

Foundation of Faith



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How to Make the Dream God Gave You Come True

By Inyang Okutinyang

“Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brothers... and Joseph brought a bad report of them to his father. Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of many colours. But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him. Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more. So he said to them, ‘Please hear this dream which I have dreamed: There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf.’ And his brothers said to him, ‘Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?’ So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words. Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers and said, ‘Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me.’ So he told it to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, ‘What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?’ And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind.” Genesis 37: 2-11.

This passage is about Joseph, and the power of a God-given dream. Has God given you a dream? We want to find out from the life of Joseph, what we can do to cooperate with God in bringing whatever dream He has given us to fulfillment. However, we must first understand how God uses the Holy Spirit to birth dreams in us and show us things that are yet to happen.

THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In John 16:7, 13 and 14, Jesus said, “Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you...However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.”

Just as Jesus was committed to doing the will of the Father, so is the Holy Spirit. He is not going to speak anything other than what the Father tells Him. Furthermore, Jesus tells us in this passage that God wants us to know “things to come”. Why would He want to show us things to come? So we can prepare for them, or in some cases, so we can change things where

necessary. God is not interested in hiding secrets from us. He wants to reveal them to us. That’s why it’s to our benefit to get to know the Holy Spirit intimately. He is the One who will show us things to come.

Jesus said the Holy Spirit would glorify Him by taking what is His - that is His Word, His revelation of the plans He has for us in life - and then the Spirit will declare them to us. Wasn’t it beneficial for Peter when Jesus told him in John 21:18, that he was going to preach the gospel until he was old? Not too long after that, Peter was thrown in jail in Acts 12. Pending his imminent execution, he went soundly to sleep, secure in the knowledge that he was too young to die! Jesus’ revelation to him of things to come, helped to guide the way Peter lived. Praise God that today, He is still in the business of showing us things to come!

THE PURPOSE OF HAVING A DREAM

Every Bible character who walked with God and did exploits for Him, had a dream, a hope, or a vision; something that pointed him or her to a better future. We as believers have the best days of our lives ahead of us, not behind us. When people refer to “the good old days”, they are implying that today and the days ahead can only be worse. In the world, people who cannot see any hope for the future, often resort to substance abuse to numb the pain of their present reality. Or worse still, they commit suicide. Thank God that is not our portion as believers. In Christ, the best is always yet to come as we move from glory to glory!

The Lord will not show you everything that’s ahead. But He will let you know something that will take a hold of your heart - maybe through a dream or a vision. It may even be through reading the scriptures that the Lord will confirm something in your heart. The vision He gives you will be so strong, that you just know that you know that you know that it’s true! This is exactly what the Lord did for Joseph. He gave him big dreams, to bless him and to use him to bless multitudes. Today that is still God’s purpose when He gives us dreams.



SATAN WANTS TO KILL YOUR DREAM

Soon Joseph's jealous brothers could stand him no longer. And so they took him and sold him into slavery. Eventually, he ended up in Egypt (Genesis 37:12-36). Just imagine the kind of frustration that led his brothers to almost kill Joseph, and to eventually sell him as a slave. The devil must have laughed at him and told him that now his dreams could never be fulfilled. It doesn't matter what you are going through today, or what your background is. There is someone in the Bible who has experienced something similar, or even worse, and who came out victorious over their circumstances!

DON'T USE YOUR MOUTH TO DELAY YOUR DREAM

When God reveals something to you, you need to be very careful about with whom you share it. Not everybody is going to be as excited as you are about what God has shown you; not even fellow Christians. You don't need to share everything that the Lord reveals to you with others. By doing so, you could get the enemy involved in God's plan for your life. Joseph found this out the hard way. He was only seventeen and didn't know better than to provoke his already jealous brothers with his dreams of rulership over them! Moses' mistake in this regard cost him forty years! How true do the words of Jesus in Matthew 7:6 ring, "Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine; lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces."



DIVINE FAVOUR IS REQUIRED TO FULFILL YOUR DREAM

"Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there. The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord made all he did to prosper in his hand. So Joseph found favour in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority. So it was, from the time that he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was on all that he had..." Genesis 39:1-5.

Joseph the slave is described here as a prosperous man. Some people think of prosperity as having a yacht, a fat bank account, and stocks in the best company in the world. But God called Joseph prosperous when he owned nothing, not even his own life! Biblical prosperity is the ability to use God's power and provision to meet our needs and the needs of others. The Bible calls Joseph a prosperous man although in the world's eyes he was a mere slave. A man who is prosperous by the world's standards, but who is stingy and who lives independent of God, is not prosperous in the sight of God.

Joseph's master saw that the Lord was with him. How wonderful it would be if the employers of all Christians could see that the Lord was with them. Imagine your employer coming to you and saying that he knows that the

company is being blessed because the Lord's blessing is upon you! What a wonderful witness for Jesus!

Those who are faithful to God's vision will enjoy favour with Him and with others. They will succeed in all their relationships, especially with God. God caused Joseph to be viewed with favour by everyone he served, and that caused him to be blessed in whatever he did. Likewise, the Lord gave Daniel and the other Hebrew children favour and tender love in the sight of all their instructors and the king of the land to which they had been taken as captives. God wants to do the same for us today. We should expect divine favour to work for us all the time. People we deal with will just find themselves liking us, or doing things for us, and they won't even know why! We will; it's called favour with God and man!

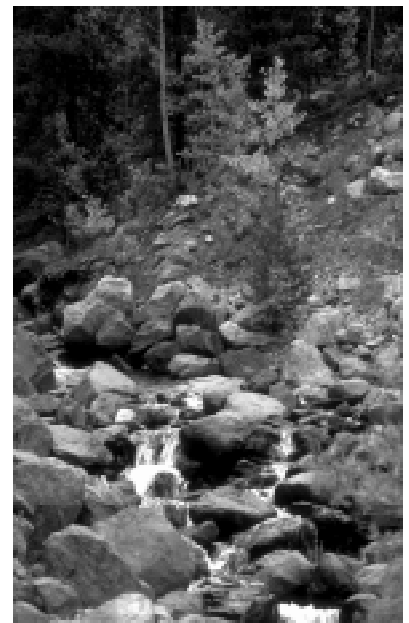
Luke 2:52 states that Jesus "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men." Many people in the Bible enjoyed favour. If you aren't, maybe you're not believing for it. Experiencing divine favour has nothing to do with your ethnic background, sex, social status, possessions, etc., but with your relationship with God. Ask God for it, receive it and walk in it, for you will need favour to realize the dream that God has given you.

SIN WILL ABORT YOUR DREAM

Joseph's life clearly illustrates the fact that vision restrains people from sin. We need to be careful not to compromise our integrity or obedience to God, especially when the vision seems slow in coming. "And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, 'Lie with me'. But he refused and said to his master's wife, 'Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her." Genesis 39:7-10.

Joseph knew that this would not just be a sin against man, but against God. We must not allow anything to hinder our fellowship with God. The devil will bring his temptations repeatedly, seeking to wear down our resistance. Satan didn't succeed with Joseph, for he was completely sold out to God. He just kept telling the woman "no". If it is "no" today, it should be "no" tomorrow, and "no" forever!

Let's continue the story in verses 11 and 12. "But it happened about this time, when Joseph went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house was inside, that she caught him by his garment, saying, 'Lie with me'. But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside." He did exactly what the Bible says to do with fornication; he fled! Nevertheless, Joseph ended up being thrown in prison after the woman falsely accused him of attempted rape.



MAINTAIN A RIGHT ATTITUDE REGARDLESS OF CIRCUMSTANCES

If some Christians had been able to endure walking in Joseph's shoes thus far, at this point they would have lost it! First, he was sold by his own brothers into slavery, then he was wrongfully imprisoned. It seemed like he had jumped from the proverbial frying pan into the fire! What do you do when the dreams God gave you seem to get shattered right before your eyes? You put the pieces back together and keep on keeping on! No matter how bad things look or get, there's never a right time to doubt - to doubt God's faithfulness, or the dream that He gave you. When things go from bad to worse, stay faithful to the vision. Believe what God told you, and remain steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

Psalm 105:17-19 tells us what Joseph suffered; "He sent a man before them - Joseph - who was sold as a slave. They hurt his feet with fetters (or chains), He was laid in irons. Until the time that the word came to pass, the word of the Lord tested him." Before his dreams came to pass, Joseph was severely tested and tempted. But he passed the test and entered his rest! Do you want to know how to pass your test? Maintain the same kind of attitude he did. Your attitude is the key to your altitude! Joseph's attitude in prison was such that you would have thought he was in a king's palace. He wasn't blaming God or grumbling and complaining (though in the natural, he seemed to have had every right to do so).

You just can't keep a good man down. Even in prison, God prospered Joseph to where he ruled over the prison house! "But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favour in the sight of keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners who were in the prison; whatever they did there it was his doing. The keeper of the prison did not look into anything that was under Joseph's authority, because the Lord was with him; and whatever he did, the Lord made it prosper." Genesis 39:21-23.

Part of maintaining a godly attitude in the midst of trying circumstances is learning to keep your joy. In Genesis 40:6, Joseph enquired why Pharaoh's chief butler and chief baker should be so sad in prison. One would expect prisoners to have plenty of reasons to be sad! Except if they were prisoners like Joseph, who had tapped into the revelation in Nehemiah 8:10, "...the joy of the Lord is your strength." Furthermore, Philippians 4:13 says that "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." When you lose your joy, you lose your strength and you can do nothing. Someone once said, "If the devil can't steal your joy, he can't keep your goods!" No wonder Joseph was so prosperous. He maintained his joy and therefore his dream, even in the hardest of situations. Though he was in prison, the prison was not in him!

THE VISION IS FOR AN APPOINTED TIME

We are told in Habakkuk 2:3 that "...the vision is yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries (or delays), wait for it; Because it will surely come, it will not tarry." Satan may try his best to prevent the dream God gave you from coming to pass, but his best can never be good enough. God is at work on your behalf to help you. You must believe that He knows your address, and when He's ready to deliver your promotion, nobody and no devil can stop Him. The Bible tells us that promotion comes not from the east or from the west or from the south, but from the Lord.

While they had been imprisoned together, Joseph had accurately interpreted some dreams that the chief butler and chief baker had dreamed. Just as he had predicted, the butler was restored to his position of waiting on Pharaoh. In Genesis 41 we read of how two years later, Pharaoh had a very troubling dream that none of his magicians or wise men could interpret for him. Suddenly the butler remembered Joseph's ability to interpret dreams, and how he had promised Joseph two years ago that he would speak on his behalf to Pharaoh. Pharaoh immediately sent for Joseph, who proceeded to interpret his dream for him. Pharaoh was so impressed with Joseph, that on the spot he promoted him to the position of second in command of all Egypt! In one day Joseph went from the Jailhouse to the White House!



Where did he get the wherewithal to be second in command to Pharaoh? In Potiphar's house and the prison, of course! Joseph's move from Potiphar's house to the prison was actually a promotion in disguise; for that was where the Lord perfected his preparation and training to rule a nation!

The process took about thirteen years from the time Joseph first received his dreams to the time of his elevation to ruler of Egypt. All along that long road, Satan was waiting at different stops to steal his dreams and to cause him to give up - through his brothers' hatred; in Potiphar's house; and in prison. At any point along the way, Joseph could have succumbed to anger, bitterness and disillusionment, like many Christians do today. If they only knew what they were throwing away, they would weep for eternity and that still wouldn't be long enough!

Several years later, we read in Genesis 42 how there was such a severe famine in the whole region that Jacob had to send Joseph's brothers from Canaan to Egypt to purchase food. Since Pharaoh had put Joseph in charge of all the food distribution, his brothers had to purchase the food from him. Though he recognized them, they didn't recognize him, and ended up doing what they had said they would never do all those years ago when seventeen year old Joseph had shared his dreams with them - they came and bowed down before him! Every last detail of Joseph's dreams came to pass, not only did he rule over them, they repeatedly bowed down to him - and gladly too!

EVERY DETAIL OF YOUR DREAM WILL BE FULFILLED

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FORGIVENESS: THE PATHWAY TO DREAM FULFILLMENT AND FRUITFULNESS



It's not hard to imagine the consternation of the brothers when he finally revealed himself to them in Genesis 45. "Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am Joseph;...But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence. And Joseph said to his brothers, 'Please come near to me.' So they came near. Then he said: 'I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life...to preserve a posterity for you in the earth to save your lives by

a great deliverance. So now it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and the lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.' " (Verses 3-5, 7,8).

Just think about that. Joseph harboured no unforgiveness towards his brothers for what they had done to him, or for all he had suffered as a result of their actions. He considered it all to be part of God's plan, and that though they had meant it for evil, God was big enough to have turned everything around for the good of all (see Genesis 50:18-21). Don't make the mistake that so many people do. They live with so much anger and bitterness over the things they've suffered. Forgive and forget, release the people who have hurt you and bless them. Then like Joseph, you will open the door for God's blessings to come to you.

Before he was reunited with his family, Joseph married in Egypt and had two children. "And to Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, ...Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: 'For God has made me forget all my toil and all my father's house.' And the name of the second he called Ephraim: 'For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.' " Genesis 41:50-52. Forgetting the painful past enabled Joseph to keep on believing in the dreams God gave him, and enabled him to embrace his future. It's time to forget all your unpleasant experiences. According to Philippians 3:13, you should be "...forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead." Then your dreams can come true and like Joseph, you too will be fruitful.

How can you tell that some people have not forgotten their painful past? All you have to do is listen to the way they talk about it. You can tell that the wounds are still raw and that they are still feeling the emotional pain. When a wound has healed, a scar remains, but when someone touches the scar, you don't feel the pain anymore. It is important to point out that by forgetting the past, we don't mean to imply amnesia! Of course you will still remember what was done to you, but because you choose to act on the Word of God and forgive, the memories of the events will cease to be painful and damaging.

CONCLUSION

Joseph was fruitful in the land of his affliction, and you too can be fruitful in the land in which God has put you. Joseph was able to let go of his past and let God bring his dreams to fulfillment. If you can do that too, you and all those around you will reap the benefits, now and eternally! No devil is big enough to steal your dreams; and no sin should be enticing enough to cause you to abort them. Cooperate with the Holy Spirit, and together you will see the fulfillment of all the dreams that God has given you!

Salvation Prayer

If you would like to receive Jesus as your Saviour, pray the following prayer sincerely from your heart:

Dear heavenly Father, I come to you in the name of Jesus. You said in Your word, "...if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, **YOU WILL BE SAVED**" (Romans 10:9). I do believe with my heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. I believe He was raised from the dead for my justification. Your word says, "...it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved." (Romans 10:10). I do believe with my heart, and I now confess with my mouth that Jesus is my Lord. Therefore, I am saved! Thank You Lord!

To grow in your new Christian life, it is important to study the Bible and to pray every day to your Heavenly Father. You also need to belong to a good, Bible-believing church where you can be taught the Word of God.



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