

Building

The Church's "Business": 5 B's--part 3

The Life of Joseph

January 19, 2014

DAY 1: Getting Back Up, Again and Again!

1. "BELOVED" trumps "BROKENNESS." The scripture is clear. No matter what you've done, no matter how heinous, God's grace is greater still. Today we look at our third "B:" BUILDING.
2. When I was boy I built two kinds of toys. The first were toys like glider airplanes made out of balsa. It didn't take long to "build" them; ten seconds, tops. I also built model airplanes. Those would take me a lot longer to build. Then I had to paint them. It took meticulous effort. The balsa planes lasted just a few minutes. I had the model planes for years, that is until my little brother discovered them!
3. In life, it takes years to build the important things: your relationship with God, your reputation, trust, a marriage, your kids, your financial freedom, your business, your ministry and your health. What is an area that you'd like to *build*?

Prov. 24:16 A righteous man falls seven times but gets up, but a wicked man stumbles in times of calamity.

4. Building things takes time, concerted effort, eating an elephant, and continuing to overcome repeated disappointments. What strikes you about Proverbs 24:16? List three truths from this verse:

a. Truth #1:

b. Truth #2:

3. Truth #3:

Genesis 40:9 So the chief cupbearer told his dream to Joseph and said to him, "In my dream there was a vine before me, 10 and on the vine there were three branches. As soon as it budded, its blossoms shot forth, and the clusters ripened into grapes. 11 Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand." 12 Then Joseph said to him, "This is its interpretation: the three branches are three days. 13 In three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your office, and you shall place Pharaoh's cup in his hand as formerly, when you were his cupbearer. 14 Only remember me, when it is well with you, and please do me the kindness to mention me to Pharaoh, and so get me out of this house. 15 For I was indeed stolen out of the land of the Hebrews, and here also I have done nothing that they should put me into the pit."

5. We pick up Joseph's story in "federal" prison. Two former servants of Pharaoh are fellow prisoners. Each tells a dream they had to Joseph. How would you describe Joseph's attitude?

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|--|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resigned to his lot | <input type="checkbox"/> Given up | <input type="checkbox"/> "What's the use?" | <input type="checkbox"/> Look out for #1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engaged with the life in front of him | <input type="checkbox"/> "God wants to use my life wherever I am." | <input type="checkbox"/> "God hasn't given up on me." | <input type="checkbox"/> "Where is God?" |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "God hasn't given up on me." | <input type="checkbox"/> "Where is God?" | <input type="checkbox"/> "I'm trusting God." | <input type="checkbox"/> "Be a blessing where you can." |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "Be a blessing where you can." | <input type="checkbox"/> Mopey, grumbling, murmuring, blaming, etc. | | |

DAY 2: Overcoming Repeated Disappointments

1. Yesterday, Joseph appealed to the cup bearer.

Genesis 40:14 "Only remember me, when it is well with you, and please do me the kindness to mention me to Pharaoh, and so get me out of this house."

2. The cup bearer was released from prison and brought into the king's presence, just as Joseph foretold. Imagine you were Joseph. Given the miraculous nature of the dream's interpretation coming true, what would you "expect" the cup bearer to do next?

Genesis 40:20 On the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, he made a feast for all his servants and lifted up the head of the chief cupbearer and the head of the chief baker among his servants.²¹ He restored the chief cupbearer to his position, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand.²² But he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them.²³ Yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

3. Joseph had also correctly interpreted the baker's dream. When the cup bearer was restored to his place in the king's palace, did he appeal to the king for Joseph, the one who had helped him?

4. If you have been Joseph, and day-after-day you heard nothing, what would have been your response?

5. The very next verse begins, "After two whole years ..." How would this amount of time affect your response in question 4?

6. Pharaoh has a troubling dream and needs it interpreted. FINALLY, the cup bearer wakes up!

Genesis 41:9 Then the chief cupbearer said to Pharaoh, "I remember my offenses today."

7. The cup bearer recommends Joseph to interpret the dream.

Genesis 41:14 Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they quickly brought him out of the pit. And when he had shaved himself and changed his clothes, he came in before Pharaoh.

8. Joseph was called SUDDENLY; no warning; no advance notice. Would you have been "ready to go?"

9. Life is hard. It requires an *attitude* of building, and *actions* of building toward what is important every day, as you are able. It often requires overcoming the disappointments of others and the mysteries of life. What strikes you from this story so far?

DAY 3: Engaging Opportunity

1. Pharaoh calls for Joseph...

Genesis 41:15 And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it."

2. How would your attitude toward God have been, PRIOR to this stunning change?

3. Let's look at Joseph's attitude toward God...

Genesis 41:16 Joseph answered Pharaoh, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer."

4. What words would you use to describe his remarkable attitude toward God, especially after so many disappointments?

5. Pharaoh tells Joseph his two disturbing dreams.

Genesis 41:25 Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "The dreams of Pharaoh are one; God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do. ²⁶ The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good ears are seven years; the dreams are one. ²⁷ The seven lean and ugly cows that came up after them are seven years, and the seven empty ears blighted by the east wind are also seven years of famine. ²⁸ It is as I told Pharaoh; God has shown to Pharaoh what he is about to do. ²⁹ There will come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt, ³⁰ but after them there will arise seven years of famine, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt. The famine will consume the land, ³¹ and the plenty will be unknown in the land by reason of the famine that will follow, for it will be very severe. ³² And the doubling of Pharaoh's dream means that the thing is fixed by God, and God will shortly bring it about. ³³ Now therefore let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt. ³⁴ Let Pharaoh proceed to appoint overseers over the land and take one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt during the seven plentiful years. ³⁵ And let them gather all the food of these good years that are coming and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh for food in the cities, and let them keep it. ³⁶ That food shall be a reserve for the land against the seven years of famine that are to occur in the land of Egypt, so that the land may not perish through the famine."

6. In these verses, on whom is Joseph shining the light?

7. Underline four places where Joseph tells Pharaoh that God is superintending, not just Pharaoh's dreams, but the nation's future.

8. What has Joseph built? Character, other-centeredness, faith in God and his reputation. All of these were central to bring the story to this moment! (Remember the braggart and his own dreams two weeks ago?) What's your take away from today's devotional?

DAY 4: God is Building Into Us While We Are Building

1. Very few people "fall into" success. This is true in marriage, parenting, finances, work, and ministry. Instead, success is built over a long period of time.

Genesis 41:37 This proposal pleased Pharaoh and all his servants. ³⁸ And Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find a man like this, in whom is the Spirit of God?" ³⁹ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you are. ⁴⁰ You shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you command. Only as regards the throne will I be greater than you." ⁴¹ And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt." ⁴² Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain about his neck. ⁴³ And he made him ride in his second chariot. And they called out before him, "Bow the knee!" Thus he set him over all the land of Egypt.

2. In Pharaoh's mind, what qualified Joseph to take up the second most powerful position in Egypt?

3. It's easy to forget the hardships endured over many years. It's during those years of hardship that God does His deepening work in us. In the following verses, jot down what God is building into us.

Luke 16:10 "One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. ¹¹ If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? ¹² And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? ¹³ No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."

1 Chronicles 17:7 Now therefore thus shall you say to my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel;'

Luke 18:13 But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!'" ¹⁴ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for every one who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

4. How would you summarize these verses? For example:

a. While we focus on our "outside" life, God focuses on our "inner" life.

b. ADD YOUR OWN LESSON: _____

5. What have you seen God building into you?

DAY 5: God Builds Life Lessons In Us

1. Joseph's perspective, his humility, and service on a daily basis finally win the day.

Genesis 41:46 Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh and went through all the land of Egypt. ⁴⁷ During the seven plentiful years the earth produced abundantly, ⁴⁸ and he gathered up all the food of these seven years, which occurred in the land of Egypt, and put the food in the cities. He put in every city the food from the fields around it. ⁴⁹ And Joseph stored up grain in great abundance, like the sand of the sea, until he ceased to measure it, for it could not be measured.

2. God had clearly led Joseph. Not only was Egypt saved from famine, but neighboring countries came to buy food from Egypt! Joseph had been through a dark night of the soul. What helped him persevere? What allowed him to maintain hope in God? Let's pick up the story...

Genesis 41:50 Before the year of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph. Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera priest of On, bore them to him.

Genesis 41:51 Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh. "For," he said, "God has made me forget all my hardship and all my father's house."

3. Joseph had married and had two sons. The first one is named, "Manasseh," which is Hebrew for "forget."

a. What two items did Joseph say God had helped him forget?

b. How was Joseph using the word, "forget?" Do you think he meant that he just could not remember what had happened when his brothers betrayed him, threw him down into the waterless pit, and then sold him into slavery?

c. If amnesia is not what Joseph meant, what did he mean by saying he had "forgotten" what happened back home?

4. Moses then tells us about Joseph's second son.

Genesis 41:52 The name of the second he called Ephraim, "For God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction."

a. The word, "Ephraim" sounds like the Hebrew word meaning "twice fruitful." What is Joseph saying by the naming of his second son?

b. Think of it. Every time Joseph calls either son, he is recalling to his mind the two central lessons of his last twenty years!

5. Do either of these lessons strike you? Is God working in you these same attitudes and lessons? How so?