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Title: What Would I Do If I Was Joseph?

Purpose: Purpose: Help people understand trials are often a spiritual test and provoke them to keep believing God and following His plan when our faith is tested.

Truth for Today: Adversity tests our faith in God. When faced with adversity, will I choose to keep believing and following God or quit.

Topic: Discipleship, Joseph, Trials, Adversity

Text: Psalm 105: 17-21

Series title: What Would I Do If...

Series purp.: Provoke people to follow God's will, God's Word and the Holy Spirit above all else

## What Would I Do If I Was Joseph?

### I. Introduction

A. Review series: "What Would I Do If..." We're looking at Biblical characters to show us the result of their good and bad decisions so we can live a life pleasing to God. The overarching theme is nothing in this life is more important than following God's will, God's Word and the Holy Spirit. We've already learned some valuable life lessons from Peter and Jacob. Today we'll talk about Jacob's favorite son and ask ourselves, "What Would I Do If I Was Joseph?" E.g. sandals.

II. Truth for Today: Adversity tests our faith in God. When faced with adversity, will I choose to keep believing and following God or quit.

A. Israel's history A-I-J-12-J, [Psalm 105:17-21 (NLT)] Then **he sent** someone to Egypt ahead of them— Joseph, who was **sold as a slave**.<sup>18</sup> They bruised his feet with fetters and placed his neck in an iron collar.<sup>19</sup> **Until the time came to fulfill his dreams, the Lord tested Joseph's character.**<sup>20</sup> Then Pharaoh sent for him and **set him free** (from prison and he interpreted Pharaoh's dream)...<sup>21</sup> Joseph was put in charge of all the king's household; **he became ruler over all the king's possessions.**]

1. "the Lord tested Joseph's character" with adversity. Def. test: (1) Our response to adversity or hardship<sup>3</sup> that proves whether our character or faith is genuine.<sup>2</sup>

2. The idea that God tests his followers isn't new. (1) [Ge. 22:1-2 (NLT)]...**God tested Abraham's faith**....<sup>2</sup> "Take your son... Isaac, whom you love so much... Go and **sacrifice** him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains...] The final test of the Father of Faith. His faith grew from a man who laughed at God's ability to do the impossible to expecting Him to. (2) Jesus used tests to grow the disciple's faith, [John 6:5-6 (NLT)]... (Jesus) asked (Philip), "Where can we buy bread to feed all these people?"<sup>6</sup> **He was testing Philip**, for he already knew what he was going to do.] Would logic or faith guide Philip's answer?

a. Tests from God are like a test at school. Tests reveal what we know and what we'd do. When we pass, we're promoted. e.g. Titus, Blake

B. Sometimes the devil tests us with (1) temptation to sin, e.g. Jesus 40 day temptation had 3 tests, (2) Tragedy can make us stop believing in or following God, e.g. Job.

### III. Joseph's 1<sup>st</sup> test: What would I do if I was abandoned by family, faced death and was sold as a slave?

A. **Genesis 37:12–36 (NLT)**...Joseph's brothers went to pasture their father's flocks...<sup>13</sup> ...Jacob said to Joseph...<sup>14</sup> "Go and see how your brothers and the flocks are getting along"...<sup>17</sup>... So Joseph followed his brothers to Dothan and found them there. <sup>18</sup> When Joseph's brothers saw him coming...**they made plans to kill him.** <sup>19</sup> "**Here comes the dreamer**..."<sup>20</sup>...let's kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns...<sup>23</sup> So when Joseph arrived, his brothers ripped off the **beautiful robe**...<sup>24</sup> Then they... threw him into the cistern. Now the **cistern was empty**; there was no water in it. <sup>25</sup> Then, **just as** they were sitting down to eat, they...saw a caravan of camels... It was a group of **Ishmaelite traders** taking a load...to Egypt. <sup>26</sup> Judah said...<sup>27</sup> Instead of hurting him, let's sell him to those Ishmaelite traders...<sup>36</sup>...the Midianite traders arrived in Egypt, where **they sold Joseph to Potiphar**, an officer of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt...] **Imagine** how he felt. Confused, hurt Physically and emotionally), abandoned and all alone, afraid, etc., yet somehow God would use the brother's sin to reposition Joseph in Egypt and eventually save the very brothers that hated him. **[Ge. 45:7–8(NLT) God has sent me** ahead of you to keep you and your families alive...<sup>8</sup> So it was **God who sent me here, not you!** And he is the one who made me an adviser to Pharaoh...and the governor of all Egypt.]

1. Why did his brothers do this? They were jealous because Joseph was dad's favorite son and he had dreams that his brothers would one day bow down before him. These experiences probably made a 17-year-old proud and it's how he came across to his older brothers. Joseph's faith would now be tested for 13+ years.

B. Like Joseph, when we face a spiritual test, we have 3 choices:

1. #1, Get hurt, mad and become bitter towards the person who wronged us and promise revenge. **e.g.** Joseph walks behind slave traders for Egypt. I'll get you!
2. #2, Get mad at God for letting it happen and stop following Him. Joseph could let his God given dream die. We can miss God's opportunities for the future.
3. #3 Decide to have faith that God is in ultimate control of our life and trust God in spite of the immediate circumstances. **[Ro. 8:28 (NLT) And we know that God causes everything to work together** for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose...] **[1 Thes. 5:18 (ESV) give thanks in all circumstances**; for this is the will of God...for you.] What could Joseph possibly be thankful for when walking through the hot desert, sweaty, thirsty, tired and headed to a life of slavery. (1) He was still alive, (2) God, not man, was in control of his life. **// us** there's always a reason to hope and something to be thankful for.

### IV. Conclusion: How will I respond to hardship when my faith is tested?

A. **[James 1:2–4 (NLT)**...when **troubles of any kind** come your way, consider it an opportunity for **great joy**. <sup>3</sup> For you know that **when your faith is tested**, your **endurance** has a chance to **grow**. <sup>4</sup> So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be **perfect and complete**, needing nothing.] **Something good is on the other side of trouble if I hold on to my faith in God.**

## V. Response

- A. Prayer: You're facing trouble now and you want your faith to help you pass the test.
- B. Souls: People start following Jesus when: (1) Trouble makes us realize our need for God, (2) Our sin is heavy and we need forgiveness (3) God is giving us desire for Him. Problem-Solution-Decision

## VI. Bibliography/ Resources: Logos Bible Software and Library, Platinum Edition, was used to prepare this message.

1. Hartley, J. E. (1999). [1972 צָרָה](#). In R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer Jr., & B. K. Waltke (Eds.), *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed., p. 778). Moody Press.
2. Webster, N. (2006). In [Noah Webster's first edition of An American dictionary of the English language](#). Foundation for American Christian Education.
3. Wilson, M. R. (1999). [1373 נִסָּה](#). In R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer Jr., & B. K. Waltke (Eds.), *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed., p. 581). Moody Press.

## VII. Supplemental material

- A. Tests can refine our character, mature us and purify us from sin, like smelting gold to remove impurities.<sup>1</sup> Adversity tests our faith in God; will I give up or keep believing and following God?
- B. 1 Peter 1:7 (NLT) **These trials will show that your faith is genuine.** It is being **tested** as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.