



# Joseph's Brothers Go to Egypt

Genesis 42



Because of the grace and wisdom that God poured out on Joseph, Joseph was now a very influential man in the great kingdom of Egypt (Acts 7:10). God used Joseph to save the lives of millions of people. Joseph relied on God's grace more than ever when his brothers showed up on his doorstep.

## Day #1: Storing Up

Other than Pharaoh, there was no one in Egypt with more power than Joseph. Joseph spent seven years storing up grain to prepare Egypt for the famine that God warned about. Then the famine hit. People ran out of food in every country (Genesis 41:54). However, the Egyptians were allowed to come to Joseph and buy the grain they needed for food.

Storing up for hard times is such a smart plan! In the book of Proverbs, God warns against being wasteful and lazy this way:

**+** *Take a lesson from the ants, you lazybones. Learn from their ways and become wise! Though they have no prince or governor or ruler to make them work, they labor hard all summer, gathering food for the winter. - Proverbs 6:6-8*

This plan not only works for food, but also for money, time, and energy. Adults "store up" by saving some of their money so they will have what they need when they are too old to work.

**\*** What are some ways **you** can "store up" for times when you have little? For instance, let's say your teacher announces on Monday that you will have a Math test coming up on Thursday. You know that you will be at church most of Wednesday night. What should you do Monday night and Tuesday night? You should use the free time you have on Monday and Tuesday to study! This way, you will be "storing up" your knowledge while you have the time.

Go outside and watch an ant. These hard workers never waste time! They work hard and store up what they will need in the future.

## Day #2: Like Joseph

Joseph had the grains of wheat and barley that people needed in order to live. What a joy it must have been for Joseph to be able to give the very thing the people needed so desperately. First he sold it to those in Egypt, then to those outside of Egypt.

More importantly, we have the "grains" of truth that people need to gain eternal life. We have the privilege of giving out God's truth to those who desperately need forgiveness and new life. First we share it with those around us, and then to those in other cities and other countries.

**+** Jesus told His disciples: *You will be my witnesses, telling people about Me everywhere - in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.* - Acts 1:8b

So, too, we should be His witnesses. We should tell everyone about Jesus, the Savior. First, tell those closest to you, such as close friends and family members. Then, tell those on your soccer team or in your ballet class. Tell friends at school. Then pray for the opportunity to tell someone even farther away. You may be too young to go on a mission trip, but you are never too young to pray for a missionary!

**\*** Ask your parents to help you learn about a missionary who serves God in a country that you are interested in. Pray for that missionary and write an encouraging letter to him or her. When you write, ask if they can help you become a pen pal to a child that they know in their country. Through your letters, you can share the love of Jesus with a child who lives in a different part of the world!

## Day #3: Complete Grace

Meanwhile, back in Canaan...Joseph's family was starving. When Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent ten of his sons to buy some. Jacob did not send all of his sons. He kept his youngest son, Benjamin, at home to keep him safe. Since Joseph's disappearance, Benjamin had become Jacob's new favorite.

People from all over had come to Egypt to buy grain. When Joseph's brothers came before Joseph, they bowed down to him. They did not recognize Joseph,

Day #3 continued:

but he certainly recognized them.

Do you remember the dreams that Joseph had when he was just a teenager? He dreamed that his brothers would bow down to him one day (Genesis 37:6-10). Suddenly, that day had arrived!

Because God had given the dreams to Joseph, Joseph knew that this event was from God. Joseph knew he had not earned this moment! It was given to him by God's grace. By this same grace, God gave Joseph the ability not to take revenge on his brothers after they had been so cruel to him (Leviticus 19:18).

 This same grace is available to all believers. It gives us the desire and the ability to do what is right, no matter what.

 *And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. - 2 Corinthians 9:8 NIV*

In the verse above, circle the words **all** and **every**, each time they appear. God's grace is COMPLETE! You can rely on God to give you EVERYTHING you need to obey Him!

## Day #4: Wisdom of God

If you have brothers or sisters, choose one and describe him or her. (Choose a friend if you don't have siblings.) You are describing the way your brother or sister looks right now. But what if you could fast-forward about 15 years? What if he or she was living in a foreign land, wearing foreign clothes, and speaking a foreign language? In that case, you might not even recognize your own brother or sister.

Joseph was just a teenager when his brothers last saw him. Now he was a grown man, married with children. He looked and spoke much more like an Egyptian than an Israelite. Joseph did not tell his brothers who he was. In fact, he used an interpreter when he spoke to them, so they wouldn't know that he spoke their language.

We can be sure that Joseph was leaning on God's grace and wisdom this day. When faced with this very unusual situation, God gave Joseph the plan he needed in order to make sure he would see his father and Benjamin again.

 *If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and He will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. - James 1:5 NLT*

Day #4 continued:

Boldly, Joseph accused his brothers of being spies! Of course, the brothers insisted that they were not spies. They told Joseph that they were 10 brothers, and their father and youngest brother were at home in Canaan.

Joseph held all the brothers in prison for 3 days to see if there had been any change in their hearts. Then Joseph told them they could go home and take grain to their hungry families. He told them they must come back to Egypt, and bring their brother Benjamin to him. Joseph kept Simeon in prison so that the brothers would be sure to come back. Joseph wanted to see his brother, Benjamin, very much.

 God knows everything! Lean on Him when you don't know what to do and He will give you the wisdom you need (James 1:5).

## Day #5: Taste of Grace

Joseph had his servants fill his brothers' bags with grain. He gave them plenty of grain to feed all of their families for weeks to come.

Then Joseph did something very surprising. He secretly ordered that His brothers' money also be put in their sacks. Joseph didn't take their money! He gave them free grain that they did not deserve. This was an act of grace. Because God had given Joseph so many blessings that he did not deserve, Joseph was able to give his brothers a blessing that they did not deserve (Genesis 43:23).

When the brothers stopped to rest for the night, they found their money in their sacks. They were terrified. They did not understand this gift of grace. The guilt that they felt for what they had done in the past made them unable to accept Joseph's grace. We'll see that this was just the first taste of grace that the brothers would receive.

 Make a list of some of the blessings God has given you. Did you do anything to earn the blessings you enjoy - such as your family or your healthy body? God gives you these gifts by His grace.

Think of a way you can give a blessing to someone who has done nothing to deserve it. For example, pay for an extra ice cream bar in the lunchroom at school, and ask the cafeteria worker to give it to another child for free. Leave a treat in your sister's room, or leave flowers at your neighbor's door. Giving something to someone who has not earned it is grace. It all begins with the grace God has given to you!

 *So make sure that you also do well in the grace of giving to others. - 2 Corinthians 8:7b*