



Managing GOD's Money

Theme for September: Life Lessons

Life is a journey that's not smooth, but lesson-filled. Our great challenge is to be open to learn as we go. Sadly, rarely do we learn from our experiences, especially if bad, because we don't accept them. We need to ask Jesus, our Messiah, to lead us through these bad experiences as He promised, and show us how to grow from them.

Because we don't use these events He presents to develop us, we repeat mistakes and act daily like each outing is our first. We are busy with our priorities that spotlight urgent matters without everlasting significance, so we side-step God's messages He chooses specially for us.

This month we look at some journeys with several life-lessons. We will highlight a few and look at how we might apply them daily as we stay alert to Messiah's teachings. Don't miss God's faithfulness that permeates these journeys:



September 1-7: Egypt to Canaan

September 8-14: Jerusalem to Moab

September 15-21: The Cistern to the Mansion

September 22-30: Shepherd to King

September 15-21: The Cistern to the Mansion



Genesis 37:5-8

Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had: We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it." His brothers said to him, "Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?" And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said.

To put this journey in Joseph's dreams—a later context, first we must dream was similar—would look at Joseph's rapport become reality, but at the time with his dad, Jacob, his mom nobody understood them Rachel, and his brothers. In fully; but his father *kept the matter in mind.* (**Genesis 37:11**). **Genesis 30:1** we read that Rachel could not have children but her sister Leah could. Wearing the richly ornamented robe his father gave him, Rachel and Leah competed Joseph went to his brothers to find out about their well-being and encouraged Jacob to father as they tended the flocks. children with their servants. Later God allowed Rachel to bear a son, Joseph, Jacob and When he found out he was to report to his dad, Jacob. But his Rachel's first son (**Genesis 30:22-24**). brothers, except Reuben, had other plans. First they threw him into a cistern. Then they removed him and sold him as a slave to Ishmaelites who resold him to Pharaoh's servant, Potiphar, in Egypt.

Jacob favored Joseph causing him into a cistern. Then they jealousy among his half removed him and sold him as brothers (**Genesis 37:3**). So, a slave to Ishmaelites who when he told them about his dream in which their sheaves resold him to Pharaoh's bowed to his, their jealousy servant, Potiphar, in Egypt. heightened.

Later, the brothers lied to their dad, saying an animal killed Joseph. As proof Joseph died, his brothers showed Jacob his robe they soaked in animal's blood—this news devastated Jacob (**Genesis 37:31-36**).

Accept Where You Are and Work With the Lord

Here is a key lesson on this trip: Accept where you are, accept what you have, and work with the Lord—not for Him, not ahead of Him, but with Him.

Last week we looked at Naomi's *perfect pity party* nobody attended. Here we see *better conditions* for a *pity party*. What did Joseph do to deserve this treatment? Sold as a slave is a *good reason* to be angry, bitter, resentful; particularly being an Israelite slave in Egypt. He could blame dad for *favoring him*, which caused his brothers to dislike him. Or, he could blame dad for *sending him to his brothers*, creating the *opportunity* to sell him as a slave. Naturally, he could blame his brothers.

What did he do? He chose to *accept where he was, accept what he had, and work with the Lord*. **Genesis 39:1** shows God blessed and prospered Joseph and his master, Potiphar (**Genesis 39:5-6**).

God creates individual goals and plans for us but tells us relevant details *when He knows* we need that knowledge.



Memory Verse

Daniel 2:19-21

During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven and said: "Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his.

Joseph didn't know God's goals and plans—God's will—but in hindsight, we see while he was Potiphar's slave, God prepared him for a larger leadership role. Meanwhile, in ignorance, Joseph obeyed God, and worked as Potiphar's slave.

How often when we can't see the *prize, God's will*, we become agitated and exit His path—missing His best. Not so with Joseph whose future task needed integrity, loyalty, steadfastness he developed while looking after Pharaoh's household.

Listen, Learn, Lead

We see another lesson on this journey during Joseph's time with Potiphar: *Leaders must listen to God, learn from Him, and then lead with Him*. In this position, Joseph needed to

learn and practice leadership qualities. God *equipped Joseph, as He does us*, to do His goals and plans; He doesn't expect us to lead alone. He expects us to listen to Him, learn from Him, and then follow Him. Joseph did just that!

"God helps those who help themselves" isn't biblical; Benjamin Franklin coined it in 1736. God does the contrary. He strengthens the weak. It's when we are weak He is strong in us and we perform well. Have you noticed? Remember how ill-equipped Moses was? God gave Him Aaron, and taught him all he needed for the job. God will do the same for us.

Let's get back to Joseph whose testing was in God's plan. Because Potiphar trusted Joseph, he put him in charge of the household and had no concerns. As we said earlier, God blessed the household and the fields (**Genesis 39:5-6**). So, when Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Joseph, the Lord led him away; Joseph fled! But his testing continued as Potiphar's wife lied about the incident and Joseph ended in prison, wrongfully (**Genesis 39:11-13; 19-20**).

Joseph's conditions for a *pity party* soared. Another wrong done to him. Why him? What did he do to deserve this? Still, that's not how he reacted.

God continued to prepare him for leadership. In prison, he got a leadership role (**Genesis 19:21-23**).

Follow His Plan

Here we see another lesson on this journey: God expects us to follow His plan. When we don't, we bear the negative outcomes. Joseph didn't try to escape from prison to "get on with his life." He stayed and followed God's plan. He continued to listen to God, and to wait on God. So, he was available to interpret the chief cupbearer and chief baker's dreams in prison; one with a positive result the other negative. Because God revealed them to Joseph, each was accurate (**Genesis 40:6-19**).

Sticking with God's plan is difficult. Indeed, with so many distractions around, how do we know His plan? In hindsight it's easy to see how Joseph fitted in God's plan. However, how do I know how I fit in God's plan today? This is a valid question. How, indeed! A frequent and similar question I get is how do I know God's will?

Joseph did not seek to find God's will; he merely did what was right and trusted God for the outcome. We don't do that; we wrestle to know God's will. We forget the Bible shows clearly His general will. So we need to study the Bible

diligently and pray continually (**1 Thessalonians 5:17, Ephesians 6:18**). This means learning to develop an attitude, a lifestyle of prayer. While we pray we align our lives with His Word (**2 Corinthians 6:18**) and ask Him to search us, and show us unconfessed sins and areas in our lives that strayed from His path.

Meanwhile, we need to watch (**Mark 13:17**), wait, and look in and around our circumstances to see what God might be showing and teaching us.

Love is better than Revenge

Joseph followed God's plan and later God restored him to Pharaoh's house. There, God used him to interpret Pharaoh's dream about the impending seven-year feast followed by the seven-year famine (**Genesis 41:17-41**).

At age 30, God gave Joseph the job for which He prepared him: head of Pharaoh's palace and second to Pharaoh in Egypt. Pharaoh understood Joseph had no powers, but His God did. He believed Joseph's God was Joseph's source of wisdom and knowledge. That was good enough for Pharaoh so he gave Joseph the top job. A Hebrew slave, in charge of Egypt; surely that's God's doing (**Genesis 41:39-40**).

Joseph followed God's plan and so Egypt had more than

enough food during those challenging fourteen years of feast and famine. But a more crucial assignment awaited Joseph—to meet his brothers who sold him into slavery.

His brothers needed food during the famine and came to Egypt. In an emotional moment, Joseph disclosed whom he was and reassured his brothers that God sent Him to Egypt for this time: what they meant for evil, God used for good (**Genesis 45:1-7**).



Application

Deuteronomy

6:18-19

Do what is right and good in the Lord's sight, so that it may go well with you and you may go in and take over the good land the Lord promised on oath to your ancestors, thrusting out all your enemies before you, as the Lord said.

How difficult it is to accept blatant injustices. In fact, any injustice. After all, *we have our rights*. How dare anyone violate them! Yet, it is in these instances God wants us to learn humility, patience,

dependence, among other traits.

Joseph, accepted where God placed him; he listened, learned and followed God's plan. He didn't pity party, but showed love, grace, and mercy. He knew revenge is for God.

Joseph did not devote time assembling prayer groups to seek God's will for Him. He prodded along, open to God's call.

Are you seeking God's will for you? Instead of focusing on God's will for you, start devouring His word; you will see His will when you ask Him to remove obstacles and you *adjust your lifestyle* to His ways.

We can take many lessons from Joseph's journey. This week, mull over these six areas of God's general will John MacCarter reminds us of in one of his messages I listened to recently:

1. We Be saved (1 Timothy 2:4)
2. We be filled with the Spirit—when the word dominates us, the Spirit controls us (Ephesians 5:18, Colossians 3:16)
3. We be sanctified (1 Thessalonians 4:3)
4. We be submissive to God, to one another—wives to husband, husbands to God while loving and

wives as Messiah loves the church (Ephesians 5)

5. We suffer—'power' is perfected in weakness (1 Peter 3:17, 2 Timothy 3:12, 2 Corinthians 12:1-10)
6. We be thankful (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

As well, remember this PAW principle:

1. Pray continually
2. Align your life with His Word
3. Watch and wait to see Him right where you are

When we align our lives with God's word, we will know God's will; that's what Psalm 37:4 tells us. God will supplant our human wants for His will.

This week practice slowing down and listening for God's voice regularly. Apostle Paul listened to God and was sensitive to Him when they jailed him. In Acts 16:25-40, they jailed Paul and Silas wrongfully for casting out a demon from a slave girl, so denying her owner future revenue from her demonic acts. Instead of becoming preoccupied trying to find God's will, pity party, worry about their next move, they focused on God, prayed, and sang. God did the rest (Acts 16:25-26).

Joseph, Paul, and Silas, focused on God. Let us love Jesus and devote our lives to serving Him. He reminds us in

Matthew 9:37-38 that the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. We need only be available to respond to His call. That's all.

We won't hear Him if we are busy "doing ministry"—working *for* Him. That's what the church in Ephesus did; they were busy with the wrong things, and they forsook their first love (Revelation 2:1-7).

Finally, reflect on these questions:

1. Do you know Jesus as Lord and Savior?
2. Today, where are you in life's journey?
3. Are you so focused trying to know God's will for your life you are distracted from your first duty to love Jesus with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength?
4. Ask Him to teach you what it means to love Him with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.
5. Do your actions show that you have turned over every area of your life to Him?

Stop focusing on everything except loving Jesus with all you have. Start to listen, learn, and follow Him. He is available, and He will show you the way. And like Paul and Silas, keep singing and praising Him. The result may surprise you, pleasantly.



Daily Reflections



September 15:
Genesis 30:1-24;
1 Timothy 2:4

September 16:
Genesis 37:1-11;
31-36

September 17:
Genesis 39:5-6;
Colossians 3:16

September 18:
Genesis 39:11-13;
19-23;
Revelation 2:1-7

September 19:
Genesis 40:6-19;
Acts 16:25-40

September 20:
Matthew
9:37-38;
Genesis 41:17-41

September 21:
Genesis 45:1-7;
Philippians 1:29

Considering the month's *theme*, and the period's *topic*, daily reflect on verses on the left. These questions might help your reflections:

1. Who is talking to whom, about what, and in what context?
2. How do these verses apply to me today?
3. What lessons from these verses can I start today?

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