

GROUPS CHAPELS 2019
GENESIS 37-47

SUCCESS ACCORDING TO JOSEPH

*Flourishing when Forgotten; Winning when Waiting;
Excelling when Exiled; & Overcoming when Overwhelmed*

Joseph in Genesis is one of the most beloved characters in scripture—for many different reasons. Let's focus on five:

PRUDENCE • Whatever responsibility was assigned to Joseph's care prospered. Joseph was a diligent and trustworthy steward in all that he did. From the lowest positions and tasks (shepherd, slave, prisoner) to the highest (steward of a royal officer, manager of the jail, prime minister in Egypt), Joseph was marked by one key phrase: "God caused all that he did to prosper in his hand." Joseph lived out the principle found in Colossians: "*Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus,*" and "*Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men.*"

PERSEVERANCE • Joseph's story is that of one disaster after another. He went from being the favored and "firstborn" son (with the whole "coat of many colors" business), to being cast into a pit, sold into slavery, and then innocently cast into prison. Joseph proved his worth in each situation, yet God had a master plan of salvation that required keeping Joseph in obscurity and servitude for years. Joseph's held on God's promise in order to give him perseverance in each downward step in his story. Joseph teaches us, like none other in scripture, to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus when we go through what seems like unfair trials and persecution.

PURITY • He is one of the few characters in the Bible of which no sin is ascribed to him (with Daniel, Enoch, Jesus, and... no, that's about it!), especially when given every opportunity to indulge in youthful, fleshly desires in obscurity in Egypt. Joseph was the first in a long line of patriarchs in Israel who is presented without some questionable character fault (think of Noah's drunkenness, Abraham's failure with Hagar, Isaac favoring Esau, Jacob's treacherous schemes, etc!). Now, of course Joseph was a sinner like any other man (Rom 3:23), but we can look at his life as an example of purity and righteousness—ultimately, Joseph simply points us to the true and ultimate righteousness of Jesus.

PROVIDENCE • When Joseph finally reveals himself to his traitorous brothers, his response to them is mind-blowing: "*Don't be angry with yourselves that you sold me here... God sent me before you to keep you alive by a great deliverance. It wasn't you who sent me here, but God! What you meant for evil, God meant for good!*" (paraphrased from Gen. 45:5-8). Yet, Joseph was convinced that God had a sovereign plan, even before he understood how God would use him to rescue the world from a devastating famine. God's providence kept Joseph persevering.

PROPHETIC LIFE • Many theologians have noted that "Joseph is the richest type of Christ in the Old Testament." What this means is that Joseph unknowingly lived a prophetic life. His story foreshadowed Jesus' ministry. The clearest example is the episode of Joseph's betrayal by his

brothers, and when Joseph is exalted by Pharaoh. Joseph's life is a wonderful illustration of Philippians 2:5-11, from "taking on the form of a bondservant" and "obedience to the point of death," to being "highly exalted" and bestowed with "the name which is above every name" before which "every knee will bow." The point for the Christian is this: We too should desire to have a life which exemplifies Jesus and points people to Him!

As we work through the life of Joseph this year in our chapel homework and devotionals, we are going to focus primarily on these five "P"s of Joseph's amazing saga:

Prudence / Perseverance / Purity / Providence / & a Prophetic Life