

The Story of Joseph

Adapted from DLTK's Growing Together

This is the story about a young man named Joseph. His father's name is Jacob, and they lived in Canaan from where his grandfather was from.

Joseph was seventeen (old enough to drive a car these days), and he had eleven brothers and only had one brother younger than him. Can you imagine having eleven brothers to play with, or fight with?

Because Joseph was one of the youngest sons, his father spent more time with him, and he became very special to him. So, Jacob had a special robe made for Joseph. (They didn't have jackets back then, so this was a very special jacket). It was very beautiful and had every color you could imagine in it.

All of Joseph's older brothers saw this and they got very jealous. The word jealous means that Joseph's brothers disliked him because they thought his father liked him more, and because he got the special coat. They got so jealous they couldn't even say a kind word to him.

One day Joseph had a dream, and he went to go tell his brothers. He said, "Guess what? Last night I had a strange dream. We were tying up bunches of grain out in the field when suddenly my bunch stood up, while all of yours gathered around and bowed to me." The brothers looked at each other in disgust, but Joseph continued. "Then I had another dream that the sun, moon, and eleven stars bowed down to me."

"Who do you think you are?" the brothers asked. "Do you think that you are better than all of us? Do you think that we would ever bow down to you?" This made the brothers dislike Joseph even more.

When he told his father about his dreams he said, "Those are strange dreams." But he thought carefully about what Joseph had told him.

A few days later Joseph's father asked him to check on his brothers. They were in the fields quite a distance away. So, Joseph went to find them.

When the brothers saw Joseph in the distance, they made a plan to kill him. But when Reuben, Joseph's oldest brother heard this he said, "Let's not kill him, just throw him in a well out here in the field." He said this because he was secretly planning to come back and rescue Joseph when the other brothers had left.

So, when Joseph came to them, they took off his beautiful robe and they threw him in an empty well. A little while later a group of people came by that were wanting to sell some things in Egypt. One of the brothers spoke up, "Why don't we sell him to these people, this way we never have to see him again, and we don't have to kill him."

The other brothers liked this idea, so they sold him to the people who were going to Egypt.

Unfortunately, Reuben had been working and hadn't seen what happened. When he returned to the well, he noticed that Joseph was gone. He had been sold to an important man named Potiphar, an assistant to the Pharaoh of Egypt.

The rest of the brothers took Joseph's beautiful robe and dipped it in animal blood and took it back to their father. When the father saw this he cried, "Some animal has killed my son." And he cried for many days, so much that nobody could comfort him.

Now Joseph had started out as a slave, but the Lord was with Joseph and He helped him do everything right. So, Potiphar made him his helper, and put him in charge of everything that he owned.

The problem came when Potiphar's wife lied about Joseph to her husband; so Potiphar had Joseph put into jail.

The Lord was still with Joseph in jail, and the warden put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners. He never worried because the Lord was with Joseph and helped him do everything right.

After Joseph had been in jail for some time, a cupbearer and baker to Pharaoh had been sent there. One night, each of them had a dream. They told their dreams to Joseph, and he told the cupbearer that he would soon be let out of jail. "Please tell Pharaoh about me, and ask him to get me out of here," Joseph said.

When the cupbearer was freed, he forgot about what Joseph did. So, Joseph stayed in jail for two more years. Until one day, the Pharaoh had a dream, and nobody could explain it to him. The cupbearer then remembered what Joseph had done for him, and Joseph was brought to Pharaoh.

"Can you understand dreams?" Pharaoh asked. "I can't, but God helps me." Joseph replied. After Pharaoh had told him his dream, Joseph explained, "God is warning you. There will be seven years when nothing will grow and there won't be any food for anyone."

"What can I do?" Pharaoh asked. "God has shown you what to do. There will be seven years before the bad years that will be very good. So good that there will be extra food for everyone. So, you should save a little bit of each year's harvest, that way you will have enough to get you through the bad years," Joseph said.

Pharaoh believed all that Joseph told him and put him in charge of all the land of Egypt.

People came from all countries to buy grain from Joseph, because the whole world was in need of food. Some of those people were Joseph's brothers. When his brothers came, Joseph recognized them, but they did not know who he was. (It had been over 10 years since they had seen him).

The brothers all bowed to him because he was an important person. Just as he dreamt they would at the beginning.

After a few meetings with his brothers he could not keep it in any longer, and Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father alive?" But his brothers couldn't answer him because they were afraid. Then Joseph said, "Come here. I am your brother, the one you sold! Do not worry, and do not be angry at yourselves for selling me, because God has put me here to save people from starving."

So his father, his brothers, and their families came to live in Egypt with Joseph, and they had all the food they needed.

God tells us many times in the Bible how important it is to show the kind of love that Joseph showed in Genesis. Patience is often one of the hardest of all ways to show love because we become selfish and in a hurry to get what we want. So, the next time you are struggling with patience, which shows God's love, think about Joseph and try to love the way God wants you to.