

Life Lesson 19  
Joseph and Pharaoh  
Text: Genesis 41 and 42

Introduction

Have you ever felt left out and forgotten? Think how Joseph must have felt working there in prison day after day. The butler who was freed seemed to be Joseph's last hope of ever getting out of there. The butler forgot all about him, and there was no other chance for his release.

But, Joseph wasn't really forgotten. God remembered him. God planned for Joseph to be free--but in His own special timing.

The Story

About two years after the butler went back to work for the Pharaoh, he had cause to remember Joseph. Pharaoh had a dream--a very strange one! He was upset by it because he couldn't figure out what it meant. He called all his wise men and asked them, but they couldn't figure it out either.

It was then that the butler remembered Joseph.

"When I was in prison I had a strange dream," he said. "A young Hebrew man interpreted my dream and the dream of the baker. It happened to us just as he said. Maybe he can tell you what your dream means."

Life changed very suddenly for Joseph! The men hurriedly brought him out of the dungeon and fixed him up with new clothes. Then they brought him to Pharaoh.

"Can you tell me what my dream means?" Pharaoh asked him.

"I can't, but God can," Joseph replied.

"I dreamed about cows," Pharaoh told him. "I was standing by the river and seven fat

cows came up from the water. They were well-fed and healthy. Then seven other cows came up. They looked terrible! They were skinny and sickly. I never saw such awful-looking cows. Now here's the funny part--the seven sickly cows ate the fat cows. When they had eaten them they were still as skinny as ever. I woke up then, but when I fell back asleep I had another dream just as strange. I dreamed about ears of corn this time. There were seven good ears of corn on one stalk. They were full and fat. Then sprang up seven more ears of corn that were withered up and dried out. The seven bad ears ate up the seven good ears. I can't figure these dreams out, and neither can the magicians and wise men. Can you?"

"God is showing you what He is going to do," Joseph replied. "The seven good cows are seven years and the seven skinny cows are seven years. The ears of corn mean the same thing. There will be seven years of great plenty in Egypt. The rain will fall and the crops will prosper. There will be more than enough for everyone to eat. Then will come seven years when the rain won't fall. The crops won't grow and there won't be enough food for everyone. Everyone will forget the good years because the bad years will be so terrible. He gave you two dreams meaning the same thing because it will happen very soon."

"What shall I do?" Pharaoh asked.

"Why don't you appoint a wise man to store up the extra food during the seven good years. Then when the bad years come there will be enough food saved back to feed everyone until the famine is over."

"That's what I'll do," Pharaoh replied. "And I'll put you in charge of it. I can tell God is with you. You will be my second-in-command. No one will have more authority in Egypt than you, except me, of course."

Pharaoh gave him fine clothes and jewels and gave him a fine chariot. Everyone had to

bow down in respect when Joseph went past. What a change from the life of a slave and a prisoner! What had seemed impossible to Joseph was no trouble at all to God.

### The Life Lesson

Boys and girls, there will be times when you won't understand what is happening in your life. Things will seem pointless and sometimes hopeless. I hope you remember that God is truly working out all things for good. It may not seem like it, but He really is. Some day, you will understand why, just as Joseph did.

## Review Questions

What made Pharaoh's butler remember Joseph?

*Pharaoh had a strange dream and wanted someone to tell what it meant.*

What did Pharaoh dream about?

*About fat and skinny cows, fat and skinny ears of corn.*

Was Joseph able to interpret Pharaoh's dream?

*God told Joseph and Joseph told Pharaoh what the dream meant.*

What did the dream mean?

*There would be seven years of plenty, followed by seven years of terrible famine.*

What did Joseph recommend?

*He suggested that Pharaoh appoint someone to gather up food in the years of plenty to keep people alive in the lean years.*

Who did Pharaoh appoint as his second-in-command?

*Joseph*