

# Lesson 24: Joseph Interprets the Dreams

Genesis 39-41 (pg. 48-49, Gospel Story Bible)

## Teaching Points:

**Note to the teacher:** Although Potiphar's wife tells Joseph to "come to bed with me" [NIV] or "lie with me" [ESV], younger children are generally satisfied with the explanation that Potiphar's wife was dishonoring her husband.

**Joseph is in the Lord's hands** — In Egypt, Joseph enjoys God's favor and rises to a position of great prominence. But then he is falsely accused and thrown into prison. Still, God's favor is upon Joseph. He again rises to a very important position within the prison. We can trust God even in difficult circumstances. God is always in control. Nothing, not even imprisonment, can hinder his plan.

**Joseph does not forget the Lord** — Think back and remember how, in Genesis 37, God gave Joseph dreams that his brothers and even his parents would bow down to him. Now, Joseph has not only been sold as a slave, he has been thrown into Pharaoh's prison. It's easy to imagine how Joseph might be wondering if his dreams would ever come true.

But here in this story we see Joseph's strong faith. When Joseph hears that the baker and cupbearer had dreams, he does not say, "Oh forget those dreams, they are meaningless." He declares that interpretations belong to God. Joseph's faith in God remains strong. Two years later, God honors Joseph's faith and brings him out of prison.

**Joseph directs Pharaoh to God** — Here we see God powerfully at work. He is setting Joseph in place so he can preserve the people of Israel through a famine that will not begin for at least eight more years.

Joseph's humility and faith in God are obvious in this passage. Joseph could have boasted and taken credit for his ability to interpret dreams. Instead, Joseph boasts in God by telling Pharaoh that God is the one who gives him interpretations. Joseph also displays wisdom. After interpreting the dream, Joseph gives Pharaoh good advice about how to prepare for the famine. The advice is so good that Pharaoh places Joseph in charge of all Egypt!

## Where is the Gospel?

**How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?**

Read Genesis 41:1-14.

Can you imagine staying in prison for two whole years for something you didn't do? That's what happened to Joseph. But God had a plan to get Joseph out of prison because God had something very important for Joseph to do. He planned to use Joseph to save Israel from a terrible famine. Saving Israel was important because Jesus would one day be born into the family of Israel.

To get Joseph out of prison, God gave Pharaoh a dream that only Joseph could interpret. In a flash Joseph was out of prison, told Pharaoh the meaning of the dream, and before you know it, Joseph was freed from prison and put in charge of Egypt. Through Joseph, God saved Israel from the terrible famine. This allowed Jesus to be born so that one day we too could be saved.

## Bible Truth:

God works all things together for our good.

## Object Lessons:

### 1. Bookmark of Romans 8:28 (Grades K-2)

#### Supplies:

- Bookmarks with Romans 8:28, or blank cardstock, cut into bookmark sizes.
- Colored pencils or crayons

Color or create a bookmark with Romans 8:28. Practice memorizing the verse.

Discuss how God worked Joseph's situation for good.

Put names on back.

(We may be able to laminate them.)

Romans 8:28 "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."

### 2. Romans 8:28 bookmarks & discussion (Grades 3-5)

#### Supplies:

- Bookmarks with Romans 8:28, or blank cardstock, cut into bookmark sizes.
- Colored pencils.

Have the students color or create bookmarks with the verse Romans 8:28. "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."

Ask the kids to think about the past few months. Have them share something unexpected that happened, that was out of their control. Was it what they had planned? How was it a challenge? Did they wonder if God was still in control? What was a blessing that came from it?

Discuss Joseph's situation. How did God use it for good?

Discuss how God could use unexpected situations for their good, or how something good can come from it.

(Note: We don't always see right away how God can use some situations for good, especially challenging situations. Remind the students that it took years for Joseph to start to see God's plan in his situation).

### A Little Bit More (grades 3-5) - Blessing

The story of Joseph demonstrates God's blessing on a person. God blessed Joseph together with those around him; e.g., Potiphar and Pharaoh.

The blessing of the Lord can also be called kindness (Genesis 39:21 NIV) or that the Lord is "with him" (Genesis 39:23). Blessing on an individual is a reflection of the gracious character of God. Man is never deserving of God's favor, but God, who is rich in mercy, gives us gifts that are undeserved and places his favor on us. Though we are blessed in many ways, there is no blessing that is greater than the blessing we receive from being united with Christ—saved through his sacrificial death on the cross.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved." (Ephesians 1:3-6)