

## LETTERS FROM GRANDPA # 458

Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will feature Joseph and the sovereignty of God. As you know, Joseph's brothers hated him, planned to kill him, but instead sold him into slavery to the Ishmaelites who took him to Egypt (Gen. 37:28). Joseph was 17 years old at that time (Gen. 37:2). For the next 13 years Joseph suffered incredible hardship as a slave and prisoner. When he was 30 years old, however, in a single day, God brought him from prison to a position of power (Gen. 41:46). In fact, Joseph became the second in command to the Pharaoh and all the people of Egypt were subject to him (Gen. 41:40).

In the course of your life you will undoubtedly suffer injustice, as Joseph did, at the hands of someone who hates you. You will possibly be lied about and may even lose a job or be mistreated through no fault of your own. When this happens to you, remember Joseph! He reminded his brothers: **"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."** (Gen. 50:20). Joseph's life had a purpose beyond his own personal comfort. God orchestrated the events of his life to save his family. His family, as you know, was the vehicle through which God determined to bring Christ into the world. So the 13 years of hardship experienced by Joseph were an integral part of God's plan to defeat the devil and further the cause of Christ! Please consider that God may also has a plan for your life beyond your own personal comfort.

A couple of incidents from Joseph's 13 years of suffering must have been especially depressing. First, Joseph was purchased from the Ishmaelites by a man named Potiphar who was one of Pharaoh's officials. Joseph did well as his slave for we are told: **"The Lord was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. When his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord gave him success in everything he did, Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned. From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the Lord blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the Lord was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field. So Potiphar left everything he had in Joseph's care; with Joseph in charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate."** (Gen. 39:2-6) Instead of being rewarded for his good behavior and hard work, however, Potiphar's wife lied about him and had him put in prison. Since Joseph was "well built and handsome" she tried every day to seduce him. One day, when the two of them were alone, she grabbed his garment and said **"come to bed with me."** Instead, Joseph left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house. This evil woman kept his garment and used it as "evidence" to convince her husband that Joseph had tried to rape her. How depressing!

The second event that must have been especially depressing happened in prison. **"Joseph's master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined. But while Joseph was there in the prison, the Lord was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there. The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did."** (Gen. 39:20-23)

One day Joseph saw two prisoners that were dejected and asked **"Why are your faces so sad today?"** They told him that they had both had dreams on the same night but didn't know what they meant. Remember! It was Joseph's dreams that made his brethren hate him (Gen. 37:5). Instead of

recoiling from this challenge, however, Joseph correctly interpreted their dreams. One dream involved the cup bearer to the Pharaoh. Joseph interpreted his dream to mean that within three days he would be restored to his position. When this happened Joseph said to him: **“But when all goes well with you, remember me and show me kindness; mention me to Pharaoh and get me out of this prison. I was forcibly carried off from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing to deserve being put in a dungeon.”** (Gen. 40:14-15) **“The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph; he forgot him.”** (Gen. 40:23) This also must have been depressing! In retrospect, however, these two years were critical to Joseph’s success. Our Sovereign God orchestrated the ingratitude of the cupbearer to Joseph’s benefit.

It was two full years later that the Pharaoh himself had dreams which needed to be interpreted. **“Then the chief cupbearer said to Pharaoh, “Today I am reminded of my shortcomings. Pharaoh was once angry with his servants, and he imprisoned me and the chief baker in the house of the captain of the guard. Each of us had a dream the same night, and each dream had a meaning of its own. Now a young Hebrew was there with us, a servant of the captain of the guard. We told him our dreams, and he interpreted them for us, giving each man the interpretation of his dream. And things turned out exactly as he interpreted them to us: I was restored to my position, and the other man was impaled. So Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and he was quickly brought from the dungeon. When he had shaved and changed his clothes, he came before Pharaoh.”** (Gen. 41:9-14)

Yes! God is the Sovereign of the universe. Nobody could do anything to Joseph without God’s approval! When evil people tried to destroy Joseph, God used their wicked actions to accomplish something eternally good. Yes! **“We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”** (Rom. 8:28)

When you love God and are called according to his purpose you too can triumph over trouble and accomplish incredible goals in harmony with God’s eternal purpose. Discouragement is one of the devil’s most powerful weapons, don’t let that liar discourage you! When you are serving Jesus, what your enemies mean for evil, God can transform into something good.

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce