

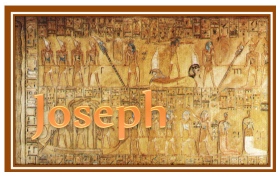


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Who was that Hero in the Multi-Colored Coat?

Genesis 45:5: (NASB) *Now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life.*

Everybody loves a hero...someone who goes above and beyond the call of duty...someone who puts their own interests aside for the greater good...someone who does those things that others can't or won't. Usually these heroes are recognized as a result of a particular event or crisis, and we laud their contribution. It is a rare thing to see someone who lives a heroic life and displays a heroic heart throughout their lifetime - one who becomes a hero for the ages. On this program, we look at such a man to try and learn from the example of his heroic life!

Chapter 1 - The Beginning: A Hero's Lesson in Motivation

Genesis 37:1-11: (NRSV) *¹Jacob settled in the land where his father had lived as an alien, the land of Canaan. ²This is the story of the family of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock with his brothers; he was a helper to the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father.*

As a teenager (about seventeen years old), Joseph worked hard and was not afraid to speak the truth, even if it meant ridicule from his peers. Integrity reveals priorities and priorities require sacrifice! **Psalms 40:8**

³Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he had made him a long robe with sleeves.

This would have been the type of garment worn by royalty in their day.

⁴But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him.

Could not - implies a fierce rivalry that overtook the older brothers. *Speak peaceably* - from the word "shalom." There is a difference between performing a heroic act and living a heroic life. Having integrity is a must.

⁵Once Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. ⁶He said to them, Listen to this dream that I dreamed. ⁷There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright; then your sheaves gathered around it, and bowed down to my sheaf. ⁸His brothers said to him, Are you indeed to reign over us? Are you indeed to have dominion over us? So they hated him even more because of his dreams and his words.

Dreams would be a theme of Joseph's life. Notice how Joseph communicated to those who hated him. We have no reason to believe he was malicious in this communication; rather he was acting more like a close family member would.

⁹He had another dream, and told it to his brothers, saying, Look, I have had another dream: the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me. ¹⁰But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him, and said to him, What kind of dream is this that you have had? Shall we indeed come, I and your mother and your brothers, and bow to the ground before you?

His father rebuked Joseph, meaning to reprove - not necessarily in an angry sense (the next verse verifies this) but perhaps more in a sense of maintaining Joseph's humility.

¹¹So his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

Kept the matter - not just remembering it, but also in the sense of guarding it.

The Hero's Choice: The motivation of hatred or the motivation of integrity The first lesson in living heroically: The contrast between a raging, one-sided rivalry consisting of ten brothers versus the younger, integrity-filled teenager who lived his loyalty and showed fearlessness when speaking truth, even if it could prove to his detriment.

Chapter 2 - Being Sold by His Brothers, A Hero's Lesson of Choices, Determination and Consequence

First, we have the choices and determination of Joseph:

Genesis 37:12-17: (NRSV) *¹²Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem. ¹³And Israel said to Joseph, Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them. He answered, Here I am.*

There is a special connection here that we cannot overlook - the way he answers, *Here I am*. *Here I am* - personal preference aside; be about your father's business. **Isaiah 6:8:** This



prophecy spoke of Jesus being willing to redeem that which was lost, the world. Is there a special connection between Joseph and Jesus? Yes, definitely. They were both willing to do whatever the Father said to do.

¹⁴So he said to him, Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock; and bring word back to me. So he sent him from the valley of Hebron. He came to Shechem, ¹⁵and a man found him wandering in the fields; the man asked him, What are you seeking? ¹⁶I am seeking my brothers, he said; tell me, please, where they are pasturing the flock. ¹⁷The man said, They have gone away, for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. So Joseph went after his brothers, and found them at Dothan.

Sometimes the path becomes harder and less predictable than anticipated. Determination says that you just keep on going, for your words should mirror your actions. Originally Joseph's father told him that his brothers were at Shechem, but they were not where they were supposed to be. They were not where their father had sent them. Providentially, there was an individual that knew where they went. In the life of Jesus, he was sent to retrieve those who were lost. In the eyes of the Father, they were lost. They chose to go another direction. Jesus was sent to recover them. **Jesus was willing, even at a young age, to do his Father's will: Luke 2:49** We have a choice as to how we are going to act when confronted with moral situations. Are we going to take the high road?

Next we compare the choices and determination of his brothers:

Genesis 37:18-28: (NRSV) ¹⁸They saw him from a distance, and before he came near to them, they conspired to kill him. ¹⁹They said to one another, Here comes this dreamer. ²⁰Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; then we shall say that a wild animal has devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams.

The motivation of hatred brings us to action based upon a moment that yields a result that may last a lifetime. Don't go down that road! Proverbs 27:4 We see another parallel between Joseph and Jesus in that Jesus' own people plotted to kill him.

²¹But when Reuben heard it, he delivered him out of their hands, saying, Let us not take his life. ²²Reuben said to them, Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but lay no hand on him that he might rescue him out of their hand and restore him to his father.

A voice of reason may rise up to avert disaster, but is it a voice of true courage?

²³So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the long robe with sleeves that he wore; ²⁴and they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it.

And so, the determination and integrity to find those he was sent to find, is met with enmity and rage, resulting in humiliation and a death sentence. He who was sent to find is sentenced by those who were lost...sounds like Jesus, too, right? Luke 19:10 Mark 14:1 Joseph's life was given as a template to help us better understand the life of Jesus.

²⁵Then they sat down to eat; and looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels carrying gum, balm, and resin, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. ²⁶Then Judah said to his brothers, What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? ²⁷Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh. And his brothers agreed.

So a death sentence is overruled to become a life sentence, for God does protect those whom He has sent to do His will. **Another parallel to Jesus: Luke 4:28-30**

²⁸When some Midianite traders passed by, they drew Joseph up, lifting him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

Joseph is sold into slavery! How corrupt was that!? Jesus was also sold for pieces of silver...Psalms 91:11-12

The Hero's Choice: Act out of the emotional instability of the moment or follow the vision!

The second lesson in living heroically: Reason without courage is at best a shaky compromise. Courage without reason is an empty promise. These both are unstable at best! Courage that is founded in reason and obedience to the vision is destined for mockery and threats, yet it still perseveres. So, what do we have so far? The development of a hero for the ages begins with asking the questions: Who is he motivated by, what is he motivated by and how he is he motivated? With a desire to only do the will of his father, the hero then must act in accordance with that vision at all costs. And most likely, there will be a cost - a severe and significant cost that most would not be willing to pay. Remember that Joseph is only seventeen years old at this point in the story.



Chapter 3 - Joseph in Potiphar's House, A Hero's Lesson in Living with Sacred Honor

Genesis 39:1-6: (NRSV) ¹Now Joseph was taken down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there. ²The LORD was with Joseph, and he became a successful man; he was in the house of his Egyptian master. ³His master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD caused all that he did to prosper in his hands.

Living a life of sacred honor usually reveals itself when circumstances are challenging and life looks as though it is not where we expected it to be. He did not give up, but rather he pursued godliness in spite of his very difficult circumstances. **Again, similar to Jesus:** [Luke 2:50-52](#)

⁴So Joseph found favor in his sight and attended him; he made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had. ⁵From the time that he made him overseer in his house and over all that he had, the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had, in house and field. ⁶So he left all that he had in Joseph's charge; and, with him there, he had no concern for anything but the food that he ate. Now Joseph was handsome and good-looking.

By choosing to follow sacred honor, one puts himself in the position to excel in the most unusual circumstances. [Psalms 91:1-4](#)

Genesis 39:7-10: (NRSV) ⁷And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, Lie with me. ⁸But he refused and said to his master's wife, Look, with me here, my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my hand. ⁹He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except yourself, because you are his wife. How then could I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? ¹⁰And although she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not consent to lie beside her or to be with her.

The truest hero stands firm and does not give in to those things that contradict the vision. The truest hero sees all compromise in the light of potential sin against God. **This reminds us when Jesus successfully stood firm against temptation:** [Luke 4:5-8](#)

Genesis 39:11-18: (NRSV) ¹¹One day, however, when he went into the house to do his work, and while no one else was in the house, ¹²she caught hold of his garment, saying, Lie with me! But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside. ¹³When she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and had fled outside, ¹⁴she called out to the members of her household and said to them, See, my husband has brought among us a Hebrew to insult us! He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice; ¹⁵and when he heard me raise my voice and cry out, he left his garment beside me, and fled outside.

A life of sacred honor will often be falsely accused and slandered, as its standards are such that by their mere presence, they reveal the depths of sin around them. **Jesus warned us about this:** [Matthew 5:11-12](#)

¹⁶Then she kept his garment by her until his master came home, ¹⁷and she told him the same story, saying, The Hebrew servant, whom you have brought among us, came in to me to insult me; ¹⁸but as soon as I raised my voice and cried out, he left his garment beside me, and fled outside.

Lies often repeated begin to sound like truth. The life of sacred honor simply moves forward, knowing that the only opinion and judgment that really matters is that of God himself. **Here is prophecy about the suffering of Jesus that parallels Joseph's:** [Isaiah 53:4-6](#)

The Hero's Choice: Live in obedience to your circumstances or live in sacred honor to the vision! The third lesson in living heroically: All choices yield consequences, both intended and unintended. Living with sacred honor means accepting all consequences with grace and humility, even at the expense of reputation and future.

Chapter 4 - Joseph sent to prison, A Hero's Lesson in Single-Minded Focus

Genesis 39:19-23: (NASB) ¹⁹Now when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spoke to him, saying, This is what your slave did to me, his anger burned. ²⁰So Joseph's master took him and put him into the jail, the place where the king's prisoners were confined; and he was there in the jail.

How would you or I react to being punished with no cause? Would we begin to think that God had abandoned us? The true hero lives in their present circumstance based on truth and is not swayed by any biased perceptions of events. [Isaiah 26:3-4](#)

²¹But the LORD was with Joseph and extended kindness to him, and gave him favor in the sight of the chief jailer. ²²The chief jailer committed to Joseph's charge all the prisoners who were in the jail; so



that whatever was done there, he was responsible for it. ²³The chief jailer did not supervise anything under Joseph's charge because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made to prosper.

Any surprise here? When you are single-minded, you do only what you know. In Joseph's case, it was fidelity to God and His principles allowing him to show his faith in God's presence in his life where others would have said God had abandoned him.

Genesis 40:1-8: (NASB) ¹Then it came about after these things, the cupbearer and the baker for the king of Egypt offended their lord, the king of Egypt. ²Pharaoh was furious with his two officials, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker...⁴The captain of the bodyguard put Joseph in charge of them, and he took care of them; and they were in confinement for some time.

Jesus extended himself to others as well: Matthew 12:15

⁵Then the cupbearer and the baker for the king of Egypt, who were confined in jail, both had a dream the same night, each man with his own dream and each dream with its own interpretation. ⁶When Joseph came to them in the morning and observed them, behold, they were dejected...⁸Then they said to him, We have had a dream and there is no one to interpret it. Then Joseph said to them, Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell it to me, please.

The pattern of his life was to always bring glory to God. Fidelity and single focus...here is an opportunity to bring comfort to others while witnessing to the power of God. This was all done without any promise of personal gain. **Similar to Jesus: Matthew 9:36**: We want to be a daily hero! We want to apply God-honoring principles over preferences in every turn of our lives.

Genesis 40:20-23: (NASB) ²⁰Thus it came about on the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast for all his servants; and he lifted up the head of the chief cupbearer and the head of the chief baker among his servants. ²¹He restored the chief cupbearer to his office, and he put the cup into Pharaoh's hand; ²²but he hanged the chief baker, just as Joseph had interpreted to them. ²³Yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

A real hero strives daily to be pleasing to God. **Isaiah 53:7-9 The Hero's Choice: Be swallowed in despair by misfortune or never flinch from a single-minded focus!** The fourth lesson in living heroically: So, the hero does good things for others and is forgotten. To the outsider it would seem as though God had all but left him. But this is precisely how a lifetime hero is developed! Tested, tried and often alone, he shows his motivation by making the choice to live with sacred honor and a single-minded focus. All the ingredients of a hero were being blended into Joseph: Character, integrity, faith, courage, and wisdom - all for the purpose of being able to literally save his world.

There are numerous parallels between Joseph and Jesus, especially in their attitudes showing how important it is for us to focus on integrity and doing what is right. We are to find faith in action in our daily lives to learn how to become a daily hero.

***So, who was that hero in the multi-colored coat?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions,
Think about it...!***