



A LIFE OF MANY COLORS

3

THE INTERWOVEN STORY OF JOSEPH & GOD

YES, NO & MAYBE

1 I'm probably more patient than most of the people in this room.

2 God's answers to my prayers seem to take longer than it does for other people.

3 When my life is tough, God seems to pile on even more challenges to grow me.

4 God causes disappointments to strengthen our faith.

5 If God answered my prayer requests quicker, He would be hurting me.

DIG DEEPER:

READ: Genesis 40:1-8 (NIV)

*Some time later, the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt **offended their master**, the king of Egypt. 2 Pharaoh was angry with his two officials, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker, 3 and put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the same prison where Joseph was confined. 4 **The captain of the guard assigned them to Joseph, and he attended them.***

*After they had been in custody for some time, 5 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.*

6 When Joseph came to them the next morning, he saw that they were dejected. 7 So he asked Pharaoh's officials who were in custody with him in his master's house, "Why do you look so sad today?"

*8 "We both had dreams," they answered, "but **there is no one to interpret them.**"*

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

○ (Vs. 1) **Offended their master** - "offended" (ḥāṭā') "to sin, incur guilt." It is highly likely that the Pharaoh had experienced some form of food poisoning, and he did not know whether the chief cupbearer or the chief baker was to blame. He threw them into the royal prison until a proper investigation could determine the culprit.

○ (Vs. 4) **The captain of the guard assigned them to Joseph, and he attended them** - Joseph became the servant of men accused of treason and attempted regicide. As the slave of these prisoners, Joseph was at the bottom of the bottom—a servant of infamous felons. Poor Joseph—he seemed destined to rise so that his dreams could be dashed!

Ø What do you think God is doing here by taking Joseph on a path from bad to worse? Does God do that, and if so, does He do it often?

○ (Vs. 5-8) **Had a dream the same night...But there is no one to interpret them** - First, the ancient Egyptians put great stock in dreams because they believed that sleep put them in contact with another world. Second, a pair of dreams, it was thought, indicated certainty of fulfillment. And third, due to their imprisonment they did not have access to professional interpreters whose "dream books" were thought essential to unlocking the symbolism of

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dreams.

○ (Vs. 8) **Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me your dreams.** - If he had given up on his own dreams, he would never have given a thought to interpreting theirs! Though more than a decade had passed since his dual dreams, (Sheaves of grain bowing to his/Stars, sun and moon bowing to him)—though it had been eleven tumultuous years without a word as to whether his family was alive, eleven years of dressing like an Egyptian, speaking their language, and never meeting another believer—Joseph believed that his dreams would come true!

Ø Does God still speak to people today? How have you experience it, and what messages has He still left unfulfilled in your life?

READ: Genesis 40:9-23 (NIV)

○ (Vs. 23) **He forgot him** - For eleven years Joseph had believed that his dreams would come true. He had never wavered in his conviction, despite his circumstances. And now he had solid objective evidence of his power, through God, to interpret dreams. He had brilliantly interpreted this pair of dreams. So now he was doubly sure that his own two dreams would be fulfilled. But it did not happen. Rather we read, "Yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him" (v. 23)—that is, he *completely* forgot him.

◇ The experience of delay is written large in the lives of God's greats. Abraham's long wait for a son—Moses' forty years of preparation in the desert—David's anointing as a boy, and then the long years of delay in the fields of Judea, and then the flight from Saul and hiding in the cave in Adul-lam.

Ø Are disappointments essential to spiritual growth? Why or why not?

Ø Joseph had to wait in prison for another two years. Why do you think God did not use this opportunity to release Joseph?

Ø What does this story tell you about the character of God?

MY PRAYERS THIS WEEK:



1. How am I still living in spiritual disappointment?
2. Am I letting God's unanswered prayers grow me or discourage me?
3. What new aspect of God's character do I understand better this week?

