

in mind, read back over Genesis 41:1-36, paying particular attention to the things Joseph says (as an indicator of what is in his heart).

What glimpse do we get of what is going on Joseph's heart when he says . . . ?

"It is not in me!" (Literally, "not so far as me;" 41:16.)

"God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer." (The sense is *not* that the answer will necessarily please Pharaoh but that the good or right answer will be given; 41:16.)

"God has revealed to Pharaoh what He is about to do." (41:25, 28)

"The thing is fixed by God, and God will shortly bring it about." (41:32)

Taking these comments all together, what is Joseph telling us about . . .

How he thinks about himself?

How he thinks about his circumstances?

How he thinks about his God?

Day Five

As the account of Joseph's rise to power draws to a close, we hear two more things from Joseph that tell us something about what is going on in his heart and head--he

names his sons. Read Genesis 41:46-52.

What is the meaning of the name of Joseph's first-born son?

Clearly, Joseph does not have some kind of "divine amnesia" about his past--he would not have said that God had "made me forget the hardship" if he didn't have any memory of it. And, as we will see a bit later in the story, Joseph does recall the events. So, what does it mean to say that God has caused him to forget the hardship?

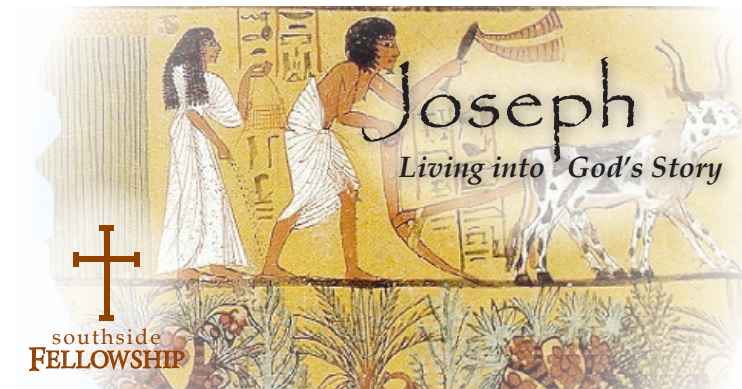
How necessary do you think it must have been for Joseph to move forward with his life with God for him to not be burdened or driven by the past injustices done to him? Why?

What is the meaning of the name of Joseph's second-born son?

Joseph is, obviously, not oblivious to the difficulties he has faced--he speaks of God making him fruitful "in the land of my affliction." What is Joseph underscoring about what has happened to him in spite of the hardship he has lived in?

How important do you think it is for Joseph to be clear that God was making him fruitful in spite of the hardships for Joseph to move forward with his life with God? Why?

What do you see in how Joseph is looking back on his life that might help you move forward in your own life?



Weekly Devotional Guide

March 7, 2010

Genesis 41: What Was He Thinking?

Day One

Waiting comes hard to most of us. Most businesses recognize that. That's one of the reasons they play "soothing" music over the phone lines when you are put on hold. All to make it easier for you to wait.

Where do you experience your greatest frustration in waiting?

Which situations tax your patience the most? Why?

We are not really told much explicitly about Joseph's patience while waiting for things "to develop" while in prison. What is said, however, does give us some indication about his demeanor or attitude while in prison. Read Genesis 40:1-41:16. Pay particular attention to the "clues" about Joseph's demeanor.

What things typically are characteristic of someone struggling with patience? How do they tend to act?

Do you see any indication of Joseph's impatience?

What in the text indicates what Joseph's attitude might have been while in prison?

Clearly, Joseph did endure patiently. He didn't respond bitterly or begrudgingly during his "tenure" in prison. In fact, he seemingly came out of the ordeal none the worse for wear. A good model for patient endurance.

The Scriptures tell us a good bit about the place of patience in the life of the follower of Jesus. Let's examine a few key passages.

What does Peter tell you about the value of patience in 1 Peter 2:20-21? Who do you get to model after when you are patient?

In Colossians 1:9-12, Paul explains how God strengthens us with all power. To what end does God so empower us? What is the goal of this gracious work He does in us?

With both Joseph's experience and Peter's and Paul's thoughts in mind, what do you think God might be doing in you as you find yourself waiting for Him to move in your particular life situation?

Day Two

On more than one occasion in the Scriptures, some follower of God was left . . . waiting . . . holding on for the fulfillment of God's good promises. But, time and time again, those who waited on God found Him to be faithful and true. To patiently wait gives Him opportunity to show Himself to be a great and wonderful Savior.

Take some time to meditate—talk to the Lord—about where you are struggling with waiting on Him . . . where you are finding patience is coming hard.

Use the following verses to "prime the pump" of your praying:

O my God, in Thee I trust, do not let me be ashamed; do not let my enemies exult over me. Indeed, none of those who wait for Thee will be ashamed. (Psalm 25:2-3)

Lord, knowing that you will not let me be put to shame . . .

My soul, wait in silence for God only, for my hope is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold; I shall not be shaken. (Psalm 62:5-6)

Lord, because You are . . . I will . . .

I wait for the LORD, my soul does wait, and in His word do I hope. My soul waits for the Lord more than the watchmen for the morning; indeed, more than the watchmen for the morning. O Israel, hope in the LORD; for with the LORD there is lovingkindness, and with Him is abundant redemption. (Psalm 130:5-7)

Lord, I will patiently wait for You to act because . . .

The LORD favors those who fear Him, those who wait for His lovingkindness. (Psalm 147:11)

Lord, I know that . . . please help me . . .

Day Three

Having reflected the idea of patience (and how it has been seen in Joseph), let's turn back to Genesis and unpack a bit

more of Joseph's story. Read Genesis 41:1-36.

What is your overall impression of how this chapter unfolds? What does the chapter add to your understanding of what is happening with Joseph?

Why does Joseph, at this time, now get released and have the opportunity to meet up with Pharaoh?

What is the culmination of Joseph's encounter with Pharaoh? How do you explain what ultimately is happening to Joseph?

If the cupbearer had "remembered" Joseph earlier, Joseph might have been released long before Pharaoh had his dreams. How might Joseph's story have played out differently if he hadn't been left a few more years in prison?

What threads of the story must all come together at this particular time for Joseph to finally be raised to the position he attains in Egypt?

When we are facing hardship, it is easy to conclude that what matters most is *our immediate relief*. What do you see unfold in Joseph's life that might give you a different perspective on waiting in the midst of difficulty?

Day Four

Jesus tells us that what comes out of a man's mouth is a reflection of what fills his heart (Matthew 15:18). With that