



# A LIFE OF MANY COLORS

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## THE INTERWOVEN STORY OF JOSEPH & GOD

### YES, NO & MAYBE

1. I have really strange dreams that wake me up sometimes.

2. Most of the people in this room have not gone through the deeply humbling experience that my life has been.

3. God causes life-strengthening experiences for us to grow.

4. There have been times when I felt God give me profound words to share.

5. God seems to take forever when answering my prayers for deliverance.

### DIG DEEPER:

#### READ: Genesis 41

##### Two More Dreams:

○ (Vs. 1) **Pharaoh's Dreams** - Dreams were believed to be confirmed when they came in pairs.

△ (Vs. 1) **The Nile** - Until 1850, the source of the Nile river was unknown. The Nile was deified in Egyptian religion (god Hap or Hapy when Nile in flood), and the appearance of the cows from the river may have suggested to Pharaoh a close connection to the gods.

△ (Vs. 2, 18) **Cows** - Because the words par'ōh ("pharaoh") and pārôt ("cows") are so similar, Pharaoh may have been deeply troubled because he feared the dream was about being overtaken and devoured by an upcoming pharaoh.

Ø God could have given this message to Jacob and his 11 sons at home, to Joseph, or to any of his "chosen" Children of Israel. What do you think it says about God that he gave these visions to the Pharaoh who espoused that he was a god himself? Why would God do that?

##### The Chief Cupbearer Remembers:

○ (Vs. 14) **Shaved and changed his clothes** - Egyptians were known for their careful attention to personal cleanliness, and contrary to the customs of the Hebrews and others, the Egyptians only allowed a beard and hair to grow as a sign of mourning, which was the reverse of the custom of the Hebrews, who shaved both as a sign of mourning.

△ (Vs. 16) **I cannot do it** - As a youth, modesty was not part of his skill set. He was conscious only of his own importance, his own destiny. He never made mention of God. Here, he is being flattered by the most powerful man in his world. 'I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream, you can interpret it'. It is easy to imagine the seventeen year old Joseph replying, 'Yes, that's true'. But the thirty year old version answers, 'I cannot do it; but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires.'" He deflects attention away from himself and his giftedness and onto God, the author of the gift.

Ø Do you think that God **causes** life experiences to humble us and make us dependent on Him, or does He only **use** life experiences to do so?



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### The Chief Cupbearer Remembers:

○ (Vs. 32) **The reason the dream was given to Pharaoh in two forms is that the matter has been firmly decided by God, and God will do it soon.** - Double dreams convey the assurance of their imminent fulfillment (v. 32). This would apply to Joseph's own dreams (37:6-9) and the two dreams of the imprisoned officials (40:8-19). The language "firmly decided" (nākôn) indicates that which is established, unfailing, proven (Deut 13:15; 17:4; cf. "support" [nākôn] pillars, Judg 16:26).

Ø Joseph's language describes a God who has "firmly decided," and has created the "support pillars" of the events to come (the good and the famine years). Do you think Joseph was correct or mistaken in his belief that God causes bad things to happen? Why?

### Pharaoh Speaks of God:

○ (Vs. 39) **Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you.** - When God speaks through humans, it always rings true with a power beyond mankind's most compelling words.

Ø What do we need to do today to allow God to speak through us?

Δ (Vs. 40) **Joseph's New Position** - The wording "All my people are to submit to your orders" translates a difficult text, literally, "All my people will kiss [yiššaḡ] you on your mouth," probably expressing homage to Joseph as their lord (cf. Ps 2:12; also 1 Kgs 19:18; Job 31:27; Hos 13:2).

Δ (Vs. 45) **Pharaoh gave Joseph the name Zaphenath-Paneah** - This name, according to many scholars, means "The god spoke and he [the one who bears this name] lives."

Ø What does this tell you about what God is trying to do in the life of Pharaoh?

○ (Vs. 46) **Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh** - Joseph entered Egypt at the age of 17. It has been 13 years of extreme hardship.

Ø Why do you think God waits so long to answer our prayers of deliverance?

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

### MY PRAYERS THIS WEEK:

1. How spiritually prepared am I to live through the times of plenty and of want?
2. Am I letting God speak through me?
3. What new aspect of God's character do I understand better this week?

