

JOSEPH OVERCOMING LIFE'S CHALLENGES

In real life we do not learn character in times of ease and prosperity, but in times of difficulty. The greatest lessons of life are often the product of our most serious heartaches.

In one of the most practical books in the New Testament, James wrote these words: My brethren count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. (James 1:2-4)

His point is simple—God doesn't waste anything! Everything happens in our lives for a reason, and a great part of that reason is to help us grow in our faith.

It has been said that life has to be lived in a forward motion but can only be understood by looking back. This demands that we trust in the loving purposes of a sovereign God. We must trust that He is in control—especially when life seems to be out of control.

This is what Paul referred to as walking by faith (2 Cor. 5:7). It goes against every element of self-preservation that is ingrained in us. We want to take charge, manipulate, and control. But God wants us to trust in the love of a Father who makes no mistakes. He wants us to rely on the One who makes us “more than conquerors through Him who loved us” (Rom. 8:37)

Such was the life of the Old Testament character Joseph. His life was filled with dark, difficult experiences—yet the final outcome was amazing! In fact, Joseph is able to teach us much about how to deal with the tangled threads of our own lives. He became a godly man in an ungodly culture—a true over comer—and his example can help prepare us as we face the issues of life.

●OVERCOMING TREACHERY

There are many beautiful words in the English language—words that are almost musical in their sound. Treachery is not one of those words.

As we enter the life of Joseph, he is standing at the very threshold of treachery—a betrayal that will rise up out of his own family. It will carry several years of pain for him, but it is a lesson in overcoming that young Joseph must learn.

Gen 37:1-11

Favoritism

The brashness of youth

Gen 37:12-28

First we see that anger replaced love, even to the point of murder(v.18). And sarcasm had replaced appropriate speech (v.19). Reuben attempted to intervene on Joseph's behalf but was rebuffed (vv.21-22). Finally, the attack took place in several stages:

They took his coat (v.23), the symbol of their resentment.

They cast him into a pit (v.24) to remove him from their sight. With hardened hearts, they sat down to enjoy a meal while their young brother languished alone in a dark pit (v,25)

They sold him into slavery (vv. 25-28) deciding that making a profit on Joseph's life was

The proper end to this said event.

Notice what the unresolved family tension had produced. The root of bitterness is hate (Mt. 5:21-22).

The root of bitterness is sarcasm (Jas. 3:1-8). The result of bitterness is manipulation, using people instead of loving them.

THE ROOT OF BITTERNESS AND ITS TRAGIC FRUIT

Look at the immediate pain that flowed from a family eaten up with hate. Reuben mourned for Joseph (and his own lack of courage). The brothers lied to their father, but never escaped their personal guilt (see Gen. 42:22). Jacob, the deceiver, was now deceived and he experienced a pain that refused to be comforted. He had reaped what he had sown. As he had deceived his father with a goat, he was now deceived by the same means.

The last result of this family bitterness was that Joseph was sold into slavery.

It's interesting that he is the only one who is not described in the text as being troubled. He was in the best position of them all, because even though he was enslaved he was right where God wanted him.. he was right where he had to be so that he could learn the lessons God wanted to teach him—lessons that would one day make a great leader and enable him to overcome the treachery and betrayal of his own brothers.

Psalm 76:10 says, “Surely the wrath of man shall praise You” Ever faithful. God would take the evil of men in Joseph's life and use it for his good and for His glory.

Excerpts: Joseph: Overcoming life's challenges

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