

Lifeline Bible Church Bible Study Outline



MANAGING FEAST & FAMINE

LESSONS FROM JOSEPH – STUDY ONE:

INTRODUCTION – Gen.40 & 41

I. Why This Study:

1. We are in the End-time, a time of pressure due to extreme competition and scarce resources.
2. We are now in December, a month of great spending but usually immediately after the great spending of December follows the scarcity of January.
3. This is also the Christmas Season when men tend to over-spend and waste lots of resources and later go into debts.
4. Life is always a combination of opposites - day and night, light and darkness, ups and downs, hills and valleys, summer and winter, wet and dry seasons, abundance and lack. If we don't know how to manage ourselves during the time of abundance then, we shall run into a lot of problem in

times of famine and start to complain unjustifiably. Life itself is a resource to be managed.

5. Joseph stands out in scripture as a wonderful Resource Manager. He effectively and successfully managed the 7 years of abundance and the 7 years of famine in Egypt and the surrounding nations

II. Definitions:

1. Feast – extensive and abundant meal, a banquet
2. Famine – dearth, scarcity, shortage, starvation, hunger, malnutrition

While a feast is associated with abundance of food, famine is associated with scarcity or lack of food. We can then extend the use of these terms to all resources generally.

III. The Value & Importance of Information:

The secret of Joseph lied in the fact that he knew something others did not know; He knew how to interpret dreams!

Coincidentally, this age is called the Information Age. Men have come to appreciate the importance of information. Only those who are well informed will rule or lead the park. Ignorance is no virtue but a vice; ignorance is dangerous! The Bible confirms this also in **Hos.4: 6**. As God's children, living in this age, we just must be well informed.

IV. What We Should Know:

1. Know God intimately – **Isa.40: 30-31; Jer.29: 13-14; Zech.4: 6; Dan.11: 32**
2. Know yourself very well – **Ps.139: 14-16** e.g. Parable of the Talents (**Matt.25: 14-15**)
3. We should know the followings about ourselves - Your sex, age, race, tribe, etc are important, temperament – Four basic temperamental types, likes and dislikes, resources – your strength, education, finances, social status, goodwill, limitations and handicaps, etc. Know What You Want – desires, expectations, aspirations, ambitions, etc. E.g. Impotent man at Bethesda Pool. Don't be covetous, confused or be distracted by others

4. Know people around you and be friendly – **Prov.18: 24; Matt.11: 16-19; Heb.12: 14.** Need for balance – **2Cor.6: 14-18**
5. Know your environment well – **Ps.137: 1-4** e.g. Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Esther and Daniel
6. Know your order and time too. Everyone has his/her time just as everything in life has its time. So, be sensitive to time – **Ps.37: 24; Eccles.3: 1-11**, Sons of Issachar – **1Chron.12: 32; Dan.9: 1-3**. Our prayers must be timely and we must be sensitive to times of answers also e.g. David, Ana and Simeon
7. The Bible and prayer are our primary sources of information. The Bible is life's manual, constitution and encyclopedia. God is a Revealer of secrets. He reveals these secrets in His word and prayer – Dan.2: 47; Amos 3: 7. We injure our own lives by ignoring the Bible and meditative prayer. The Bible and prayer must go together. Even when we pray, our prayer must be biblical. And we must be sensitive to divine order – Josh.1: 8; Ps.119: 105; Matt.4: 4; Lk.18: 1; 1Thess.5: 17

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LESSONS FROM JOSEPH – STUDY TWO:

THE PLACE & IMPORTANCE OF GIFTS & GRACE – Gen.41: 1-end

8. Like Joseph, everyone has his unique God-given gift(s) and grace - **Ps.139: 14-16** e.g. Parable of the Talents (**Matt.25: 14-15**).
9. Our gifts and grace will distinguish us in life. Your gifts and calling will define your purpose, ministry and success in life – **Prov.18: 16**.
10. Using our God-given Grace and Gifts faithfully and well makes life beautiful, peaceful and successful – **Matt.25: 20-23**.
11. Operating outside our God-given gifts and grace is a major cause of human struggle, strife and failure in life e.g. Nadab and Abihu – **Lev.10**, Uzzah – **2Sam.6: 3-6**, King Saul – **1Sam.13: 8-10** and King Uzziah – **2Chron.26: 16-21**.
12. Raw talents need sharpening. Training sharpens talent (everything in life comes raw and needs to be developed).
13. Work hard and be diligent – **Prov.6: 6-11; 10: 4; 12: 24; 22: 29**.
14. Never procrastinate. Always start early – **Ps.63: 1; Jn.9: 4**.
15. Be willing to start small – **Job 8: 7**. Little drops of water make a mighty ocean, little effort is better than no effort; little income is better than no income.
16. Be patient – growth takes time. Endure waiting till result comes – **Ps.27: 14; 37: 7; Isa.40: 31; Lk.21: 19; Heb.6: 12; 10: 36; Jam.5: 7**. Learn from the mistake of King Saul.
17. Be consistent. The carpenter drives in the nail by hitting the same spot – **Gal.6: 9; Rev.2: 7, 17; 3: 12, 21**.
18. Be friendly and maintain good human relations and social networking – **Prov.18: 24**.
19. Be genuinely committed to service and welfare of others – **Gen.40: 7; Matt.23: 11; Lk.22: 25-27**.
20. Always be willing to volunteer – see service as an opportunity and a form of giving – **Lk.22: 25-27; Acts 20: 35**. So, serve with joy – **Ps.100: 2**.

21. Package and publicize yourself – **Gen.41: 14.** . Tell others what you can do – **Gen.40: 8.**

22. Have godliness and contentment – **1Tim.6: 6-10.** There is power and gain in godliness and contentment. The godliness and content of Joseph could be seen not just in not sleeping with Potiphar's wife and forgiving his brothers but also in his equitable distribution of resources

23. Be prayerful – **Lk.18: 1; 1Thess.5: 17**

Signs that you are operating outside your God-given gifts and grace, that is, square pegs in round holes or round pegs in square holes

1. Boredom and lack of interest
2. Lack of ideas and inactivity
3. Uneasiness and lack of comfort
4. Low productivity and lack of effectiveness
5. Silly mistakes and blunders
6. Lack of ambition
7. Constant recurrent discouragement
8. Complaints and grumbling
9. Irritation, edginess, resentment and faultfinding
10. Frustration, lack of joy and fulfillment
11. Stiffness and congestion
12. Tiredness and fatigue
13. Loss of appetite or self-indulgence
14. Distraction and lack of concentration
15. Looking haggard and aging fast

Functioning in your God-given gifts and grace is like a fish swimming in water or a bird flying in the air; it's like a cock crowing, dog barking, lion roaring, horse running and monkey jumping. They are all naturally gifted by God to do those things. Enjoying what you do is a major key to success! This is a good time of review and change.

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LESSONS FROM JOSEPH – STUDY THREE:

NEED & IMPORTANCE OF SAVING/FORMS OF SAVINGS – Gen.41: 25-40

However gifted or well endowed we may be, nobody has everything or is self-sufficient i.e. our resources are always limited but our needs and wants also are usually more than what we can afford. This is a big challenge that necessitates communal living, human interaction and interdependency. This also is the reason why we need to save.

Joseph was not just a dreamer or interpreter of dreams but used his knowledge of the principles of sowing and reaping as well as that of storage and saving to help Egypt and the surrounding nations to manage the initial 7 years of abundance and survive the 7 years of famine that followed. If we learn from him and manage our God-given resources well in times of abundance, we shall survive any famine or adversity that may follow.

I. **Laws of savings are laws of sowing and reaping:**

1. You reap what you sow
2. You reap according to the proportion that you sow
3. You reap according to the quality of what you sow
4. You must sow back part of what you reap – don't eat all your harvests
5. Sowing and reaping is a form of partnership – with God, crops, land, seasons and people
 - a. Partnership with God – God is the Giver of all things. You will always need Him – **Jn.15: 5**.
 - b. Partnership with crops (and other natural gifts) – Good crops must be selected and sowed to yield bountiful harvests. This shows the need for hard work. Know your gifts and talents and put in your best in life. Never exaggerate your crops – they are finite, limited and perishable resources.
 - c. Partnership with land – Land must be cultivated in order to sow and reap bountiful harvest. Your land is where you are planted and flourish. Different crops require different soil. Different gifts need different environment to

thrive. Relocate if need be if you are dislocated e.g. Isaac moved until he got to Rehoboth – **Gen.26: 13-22**.

- d. Partnership with time: Crops have their seasons and it takes time to harvest what is planted. We have our seasons too – **Eccles.3: 1-8**. Know your time and seasons. Manage your time and seasons well and wisely – don't waste your income or harvest time – manage your success well. Save some of your harvests for the next planting season or time of famine. Manage your age well – you will not forever be young so, do things on time so you will not struggle or suffer in old age. Work hard and save when you are still young, strong and agile for your retirement when you will be tired and old.
- e. Partnership with people: Everyone is limited in what he/she can do but cooperation and collaboration with others give us greater output – **Eccles.4: 9-12**. We need others at both sowing and harvest seasons of our lives e.g. Peter's draught of fish, ajo, cooperative society, mergers, alliances, AU, EU, UN, etc.
6. Saving or banking requires a communal spirit and cooperation. This is largely lacking amongst blacks and that is part of the reasons why we suffer.
7. The church is a community, and should be the best cooperative society – **Acts 2: 41-44**. Individuality, secretiveness, selfishness, greed, betrayal and fraud destroy a community or society. Helping the church therefore is helping yourself. Nobody is an island. You will always need the church someday, sometime, somehow, somewhere.

II. **General Guidelines for Saving:**

1. Know your resources – quantity and quality
2. Put your resources to work and work hard
3. Have multiple sources of income. Income goes beyond money; it can be in kind or material also.
4. Never consume all your harvest or income but save some for the next planting season or time of famine. Know what to eat; use or spend and what to keep or save e.g. Widow of Zarephath – **1Kg.17: 8-16**. Our attitude towards saving is as important as our attitude towards income. Many

people are poor not because of poor income but because of poor attitude towards saving. Prosperity Formula:

- a. High Income + High Expenditure = Average or Poor
 - b. Low Income + Low Expenditure = Average or Poor
 - c. Low Income + High Expenditure = Abject Poverty
 - d. High Income + Low Expenditure = Prosperity & Wealth
5. Saving and investment must be timely. Save during the rainy season for the dry season. Save during feasts for the time of famine.
 6. To reduce expenditure, avoid excess luggage and travel light – reduce your liabilities – need for family planning – don't carry loads, yokes and burdens God has not given you.
 7. Curb wastage – Separate needs from wants. Avoid extravagance and party-making. Stop making parties because you have some surplus income. Look around you and see how you can turn wastes to wealth.
 8. Little savings are important and better than no savings at all. Little savings make great investments just like little drops of water make mighty ocean – Joseph gathered all the harvests during 7 years of plenty for the 7 years of famine and Jesus gathered up the fragments each time He fed thousands – **Mk.8: 19-20.**

III. Forms of Savings:

1. Material Saving – this was the first type of saving practiced before money was invented called trade by barter. This is still one of the best forms of saving. Some material savings are better than money e.g. Gold, diamond, properties, antiques, artworks, food crops, etc. You can deliberately buy some items not for use but to re-sell or use for a while and later sell when it still has good value.
2. Monetary or Financial Saving – don't spend all your money but save some for famine or when you are broke.
 - a. Save money in the bank. Different banks have different accounts and investment plans.
 - b. Take advantage of soft loans and borrow but never use loans for frivolities. Borrow low or no interest loans as a form of saving.

- c. Couples should practice joint account. Buy thing whole-sale or in dozens. You can form a cooperative society or team up with others to buy or rent as a group. However, this requires a lot of unity and cooperation but what is the use of our Christianity if we cannot do things together. Let us stop taking one another for granted!
 - d. Buy refurbished, 2nd hand or fairly used and display items. Some fairly used items are even better than new ones!
 - e. Buy during auction, sales promotions, trial periods and buy well ahead e.g. travel tickets and hard currency. Some new items are even given out to people to try free-of-charge.
 - f. Use experts and consultants where necessary e.g. Quantity Surveyors, Estate Valuers, Bulk Traders, Car Dealers, Bulk Traders, etc. We can also save a lot of money based on who buys and when we buy.
 - g. Patronize government hospitals and institutions.
3. Save by managing time and seasons well (redeeming the time – **Eph.5:16**) – Time is a resource that must be used or spent well. Buy things when they're in season and cheap for times when they're out of season and expensive e.g. Palm oil, rice and gas.
 4. Save by using your talents and skills – Always look for opportunities to show-case your talents. Talents and skills not used will eventually rot away. (Note: Most music stars have played in the church before.)
 5. Save in kind and goodwill – maintain good human relations, keep your words and promises and be nice and help people generally especially young and promising people e.g. Joseph being made Prime Minister of Egypt, scholarships, gifts and grants, visa lottery.
 6. Network socially with people who can help you and add value to your life. Marriage comes in here too. Get help from specialists and consultants who can provide certain information and help.
 7. Saving though education and training – Education is a great investment. Get as much education and training as possible and as early as possible especially for girls.
 8. It is not everything you buy. Leasing and renting are forms of savings also.

9. Saving through information – Information is power! That is why people read newspapers, magazines, journals, listen to radio programmes and watch television. What type of papers and magazines do you read? What type of programmes do you watch on TV or listen to on radio. This is the major reason why we read the Bible also as God is the ultimate Source of all information.
10. Save and bank prayers ahead of your future. Many pray in emergencies when it is too late to pray – **Ps.37: 5.**