



CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

APRIL 01 2023

Scripture Story: Genesis 39–41.

Commentary: *Patriarchs and Prophets* (or *Beginning of the End*), chapter 20.

life is hard—work!



© Thinkstock 2018

flashlight

“God was glorified by the faithfulness of His servant. It was His purpose that in purity and uprightness the believer in God should appear in marked contrast to the worshippers of idols—that thus the light of heavenly grace might shine forth amid the darkness of heathenism” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 217).

keytext

“Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you.’”

(Genesis 41:39, 40, NIV)

what do you think?

Have you ever had to do something that you wouldn't have chosen to do? Write down five things that you would never have done if someone hadn't made you do it!

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Now answer these questions:

1. Which of these would you do again even though you didn't want to do it originally?
2. Which of the above will you never do again?
3. Has anything good ever occurred out of a situation that at first seemed like nothing good could possibly come from it?
4. Do you work hard at something even if you don't necessarily want to do it?

did you know?

- **Pharaoh changed Joseph's name to Zaphnath-paaneah** when he promoted Joseph to vizier.
- Ancient Egypt was known for its architecture and grand monuments. It is possible that the Hebrews who came into Egypt during the time of Joseph were responsible for building many things we still see today.

INTO THE STORY

"The LORD was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. . . . Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, and after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, 'Come to bed with me!' But he refused. 'With me in charge,' he told her, 'my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. . . . My master has withheld nothing from me except you. . . . How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?' "

"When his master heard the [false] story his wife told him, saying, 'This is how your slave treated me,' he burned with anger. Joseph's master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined."

"After they had been in custody for some

time, each of the two men—the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were being held in prison—had a dream the same night, and each dream had a meaning of its own."

"Then Joseph said to them, 'Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me your dreams.'

"Now the third day was Pharaoh's birthday, and he gave a feast for all his officials. He lifted up the heads of the chief cupbearer and the chief baker in the presence of his officials: He restored the chief cupbearer to his position, so that he once again put the cup into Pharaoh's hand—but he impaled the chief baker, just as Joseph had said to them in his interpretation."

"When two full years had passed, Pharaoh had a dream: He was standing by the Nile, when out of the river there came up seven cows, sleek and fat, and they grazed among the reeds. After them, seven other cows, ugly and gaunt, came up out of the Nile and stood beside those on the riverbank. And the cows that were ugly and gaunt ate up the seven sleek, fat cows. Then Pharaoh woke up."

"Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, 'The dreams of Pharaoh are one and the same. God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do. The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good heads of grain are seven years; it is one and the same dream. The seven lean, ugly cows that came up afterward are seven years, and so are the seven worthless heads of grain scorched by the east wind: They are seven years of famine.'

"Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit



to your orders.
Only with respect to the
throne will I be greater than
you.’ ”

(Genesis 39:2, 6-9, 19, 20; 40:4, 5, 8, 20-22; 41:1-4, 25-27,
39, 40, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Where do you see God’s hand in this story?

What is the difference between interpreting dreams and relaying God’s interpretation?

What made Joseph succeed so often in the tasks he undertook?

Did Joseph ever take the easy way out? Explain.

How did God answer Jacob’s prayer for the safety of His people years ahead of the request?

What do you think it is more important to do—to go where
God leads us, even when it is unpleasant, or to understand
what God is doing every moment of our lives?

punch lines

“Do everything without grumbling or arguing. . . . And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain” (Philippians 2:14, 16, NIV).

“The Lord your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands. He has watched over your journey through this vast wilderness. These forty years the Lord your God has been with you, and you have not lacked anything” (Deuteronomy 2:7, NIV).

“All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty” (Proverbs 14:23, NIV).

“I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation. . . . I can do all this through him who gives me strength” (Philippians 4:12, 13, NIV).

“Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain” (1 Corinthians 15:58, NIV).

further insight

“Let the young ever remember that wherever they are, and whatever they do, they are in the presence of God. No part of our conduct escapes observation. We cannot hide our ways from the Most High.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 217.

connectingtolife

cornerstoneconnections

Sabbath

Read Genesis 39–41.

Look at your answers to the *What Do You Think?* exercise. Looking back at the text, what two things made Joseph continually stand out? One was his connection with God; the other was his willingness to live honestly and transparently. He was just not willing to change the truth in order to be safe. In this way, he lived recklessly. He lived by a code that compelled him to do his best no matter what the job. In every situation there were things he would rather not have done, but he did his best regardless.

Sunday

Read Genesis 39:2.

The Bible says that “the LORD was with Joseph so that he prospered” (Genesis 39:2, NIV). What does this mean? Can you go through life saying that “the Lord is with me”? Why do you think Joseph prospered because of this? Whose will came first in his life—his own, his employer’s, or God’s?

Note that he was truly seeking what God wanted for him, and in return he was honored by those around him as being wise and hardworking. How would that approach make a difference in your life?

Monday

Read Genesis 41:39, 40.

Read the *Key Text* again. How would you feel if someone said that to you? But notice to whom Pharaoh gave credit first. He seemed to understand where Joseph’s wisdom and discernment had come from.

What would cause people to see you as someone who is filled with the wisdom of God? How often do you take time to listen for what God wants you to do? How does God speak to you? Besides through His Word,

it might be that He tries to communicate with you through circumstances; it might be through people in your life, or the leading of the Holy Spirit. Have you ever taken the time to find out?

Tuesday

Read 1 Corinthians 15:58.

What was Joseph’s role in the events happening to him? In the *Flashlight* section it says that “God was glorified by the _____ of His servant.”

What does that mean? How did Joseph’s faithfulness affect how the Egyptians viewed God? What might your faithfulness do for those in your world? What are the people around you learning about God’s character from your faithfulness? How does Joseph’s life encourage you that it is possible to affect how others see God?

Wednesday

It is always good to dig deeper into the Word of God. Go to www.biblegateway.com and do a search for the words you think are a theme for this week. You might come up with your own list of texts that relate to what this lesson is about.

Read the *Punch Lines* and focus on the last texts. What do they mean to you? Do you ever feel as if you are working in vain? Have you ever felt that you are trying to do what God is asking but can’t seem to get it right? Paul knew the secret to contentment—faithfulness in every situation, through His grace.

Thursday

Read Philippians 4:12, 13.

Faithfulness is a question of commitment. Are you committed to doing something regardless of how you feel? Are you willing to try something radical over the next few weeks? Commit to something you know is good for you (eating habits, exercise, etc.) and practice it for no less than a week. Once

you have made it a week, try for two, and then try for more. It is a good idea to keep a journal for yourself in order to track your successes. In three weeks you will have built a new habit.

It might not feel good all the time, but in the end you know it is good for you. It’s about making a commitment to something and staying faithful. Imagine how much better it will be to make a commitment to something eternal rather than only those temporary things of this world. See if practicing the small commitments can lead to even greater commitments in time!

Friday

Read Philippians 2:14–16.

What does the example of Joseph mean to you today? Is there a way to relate Joseph’s trials and tribulations to yours? Can his successes be yours? Where does the biblical story intersect with your life? Are you willing to enter into a similar type of relationship with God for the long haul? Can you be faithful even when you don’t feel like it? It won’t hurt to give it a try!

this week’s reading*

Patriarchs and Prophets (or *Beginning of the End*), chapter 20.

**Beginning of the End* is a special adaptation of *Patriarchs and Prophets*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.