

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA # 151

Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will be about Joseph, the boy with the coat of many colors. He is one of the few heroes in the Bible with hardly a bad word said about him. After years of "bad luck" and mistreatment he finally became friends in prison with the cupbearer to the Pharaoh. A good word from this important man might set Joseph free. The Scriptures state however: **"The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph; he forgot him" (Gen. 40:23)**. As you know, this devastating news was not the end of the story. As always, God has the last word. Joseph's ordeal began 11 years before with a dream that someday he would be a ruler. Regardless of being abused and forgotten, he never lost sight of that original dream. There are some important lessons we can learn from Joseph.

Here is a brief chronology:

- Joseph was 17 when he got his first dreams about being a leader and his jealous brothers sold him into slavery (Gen. 37:2).
- In Egypt, his master's wife lied about him and he was unjustly sent to prison (Gen. 39:20).
- Though he was innocent, he languished in prison for almost 10 years.
- He was 28 years old when he interpreted the dreams of two fellow prisoners.
- The interpretation of their dreams indicated that one prisoner would be executed, but the cupbearer to Pharaoh, would be restored to his position. (Gen. 40:9 - 19).
- Joseph asked the cupbearer to remember him before the Pharaoh (Gen. 40:14).
- Then came the above mentioned disappointment about being forgotten (Gen. 40:23).
- Two more years passed before the cupbearer finally remembered Joseph (Gen. 41:1)
- Thus Joseph was 30 years old when he finally got out of prison (Gen. 41:46).
- Next came 7 years of plenty which Joseph had predicted. Now he was 37.
- After 2 years of famine Joseph's brothers came to Egypt to buy grain. Joseph would have been 39 at this time (Gen. 45:6).
- He had a rough life! Enslaved at 17 he endured 13 years of undeserved hardship.
- Joseph's dreams began to come true when at 30 years of age the Pharaoh put him in charge of the whole land of Egypt (Gen. 41:41). It was not until 9 years later, however, that he was completely vindicated before his brothers.
- **JOSEPH WAITED A LONG TO BE EXONERATED, BUT IT WAS WORTH THE WAIT!**

As we said, there are lessons we can learn from Joseph. One lesson is that there is never a right time to do wrong, nor a wrong time to do right! Because Joseph understood this he triumphed over all of his troubles. If Joseph triumphed by doing what was right, we can triumph in the same way! Rivers are crooked because they take the easy way around obstacles, and people get crooked in the same way.

The late Jim Rutherford Sr. was the man who baptized me into Christ. One of the many sermons for which he was famous was titled "If I Were the Devil". In that message he speculated about the devil's most destructive temptation. After suggesting many heinous sins, he concluded

that the most dangerous weapon used by the devil is discouragement. Discouragement doesn't even seem bad. That's why it's so dangerous! Many who would never rob a bank or commit murder, welcome discouragement as if it were a friend. Discouragement is not a friend! It is often the discouraged person that gets drunk, takes drugs, or commits adultery. It is often the discouraged person who stops praying, stops reading the Bible, and stops going to church. Discouragement is a "gateway" sin that opens a Pandora's Box of other problems. This is why it is so important to learn from the example of Joseph. He faced more discouraging circumstances than most of us will ever face, yet always seemed to cling to the promises of God and remain optimistic.

A corny joke made the rounds 50 years ago about identical twins who were totally different in their outlook on life. One was always optimistic, and the other was always pessimistic. Their psychiatrist suggested that the parents fill the pessimist's bedroom with expensive toys, and the other bedroom with horse manure. Neither boy, however, was changed! The pessimist continued complaining, and the smiling optimist dug into the dirt shouting "There's got to be a pony in here somewhere".

Even though you are young, I'm sure you have still faced many discouraging circumstances. "Encourage" and "discourage" both involve "courage". One gives it, and the other takes it away. Don't allow the devil to get you discouraged. Joseph not only triumphed over his trials, he actually believed that God had orchestrated the whole thing. Note carefully these words of Scripture: **"And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt."** (Genesis 45:4-8 KJV)

If you are facing troubles, God can always give you victory over them. As you know, "all things work together for good to those who love God and are the called according to His purpose (Rom. 8:28) Whatever happens, DON'T GET DISCOURAGED!

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce