

Lesson: Genesis 40-42

There are a multitude lessons we can learn from Joseph, one of Jacob's 12 sons. From his ordeal of being sold into slavery by his brothers, and the circumstances that followed, we see hope, faith, endurance, patience, and forgiveness. We see Joseph overcoming trials when the odds were against him, and we see him suffer momentary hardship to be greater in purpose, influence, and strength. We see Joseph continuing to be honorable and doing good even when others disappoint him. We also see that God used something that was meant for evil and turned it into good.

God gave Joseph the spiritual gift to interpret dreams. This ability that Joseph was blessed with allowed him to help others and in turn succeed in his greater God given purpose. When Joseph was in prison he was given charge over the Pharaoh's chief cup-bearer and chief baker who were sent to prison for offending Pharaoh. One day Joseph interpreted their dreams which were causing them some distress, "Why do you look so worried today? He asked them. And they replied, we both had dreams last night, but no one can tell us what they mean. Interpreting dreams is God's business, Joseph replied. Go ahead and tell me your dreams" (Genesis 40:7-8). After interpreting their dreams, Joseph revealed to them that they will be released from prison within 3 days.

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Joseph then asked the cup-bearer to remember him when he is released, “Please remember me and do me a favor when things go well for you. Mention me to Pharaoh, so he might let me out of this place. For I was kidnapped from my homeland, the land of the Hebrews, and now I'm here in prison, but I did nothing to deserve it” (Genesis 40: 14-15). When Joseph's interpretation correctly came true and they were released from prison 3 days later, the chief cup-bearer forgot all about Joseph, and never gave him another thought (Genesis 40:23).

Two years later, it so happened that the Pharaoh became very distressed by dreams he had. The Pharaoh called for all the wise men of Egypt to help interpret his dreams, but they could not. Finally, the king's Chief cup-bearer remembered Joseph, “Today I have been reminded of my failure, he told Pharaoh.” “There was a young Hebrew man with us in the prison who was a slave of the captain of the guard. We told him our dreams, and he told us what each of our dreams meant. And everything happened just as he had predicted” (Genesis 41:9-13). Upon hearing this, the Pharaoh sent for Joseph and Joseph went about correctly interpreting the dreams, first saying to the Pharaoh, “it is beyond my power to do this, but God can tell you what it means and set you at ease” (Genesis 41:16). Joseph revealed to Pharaoh that his dreams meant that there will be seven years of prosperity followed by seven years of famine throughout the land. Joseph stated, “this will happen just as I have described it, for God has revealed to Pharaoh in advance what he is about to do” (Genesis 41:28). Joseph also advised that Pharaoh find a discerning and wise man and put him in charge of the entire land of Egypt. Joseph gave Pharaoh specific advice on how to avoid the foretold famine. “Joseph's suggestions were well received by Pharaoh and his officials. So, Pharaoh asked his officials, can we find anyone else like this man so obviously filled with the spirit of God? Then

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Pharaoh said to Joseph, Since God has revealed the meaning of the dreams to you, clearly no one else is as intelligent or wise as you are. You will be in charge of my court, and all my people will take orders from you. Only I, sitting on my throne will have a rank higher than yours. Pharaoh said to Joseph, I hereby put you in charge of the entire land of Egypt” (Genesis 41: 37-41).

As Joseph predicted, the land was prosperous for seven years followed by famine. Joseph, however, was prepared because, as he was in charge of the land, he stored huge amounts of grain during the prosperous years in preparation for the famine. The famine affected Egypt's surrounding countries also but there were plenty of food in Egypt because of Joseph. People from the surrounding countries had to travel to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph.

Joseph's brothers were affected by the famine, and these same brothers that threw him into slavery, had to travel to Egypt to buy grain. “Since Joseph was governor of all Egypt and in charge of selling grain to all the people, it was to him that his brothers came. When they arrived, they bowed before him with their faces to the ground” (Genesis 42:7), just as Joseph's dream depicted before he was betrayed by his brothers.

Joseph was strengthened tremendously through his trial. He went from being a naive young man to a discerning, tactful, and powerful authority, working on God's behalf. Joseph's God given spiritual gift put him in a position of influence because he was known to be close to God and that the Lord was with him in whatever he did. He faced challenges and rose to meet them, in turn strengthening his skills and abilities. This ultimately led to great success in his time as governor over the land of Egypt.

Take away: We are given spiritual gifts by God to help each other for a

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divine purpose/ God can do great works through us to prove who He is to others/God will grow us through challenges and trials and reinforce our strengths/ All things work together for good and everything happens for a reason.

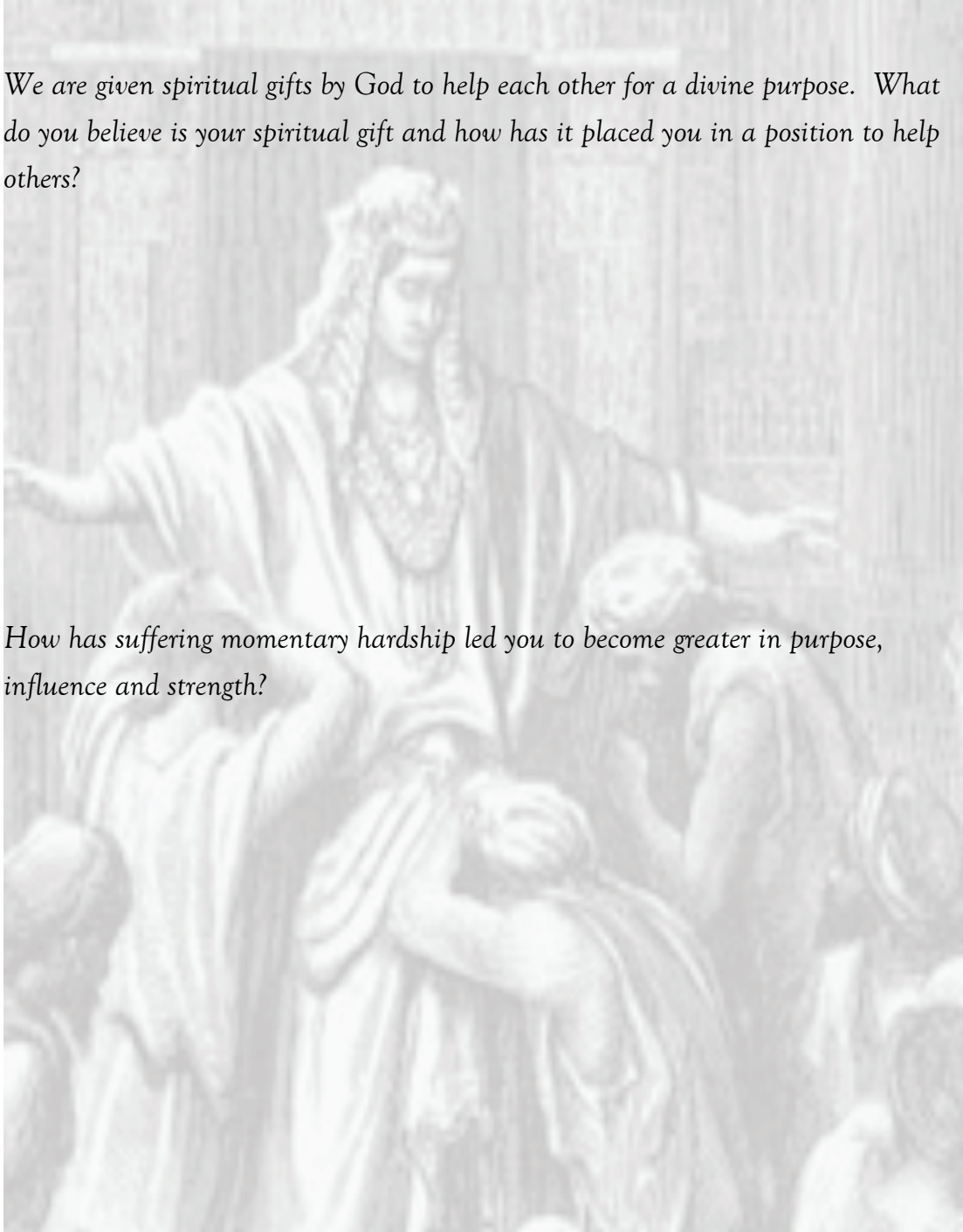
Notes:

Devotional

Genesis 40-42

We are given spiritual gifts by God to help each other for a divine purpose. What do you believe is your spiritual gift and how has it placed you in a position to help others?

How has suffering momentary hardship led you to become greater in purpose, influence and strength?



Devotional

What do you now understand after enduring a trial that you didn't know before?

How has God reinforced your strengths, making you less naive and more discerning, tactful, and a powerful authority, working on God's behalf?