

## **Starlight Station: Gifts**

**Bible Passages:** Genesis 40:1-41:44; 1 Corinthians 12:7

**Bottom Line:** Servant leaders use their gifts to help others

It's easy to watch a superhero movie and imagine what you might do with those same powers. Special abilities could be used to help people, help yourself or be used to hurt people. The truth is that even though you might not be able to run lightening fast, lift cars or walk on walls, you do have a special ability.

You have a gift. Hopefully you have an idea of what it is. If not, you have time to figure it out. God has made you for a reason and a purpose. He's given you something unique. You are the only you to have ever existed and you can do things in a way that is different from anyone else ever. How you choose to use your uniqueness and gifts is up to you.

Joseph had gifts and abilities, like the way he was able to interpret his own dream from a few weeks back. (You remember, the one that got him into trouble with his brothers!) Well he still is able to interpret dreams and he has an opportunity to use that gift to help others. Lets read all about it in Genesis 40.

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

OK, quick note here, a cupbearer's job was REALLY important. His job was to eat and drink the king's food before the king did. That way if it was poisoned, the cupbearer would die instead of the king. That sounds like a bad job, but to be honest, that cupbearer was treated really well! He was one of the most trusted people in the king's court and would often be able to speak freely with the king. Not many people were able to do that.

The chief baker would have also been a really high position in the king's eyes. This is the person in charge of all the food preparations for the king and all the parties, gatherings, meetings etc.

We're not told why they were in prison, but they were in the same prison as Joseph, one that was meant for people in high positions.

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

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

***"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."***

***So the chief cupbearer told Joseph his dream. He said to him, "In my dream I saw a vine in front of me, and on the vine were three branches. As soon as it budded, it blossomed, and its***

***clusters ripened into grapes. Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes, squeezed them into Pharaoh's cup and put the cup in his hand."***

***"This is what it means," Joseph said to him. "The three branches are three days. Within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your position, and you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand, just as you used to do when you were his cupbearer. But when all goes well with you, remember me and show me kindness; mention me to Pharaoh and get me out of this prison. I was forcibly carried off from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing to deserve being put in a dungeon."***

***When the chief baker saw that Joseph had given a favorable interpretation, he said to Joseph, "I too had a dream: On my head were three baskets of bread. In the top basket were all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating them out of the basket on my head."***

***"This is what it means," Joseph said. "The three baskets are three days. Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head and impale your body on a pole. And the birds will eat away your flesh."***

***Now the third day was Pharaoh's birthday, and he gave a feast for all his officials. He lifted up the heads of the chief cupbearer and the chief baker in the presence of his officials: He restored the chief cupbearer to his position, so that he once again put the cup into Pharaoh's hand—but he impaled the chief baker, just as Joseph had said to them in his interpretation.***

***The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph; he forgot him.***

Joseph decided to help these important men. He could see that they were troubled by their dreams and he wanted to help them. When he did, he told them the truth, even though it might not be what they wanted to hear, (chief baker).

Some would say that Joseph helped them out of selfish ambition, but based on what we know of Joseph's life, I don't see it that way. I think he helped those in need with the gifts he had and then God honored what Joseph did.

Our motivation for using our gifts shouldn't be for selfish reasons, but to be in the genuine interest of other people. Joseph's good deeds would finally pay off in God's timing.

### **Pharaoh's Dreams**

***When two full years had passed, Pharaoh had a dream: He was standing by the Nile, when out of the river there came up seven cows, sleek and fat, and they grazed among the reeds. After them, seven other cows, ugly and gaunt, came up out of the Nile and stood beside those on the riverbank. And the cows that were ugly and gaunt ate up the seven sleek, fat cows. Then Pharaoh woke up.***

***He fell asleep again and had a second dream: Seven heads of grain, healthy and good, were growing on a single stalk. After them, seven other heads of grain sprouted—thin and scorched by the east wind. The thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven healthy, full heads. Then Pharaoh woke up; it had been a dream.***

***In the morning his mind was troubled, so he sent for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but no one could interpret them for him.***

***Then the chief cupbearer said to Pharaoh, "Today I am reminded of my shortcomings. Pharaoh was once angry with his servants, and he imprisoned me and the chief baker in the house of the captain of the guard. Each of us had a dream the same night, and each dream had a meaning of its own. Now a young Hebrew was there with us, a servant of the captain of the guard. We told him our dreams, and he interpreted them for us, giving each man the interpretation of his dream. And things turned out exactly as he interpreted them to us: I was restored to my position, and the other man was impaled."***

***So Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and he was quickly brought from the dungeon. When he had shaved and changed his clothes, he came before Pharaoh.***

***Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had a dream, and no one can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it."***

***"I cannot do it," Joseph replied to Pharaoh, "but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires."***

***Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "In my dream I was standing on the bank of the Nile, when out of the river there came up seven cows, fat and sleek, and they grazed among the reeds. After them, seven other cows came up—scrawny and very ugly and lean. I had never seen such ugly cows in all the land of Egypt. The lean, ugly cows ate up the seven fat cows that came up first. But even after they ate them, no one could tell that they had done so; they looked just as ugly as before. Then I woke up.***

***"In my dream I saw seven heads of grain, full and good, growing on a single stalk. After them, seven other heads sprouted—withered and thin and scorched by the east wind. The thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven good heads. I told this to the magicians, but none of them could explain it to me."***

***Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "The dreams of Pharaoh are one and the same. God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do. The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good heads of grain are seven years; it is one and the same dream. The seven lean, ugly cows that came up afterward are seven years, and so are the seven worthless heads of grain scorched by the east wind: They are seven years of famine.***

***"It is just as I said to Pharaoh: God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do. Seven years of great abundance are coming throughout the land of Egypt, but seven years of famine will follow them. Then all the abundance in Egypt will be forgotten, and the famine will ravage the land. The abundance in the land will not be remembered, because the famine that follows it will be so severe. 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.***

***"And now let Pharaoh look for a discerning and wise man and put him in charge of the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh appoint commissioners over the land to take a fifth of the harvest of Egypt during the seven years of abundance. They should collect all the food of these good years that are coming and store up the grain under the authority of Pharaoh, to be kept in the cities for food. This food should be held in reserve for the country, to be used during the seven years of famine that will come upon Egypt, so that the country may not be ruined by the famine."***

***The plan seemed good to Pharaoh and to all his officials. So Pharaoh asked them, "Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God?"***

***Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you.”***

### **Joseph in Charge of Egypt**

***So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt.” Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his finger and put it on Joseph’s finger. He dressed him in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. He had him ride in a chariot as his second-in-command,[c] and people shouted before him, “Make way” Thus he put him in charge of the whole land of Egypt.***

***Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I am Pharaoh, but without your word no one will lift hand or foot in all Egypt.”***

Joseph didn’t take credit for the gift that God gave him. He didn’t make it about himself, like, “Look what I can do!”. Instead he said, “Look what GOD can do!”. There is a huge difference. Many times in the Bible we can see what God can do through the gifts and talents that He gives people. You are the same way. God is ready for you to use the gifts He has given you! How will you use them?

### **QUESTIONS:**

- What kind of gifts do you think you have?
  - If you’re having trouble thinking of some, just think about the things you like to do.
- How do you think you can use those gifts to help others?
- How do you think you can use those gifts and talents to honor God?