

THEME: WHEN SERVING GOES WRONG - THE LIFE OF JOSEPH

INTRODUCTION

In this study we will be looking at the fact that before we can be of any use to God, he may need to change us so that we become less self-dependent and more dependent on him. As a classic example of this process, we will be looking at the life of Joseph. This study looks at 2 key points in Joseph's life; his early years and his trials in Egypt.

JOSEPH'S EARLY YEARS: GENESIS 37 vs 1-11

LAUNCH QUESTION

Can you remember what you dreamt you would be when you were a child?

In what way has your current situation differed from that dream?

UNDERSTANDING

- Why did Jacob favour Joseph? What are the dangers of favouring younger members of the family and what effect can this have on them or the family as a whole?
- Even though Joseph was Jacob's favourite, Jacob still rebuked him. Why did he do this and why at the same time did he ponder the incident in the back of his mind?
- Why was Joseph unwise to share his dream with his brothers? Can you remember the last time you shared something that you immediately regretted?
- Do you think dreams have a role to play in helping us live our Christian lives? If so what role do they play? Can you remember a time when a dream has affected your decision making?

TRIALS IN EGYPT: GENESIS CH 39 & CH 40

- The word *favour* crops up in 39:4 and 39:20. Was this something Joseph earned or was it a gift?
- Joseph did well to resist the advances of Potiphar's wife.
How can we proactively prepare ourselves for temptation in the following areas?
 - a) Sexual temptation
 - b) Financial/ material temptation
 - c) The temptation to pride or arrogance
- When was the last time you felt you got the raw end of the deal?
How did you respond to it and what did God teach you through this experience?
- How do you typically respond when you feel forgotten by God or find yourself in a desperate situation? What are some tangible things you can do to draw near to God during those times?

APPLICATION

- Pray for increased humility.
Pray that you would be less and less self dependant and more and more God dependant.
Pray that this would translate directly through to your private prayer life.
- Pray that when you go through a tough patch you will have the insight to see the way in which God might be involved in this process.