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Title: What Would I Do If I Was Joseph, pt.-3

Purpose: Help people understand trials as a spiritual test and provoke them to keep following God's will, God's Word and the Holy Spirit when our faith is tested.

Truth for Today: Trials are a spiritual test. If we keep following God's will, God's Word and the Holy Spirit, God will bless and use us mightily.

Topic: Discipleship, Tests, Trials, Success, Prosperity, Forgiveness, Purpose

Text: Genesis 41:15-16, 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? pt-3

I. Introduction

- A. J/L getaway: **Mission** Connect world inc. pers witness, **Bible Simplified/cards** 2-20's
- B. Review series: "What Would I Do If..." The last 2 weeks we asked ourselves, "What Would I Do If I Was Joseph?" We agonized over the trials and tests Joseph faced and rejoiced when God promoted him because he passed the tests. **E.g. sandals**
- C. Today we'll talk about tests 7-8-9 and learn that **If we keep following God's will, God's Word, and the Holy Spirit, God will bless us and use us mightily.**
- D. Title: What Would I Do If I Was Joseph, pt.-3

II. *Test # 7 The test of maintaining a close relationship with God when facing trouble.

- A. Context: J in jail, interpreted cupbearer, [**Ge. 41:15-16 (NLT)**] Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had a dream last night, and no one here can tell me what it means. But I have heard that when **you** hear about a dream you can interpret it." ¹⁶ **"It is beyond my power to do this," Joseph replied. "But God can tell you what it means..."** ¹³ years of slavery, unjust treatment by his brothers, Potiphar's wife and Pharaoh's wine-taster, and 2+ years in prison couldn't destroy Joseph's relationship with God.
- B. The challenge for Joseph and us is doubting God's Word and love for us when facing trouble. If "God can" why didn't he keep Joseph from slavery and prison? **The 'why' question breeds doubt that God cares and is controls our lives. Dwelling on why, is like a fire that gets out of control and destroys our faith in God. E.g. why did my baby die, go bankrupt, lose my job, etc. Satan is whispering God doesn't care. Don't listen!**
- C. Question: **Is my faith in God shaken by adversity or trouble? Do I keep believing God will work things out or do I give upon God? This is a test of our faith. Joseph kept his faith alive with no outside spiritual support. So can we.**

III. Test #8 The test of success is sometimes harder than the test of adversity.

- A. Context: Joseph interprets Pharaoh's 2 dreams, [**Genesis 41:25-46 (NLT)**]...God is telling Pharaoh in advance what he is about to do...²⁹ The next seven years will be a period of great prosperity...³⁰ But afterward there will be seven years of famine...³³ "Therefore, Pharaoh should find an intelligent and wise man and put him in charge of the entire land of Egypt...³⁹ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph...⁴¹... "I hereby put you in charge of the entire land of Egypt." ⁴² Then Pharaoh removed his signet ring...and

placed it on Joseph's finger. He dressed him in fine linen clothing and hung a gold chain around his neck. ⁴³...wherever Joseph went, the command was shouted, "Kneel down!..." ⁴⁵ Then Pharaoh gave Joseph...a wife...] Most people couldn't handle this kind of prosperity and power and stay humble. I believe the tests he faced before this shaped his character and deepened his dependence on God so he could.

- B. Prosperity, money, possessions, and power can change a person. **E.g.** (1) It can turn a humble man into a proud man when people say yes sir, or you pay cash for a new truck with all the gadgets.(2) Having a bigger house and nicer car can make a woman get a new set of friends. (3) A top-of-the-line car and designer clothes can make a teenager act like a snob who's better than people who don't have what she does. The tests Joseph faced kept him humble, i.e. dependent on God instead of himself.
- C. Question: How has prosperity effected my relationship with God, my church, and my ministry **e.g.** I've watched people struggling involved in church, praying, serving, and giving, but when they prospered, they changed. They failed the success test. We won't

IV. Test #9: How do I treat the people who hurt or abandoned me.

- A. Summary: Joseph's jealous brothers threw him in an empty well and planned to kill him but decided to sell him as a slave instead. For 13 years he was a slave; then Pharaoh promoted him to governor to prepare for a famine. When Joseph 39/40 his brothers came begging to buy food. How he'd treat them was a spiritual test.
- B. [Genesis 42:3-10 (NLT) So Joseph's ten older brothers went down to Egypt to buy grain...⁶ Since Joseph was...in charge of selling grain...it was to him that his brothers came. When they arrived, they bowed before him with their faces to the ground. ⁷ Joseph recognized his brothers instantly, but **he pretended to be a stranger and spoke harshly to them.** Genesis 45:1-8 (NLT) Joseph...was alone with his brothers when he told them who he was. ² Then **he broke down and wept...**⁴...he said again, **"I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into slavery in Egypt.** ⁵ **But don't be upset...with yourselves for selling me to this place. It was God who sent me here ahead of you to preserve your lives...**] 3x

1. Hurt can turn into bitterness and hatred and last a lifetime till we get revenge. Or, we can turn the offense over to God, forgive the offender and in forgiveness find healing for ourselves. Joseph chose the latter, so should we. He passed the test.

V. Conclusion: God allowed Joseph to go through some difficult experiences that tested his character and faith. (Ps. 105) Joseph passed the tests and God promoted him.

- A. [Romans 8:28 (NLT)...we know that **God causes everything to work together for the good** of those who **love God** and are **called according to his purpose for them.**] If Joseph could speak to us, I believe he'd say: Don't let adversity steal your faith or your commitment to doing good, no matter what happens to us.
1. Joseph exemplified our overarching theme: **Nothing in this life is more important than following God's will, God's Word and the Holy Spirit.** The difficulty we're experiencing now, may be a test and if we pass the test, we, too, may be promoted from the prison to the palace.

VI. Response

- A. Prayer: Lord help my faith be strong when I face a difficult test.
- B. Souls: Joseph found strength through a personal relationship with God. We can, too.
Problem-Solution-Decision.

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

VIII. Supplemental material

- A. [Psalm 105:17-21 (NLT) Then he sent someone to Egypt ahead of them- Joseph, who was sold as a slave....19 Until the time came to fulfill his dreams, the Lord tested Joseph's character. 20 Then Pharaoh sent for him and set him free (*from prison and he interpreted Pharaoh's dream*), 21 Joseph was put in charge of all the king's household; he became ruler over all the king's possessions.]
- B. Proverbs 30:7-9 (NLT) O God, I beg two favors from you...⁸ First, help me never to tell a lie. Second, give me neither poverty nor riches! Give me just enough to satisfy my needs. ⁹ For **if I grow rich, I may deny you** (*MSG* I might get independent; (NCV) I might reject you and say, 'I don't know the LORD.')