

## **Broken Dreams, God's Fulfillment!**

**-What were some dreams that you had when you were younger that you had hoped to be or accomplish?**

**-Did they get fulfilled?**

**-What were some of those that did not?**

**-Do you ever feel God didn't give you what you dreamed for? That if only He would have done this or that, that your life would have been better?**

**-Do you think that God may have His own dreams and purpose for you?**

**-What do you think some of them could be?**

**-Many times, we get so caught up on what our dreams are and what we want that we tend to forget that God already mapped out a plan for each of us from the beginning of time. That can be a hard one for some of us to understand, especially if you have had a very difficult life or circumstances.**

**-But, today we are going to study something that I think will help encourage us to know that God did not forget about our dreams. That He really had dreams for us that fulfill a greater purpose than what we will ever be able to imagine!**

**-To do this, we are going to look into the book of Genesis.**

**-Genesis tells the story of God's victory over our circumstances and also tells us our own responsibility to put our trust in Him, especially when things are not as expected or thought of.**

**-It is also a story of God's unconditional love and forgiveness and provision.**

**-In the book of Genesis (from chapters 37-50), we are going to talk about a very famous bible character named Joseph. The dreamer of all dreamers!**

**-To start with, let's talk about his father, Jacob. Jacob had 12 sons by Rachel and Leah and his 2 concubines.**

**-Does anyone remember who his favorite son was? (Joseph)**

**-Do you think Jacob had great dreams or thoughts for this favorite son, Joseph? (I'm sure he did as most parents would.)**

**-By showing his favoritism, what did Jacob give his son Joseph that he did not give his other sons? (A coat of many colors.)**

**-Let's pause here for a moment. Have any of you been the victim of favoritism when you were growing up? (...) With family or friends, at church, or at work or even at school? (...)**

**-The beautiful message is God has NO FAVORITES! He loves each one of us so much that He was willing to sacrifice His Son for each of us!**

**-Let's study that plan together. First off, Jacob gave his favorite son, Joseph, a coat of many colors, a coat of royalty. Do you think this made his brothers jealous?**

(Absolutely!)

**-Would that make you jealous? (...)**

**-After Joseph received the coat of many colors, he shared with his brothers a dream he had of them bowing down to him. After several episodes of this (Gen. 37), what did Joseph's brothers finally do to him to get rid of him? (They sold him into slavery to some merchants on their way to Egypt.)**

**-Do you think God was aware of what was happening between Joseph and his brothers? (Absolutely!)**

**-Could He be orchestrating something that could not be made known right away? (Yes.)**

**-How old do you think Joseph was when he was sold? (17 yrs. old)**

**-Do you think Joseph had dreams but was shocked when God allowed this to happen to him? (...)**

**-Do you feel this way sometimes, shocked that God allows something to happen to you?(...)**

**-To help us know God's plans for our own lives, let's read our first verse together on our Verse Sheet to understand this: (Isaiah 55: 8,9 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.")**

**-What is God reminding us here in His Word? (That His plans are greater than ours. His thoughts and ways are higher than ours. His plan is for our eternity and not just for this present time. And His plan includes each one of us!)**

**-Wouldn't it have been great if Joseph had this verse from the prophet of Isaiah to encourage him? But, this prophet of Israel came *after* Joseph, but he was a product of what God *did* through Joseph and the nation of Israel.**

**-Let's watch as God unfolds His story of love and purpose for Joseph and all of us. Do you remember who bought Joseph to be his slave in Egypt? (Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh's guard)**

**-And while serving at Potiphar's house, can someone share what happened to him? (He was wrongly accused of attacking Potiphar's wife and put in prison.)**

**-Have you ever been wrongly accused and suffered for it? (...)**

**-Did it seem at that time that the Lord was overlooking your suffering? (...)**

**-Did you think "Is God really in control", if so that couldn't be happening to me?! (...)**

**-At times like these, we need to run to His Word for encouragement!**

**-To help us when we feel this way, let's read our 2<sup>nd</sup> verse together on our Verse Sheet to see what it says: (Proverbs 3:5,6 "*Trust* in the Lord with all your heart and lean**

not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him *and He will make your paths straight.*")

**-So when things seem to be out of our control and not straight, or we don't understand why it is happening and our dreams seem to come crashing down, what is the Lord telling us to do in the very beginning of this verse? (TRUST in Him!)**

**-At the very end of this verse, what is the promise for us? (When we acknowledge Him in *all* our ways, He will make things straight, meaning making things right and for His purpose and His glory and our eternal hope.)**

**-Like Joseph, does it mean it is going to happen right away?(...)**

**-No, but God's ways are perfect and right for our eternal blessings and for His eternal plan and glory and we must trust Him while on the journey, knowing He will make the outcome good in the end.**

**-Throughout his whole life, Joseph did acknowledge God. But even when he acknowledged God, God still deliberately put Joseph in this prison! In our human mind that seems so cruel, but let's finish this story before we pass judgment!**

**-Does anyone know what happened while he was in prison and how he got out? Hint: it included Pharaoh's dream! (Pharaoh had a dream that only Joseph could interpret that was a foretelling of the 7 years of plenty and then the 7 years of severe famine. When Joseph interpreted it for Pharaoh, God gave him favor in Pharaoh's sight and Pharaoh put him in charge of all his kingdom, only 2<sup>nd</sup> under him! He was able to save all of Egypt from the famine and the surrounding countries as well as his own family!)**

**-Let me ask you the following question. When things seem totally impossible or discouraging in your life, do you think God can still have a plan that will work for ultimate good for you, for others and most of all for His glory? (Yes!)**

**-Just as God orchestrated a greater plan for Joseph to save the lives of many people as well as his own family during that famine, He is also orchestrating a greater plan in your life that not only affects you, but others who are around you, a plan that fits right into His eternal plan for the salvation of humanity. You are a part of that!**

**-To confirm this, let's read verse #3 together from our Verse Sheet: (Romans 8:28 "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His Purpose.")**

**-If you love Him, you have been called to a purpose! What do you think God's purpose is for you? Try to be specific. (...)**

**-There is something we can learn from Joseph in this whole story... Joseph never took his eyes off the Lord! He had faith in the Lord even as things in his life went from bad to worse. What a lesson for each one of us!**

**-In Genesis 50:20 Joseph said to his brothers: "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." Joseph had great faith amidst all the years of struggles.**

**-He was 30 years old when he began to rule with Pharaoh. That was 13 years of slavery and imprisonment and a tremendous amount of walking in faith before he began to rule. Then it was probably another 10 years after that before he even saw his family again! Amidst all of this, he was sure that God was still good and faithful even when he couldn't see it!**

**-Let me ask, are you still faithful and believe God is good even amidst your struggles or circumstances? (...) At times, just like Joseph, it can really take a huge amount of faith.**

**-Do you ever wonder what faith really is? Let's read our next verse together that tells us. Verse #4 on our Verse Sheet: (Hebrews 11:1 "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.") -So what does this exactly mean? (Faith is believing all of God's promises to us that are in His Word, even when we cannot see them.)**

**-Imagine, Joseph could not see God's promises fulfilled for 13 years because he was a slave and prisoner that whole time. Yet, he never stopped believing and never gave up in His Lord. He persevered through all the hardships and unfairness and still worshipped and loved God, despite his dreams crashing down all around him.**

**-One thing we need to remember is God's timing is definitely not ours. Had God not interpreted these dreams for Joseph and Pharaoh, everybody would have died in the famine. So God's ways are bigger than our ways.**

**-God wasn't just saving Joseph and all of Egypt, it's even bigger than that. It is through this line of Israelites that were saved that the Savior of the world was born, saving all of us who are lost!**

**-So, when your dreams seemed to have never been fulfilled, just remember that God's real dream and purpose for you is being worked out according to His perfect plan for you and all humanity!**

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**Verse Sheet**

- 1. Isaiah 55: 8,9 “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, declares the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.”**
  
- 2. Proverbs 3:5,6 “*Trust* in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him *and He will make your paths straight.*”**
  
- 3. Romans 8:28 “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His PURPOSE.”**
  
- 4. Hebrews 11:1 ‘Now faith is being sure of *what we hope for and certain of what we do not see!*’**