

Joseph: Fitting into God's Plan

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Introduction:

- A. I am glad to be here today.
- B. I spent the last 15 years preparing for the things I will share today.
- C. I am passionate about helping people discover God's will for their lives.
- D. We work with people to get into the word of God.

I. God is a purposeful, developmental God.

A. Everything God does has purpose.

- 1. God is involved in our lives intimately.
- 2. He wants us to do something unique.
- 3. From birth to today God has been working in each of our lives for his purpose.
- 4. Even our whimsical decisions are directed by God.

B. Our response to God's providential working in our lives is important.

- 1. Our son had to go through ranger training in the military.
 - a. Of 115 only 75 will graduate.
 - b. They had to endure cold conditions.
 - c. They had to endure hot conditions.
 - d. They had to endure swamps.
 - e. After a first failure he was offered a second chance if he desired.
 - f. The event would come and go but his response would shape his character.
 - g. He decided to go for it again.
 - h. My son had read Genesis and decided to work like Joseph.
 - i. His superiors recognized his hard work and affirmed him.

- j. He got his ranger badge.
2. His perseverance then helped him to develop character.
3. Joseph encouraged him to persevere.

II. Let's look at the life of Joseph.

A. The foundation of his life. (Genesis 37)

1. He was born 11 of 12 and was special to Jacob, being Rachel's son.
2. Jacob favored him with a coat of many colors.
3. He came from a dysfunctional family.
4. Jacob was a shepherd so Joseph was a shepherd.
5. At 17 Joseph had dreams of promotion.
 - a. He shared his dreams with his brothers.
 - b. They sold him into slavery.
 - c. God blessed Joseph even in slavery. (Genesis 39)
 - d. Joseph applied the creation mandate to rule.
 - e. He learned humility and integrity and management.
6. Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Joseph.
 - a. Joseph decried sinning against God.
 - b. Now Joseph is imprisoned.
 - c. God still blesses him.
 - d. Joseph interprets dreams accurately for the baker and cup bearer.
7. At 30 years old Pharaoh had a dream. (Genesis 41:15-16)
 - a. Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dream and was promoted.
 - b. Only Joseph and Daniel have nothing negative recorded about them.
 - c. God chose Joseph to save the family of Jacob. (Genesis 50:20)
8. God accomplished his purposes in our lives if we are faithful.

B. What impresses you about Joseph?

1. His faith but where did he get his faith?
 - a. From Rachel.
 - b. Personal relationship with God.
 - c. From Jacob in his later years after he had learned some lessons.
 - d. Jacob hungered for God but he appropriated the blessings wrongly.
 - e. His bad decisions had cost him much.
 - f. Perhaps he told Joseph about the time he wrestled with God.
 - g. Maybe Joseph learned to hold on to God no matter what.
2. Joseph must have had a sense of destiny as many of us do.
 - a. God does not waste our difficult experiences but uses all. (Romans 8:28)
 - b. God will allow experiences to prepare us for his purposes.
 - c. What I believe about God will determine what I do and how I live.
 - d. Who God is becomes very important. (Philippians 3:19)
 - e. Joseph's beliefs are never spoken of directly but his life testified.

III. Can I affect God's will for my life?

A. Is all determined or do our choices make a difference?

1. Both.
2. What in Joseph's life demonstrates God's sovereignty?
 - a. Dreams.
 - b. Egypt.
 - c. Protection in trouble.
 - d. The famine in Egypt and his promotion.
 - e. The baker and cup bearer.
3. Can you relate to some of these things?
 - a. Your birth order.

b. Parents. (Psalm 139)

c. He determines our days. (Job 10:8)

d. He works in us to want to do God's will. (Ephesians 2:10; Philippians 2:13)

e. Our choices. (Luke 22:42; John 5:3; Mark 1:5-39)

4. What choices did Joseph make?

a. Attitude.

b. Obedient.

c. Forgiveness.

5. Paul was clearly called by God but most of us are called more like Joseph, in a mysterious way where we often don't understand much. (Acts 9:15)

a. At 35 years old I realized I was nearly half done.

b. This second half is like being in a tunnel where the light shines in the far opening.

c. By faith we move into the second half and God is continuing to work.

IV. Prayer.

A. Lord we are grateful for the life of Joseph.

B. We want to be as faithful to you as Joseph was.

C. Help us to serve your purposes in our lives.

D. Let our thoughts move us closer to your will for us.

E. We pray in Jesus' name.