact that Joseph reported the misdeeds committed by his brothers to his father. Certainly, the brothers saw Joseph as a traitor. The second reason was in the fact that Joseph was a dreamer. In his two dreams, Joseph appeared in a position of honor. Importantly, although the family of Jacob was facing a crisis of favoritism, hatred, jealousy and falsehood, it was part of God's plans for the formation of a great people. God does not think like us and does not judge according to human criteria. His justice and his purposes are perfect, though we are unjust and imperfect.

**3. The dreams of Joseph (Gen 37:7,9).** One night, God gave Joseph a dream and the boy hurriedly told his dream to his brothers. We cannot always share all our dreams. Some must be kept in our heart until they are fully fulfilled. Joseph had another dream and once again he reported the dream to his brothers and his father. Joseph's dreams were given by the Lord, and one day they were fulfilled faithfully. If God has given you a dream, keep it in your heart and wait because in the Lord's time it will be fulfilled.

## **II - THE CRISIS OF THE PIT AND SLAVERY**

**1. Joseph is sold into slavery (Genesis 37:27,28).** One day, Joseph's brothers took the flocks to Shechem. Joseph went there to see if all was well. But in arriving there, he found out that his brothers had gone to Dothan. When Joseph's brothers saw that he was approaching, they decided to kill him. The plan was to kill Joseph and then tell their father that a wild animal had killed him. Joseph's brothers had a wicked, evil mind. But Reuben did not accept this idea and advised his brothers to throw Joseph into a pit. Reuben planned to rescue his brother. But Judah also had an idea: "to sell him as a slave." So the brothers took Joseph out of the pit and sold him into slavery to the merchants for twenty pieces of silver. Joseph's brothers took his cloak and dipped it in the blood of an animal. The goal was to deceive Jacob. They made their father cry and

suffer. Jealousy and envy always produce sorrow and grief in the family.

**2. Joseph in Potiphar's house.** Joseph was bought by merchants and taken down to Egypt. On arriving there the merchants sold him to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh. However, God was with Joseph in the pit and also in Egypt. The Lord does not abandon us in the face of adverse situations. Joseph found grace and favor in Potiphar's eyes and he put him in charge of everything he owned.

**3. Joseph prospered in Potiphar's house.** Joseph was made an overseer, managing all the affairs of the house of Potiphar, who prospered greatly because God was with the young man. He could have let sorrow and sadness dominate his heart, but he remained pure. Joseph is an example of resilience in the midst of crises, because he did not allow his faith in God to be shattered in the face of adverse circumstances. God was with Joseph, but the crisis once again reaches him. Potiphar's wife, who had no scruples or decency, sought to seduce him. But he was faithful to God and to his master. Therefore, he rejected the proposal of the woman who, angrily, set a trap for him by accusing him of seduction (Genesis 39:14-18). Potiphar heard the lying accusation of his wife against Joseph and sent him to prison, where Pharaoh's officials were. Joseph overcame temptation, but went to jail.

### **III - WISDOM TO MANAGE THE CRISIS**

**1. Joseph is blessed by God in prison (Gen. 39:21-23).** Joseph was unjustly thrown into prison, but God was with him and would help him again. There was a greater purpose for his life. This purpose had already been revealed in his dreams. He knew that, somehow, God would take care of his life in prison. There, Joseph found favor in the eyes of the jailer. God's hand was stretched out to bless him. Therefore, wherever he went he was successful.

**2. Joseph and Pharaoh's two officers.** Joseph was maintained in prison by the mercy of God. There he met two prisoners who served Pharaoh, a chief cupbearer and a chief baker. One day, both of them had a dream. They told Joseph what they had dreamed, and he interpreted their dream. Joseph told the chief cupbearer that within three days he would be called to serve Pharaoh again. He told the chief baker that within three days, he would be executed. Everything happened the way Joseph had said.

**3. From prison to Pharaoh's palace (Gen. 41:1-8).** Pharaoh also had two dreams that very much troubled him. The Egyptian people believed that dreams were omens of good or bad situations and the king could not understand the meaning of his dreams. Therefore, he summoned his

magicians and astrologers to interpret them, but none of them managed to convince him with their interpretations (Gen. 41:8). So the chief cupbearer remembered Joseph and spoke to Pharaoh about what had happened to him and the chief baker. Pharaoh ordered Joseph to be brought into his presence. When he came before the king, with humility and fear of God, he heard the dreams and said that they were summarized into one. Egypt would undergo a period of seven years of great plenty and then a period of seven years of famine. So Joseph advised Pharaoh to find a wise man to be put in charge of gathering food for the time of crisis. This way the king would have food to face the time of crisis. Pharaoh, impressed by Joseph's wisdom, saw that he was the right man to manage the time of plenty and crisis, and he appointed Joseph as ruler of Egypt. We learn from Joseph that suffering can shape our character and cause us to be successful in all areas of our lives. Sufferings teach us how to deal with adverse circumstances. Every episode in the life of Joseph was part of God's plan.

### **CONCLUSION**

All the difficulties we go through when we live up to God's plan are intended to teach us. God prepared the spirit of Joseph for the crises that he would face and that he might enjoy a privileged position in Egypt. Joseph did not forget that God was with him, not only in humiliation, but when he was exalted before men.



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