

Todd Alexander - Josephs Gift

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The Apostle Paul paints the picture of godlessness in the last days. We find this in second Timothy, chapter three, verses one through five, and this is what the Apostle Paul tells us. He's speaking to Timothy. He's saying this.

Know also that in the last days perilous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures, more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. From such turn away.

The lesson for us is, don't be deceived by these perilous times that we're in, and in contrast, the Apostle Paul paints the picture of godliness in the last days, and this is what the Apostle Paul tells us. Think of this as advice. He says this in the same chapter, verses 14 through 17, that second Timothy, chapter three, verses 14 through 17.

And he's giving Timothy some pastoral advice that speaks down through the ages to us. He's saying this, but continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, Timothy. Continue thou in the things that thou hast learned, and hast been assured of knowing of whom thou hast learned them, and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction, righteousness, that the man of God may be perfectly perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Brethren, the advice here for us is make sure that your faith is rooted in Scripture.

Now the Apostle Paul gives us a pattern that I'd like to share with you today. He gives us a pattern of Israel for our spiritual growth. Looking for something to hold onto, something for signposts along the way for our spiritual growth. The Apostle Paul gives it to you, and he gives it to you in First Corinthians, chapter 10, and I'd like to read this verse 6 and 11 from the RVIC.

The apostle Paul says First Corinthians 10, 6, 11 from the RVIC. Now these things talking about the experiences of Israel became types of us. Now remember from the King James, it says we're examples to us, but the thought behind that is they were really types for us, and the Apostle Paul is telling us that he's giving us permission into the experiences of Israel to learn lessons. He says now these things became types of us to the intent we should not lust after evil things as they lusted.

Now these things happened unto them typically and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages are to come. Brethren, I'd like for you to consider with me today that Joseph is an individual type that we can look at. While the nation of Israel provides a general type and a warning. Today I'd like to look to the example of Joseph in particular. Joseph is a mirror.

He's a mirror that we may look into and see ourselves, our past, our present and our future potential.

It's a deeply personal pattern for us as a guide for our own spiritual growth, and I think Joseph's journey from Canaan to Egypt and back is one of the most incredible instructions from God for our careful attention. Like Joseph, our journey is a set of God given experiences which demand that we humble ourselves before God.

Todd Alexander - Josephs Gift

Without humility, God can't do much with us. Now I'd like you to check out this handout.

I think that Joseph has gifted us his life experience. His gift to us is his life experience that we may use as a type for our own spiritual growth, and I'd like to point out six stages of spiritual life, six seminal moments we may follow. Number one, Godly. Godly values.

Number two, Godly tools. Number three. Number three, worldly challenges. Number four, our response to those worldly challenges. Number five, a renewed and revitalized purpose.

Number six, the gift of our example.

So let's take a look at number one. It's at the 12 o' clock on your circle.

Godly values. Godliness inside. Godliness inside is the sure foundation of every success. Wouldn't you like to reach back and tell your 12 year old self that now? Godly values, the sure foundation of every success.

How many young people are 17 years old in the audience today? Raise your hand close. I don't see any.

But there's a lot of people that act like they're 17 years old. But at 17 years old. We read about this in Genesis chapter 37 when Joseph was 37 years old, and this is what happens. God gives Joseph dreams.

God gives Joseph dreams, and Joseph, in moments of naive idealism, shares his dreams with his brothers.

Joseph's father Jacob trusts him to report back to him on the sheep business. So what happened? Well, Joseph went to see his brothers. We know the story. His brothers hated him.

His brothers wanted to kill him.

Joseph's dreams when shared with his brothers Though turned into something, Joseph's dreams, when shared with his brothers, turned into his values.

God gives us dreams too. Our dreams are rooted in the promises of the Scriptures, the precious promises. Those are our dreams. Those are dreams that are given to us by God, and like Joseph's dreams, these are prophecies of the future that we hold on to, to give us hope, to give us courage.

Just like Joseph, we should turn to these promises and turn them into godly values. We should live them and hope in them, just like Joseph did. Yes, we will be sharing them with people that hate us. Yes, we will be sharing them with people that envy us. Yes, we will be sharing them in a moment of naive idealism.

But our challenge is to turn those promises, those dreams, into our values.

Our revelations of Scripture are not meant to be kept inside. Just like Joseph, they're meant to be shared.

We read in Genesis 37 that Joseph's brothers were not inspired by his godly values. This is what it says, chapter 37, verse 11, and his brethren envied him. But his father observed the saying, and when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to

Todd Alexander - Josephs Gift

slay him, and they said one to another, behold, this dreamer cometh.

Come now therefore let us slay him and cast him into some pit, and we will say, some evil beast hath devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams. Wow. Have you been the recipient of that kind of thing?

Has that happened to you? Don't stop sharing your values. Don't stop sharing your dreams. The difficulties that we develop, that we are led into by the providence of God, are meant to develop our dreams into our values. His brothers were evil, just like the bad people that the Apostle Paul warned us about in second Timothy three, chapter three.

Listen to this apt summary of Joseph's brothers. This is what the Apostle Paul says in second Timothy chapter three, and it's a perfect summary of his brothers. Lovers of own selves, covetous, boasters, proud blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful and holy, without natural affection. Boom.

Truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God. Joseph was living among his brothers who did evil against him, just like we are living in the days that are evil, and we must be true to our godly values even in the face of such evil.

That's really hard.

That's really hard. It's actually impossible without the help of God.

And as the apostle Paul warned about perilous times in the last days. Godly values are destroyed in us when we submit to ungodliness.

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What would have happened if Joseph wanted the admiration and affirmation of his brothers and found some common ground?

Wow. The whole story would be different. The lessons from God for us, the type of Joseph would not be there for our learning.

Brethren, our faith dies in darkness.

The fact is that each value has an opposite. Clean has an opposite value of dirty. Love has an opposite value of hate. Freedom has an opposite value of suppression, and every value has a continuum.

It's a spectrum. We begin in a moment of naive idealism when our values are just dreams, and then God helps us turn those dreams into values. Godly values aren't something that we own. They're not in a constant state.

They're in flux, and godly values are something that we have to constantly strive toward, and when we stop constantly striving towards those godly values, we're likely to get pulled towards their opposite.

The Apostle Paul told Timothy, it takes effort to attain godly values. Study the Scriptures, Timothy.

Todd Alexander - Josephs Gift

Remember the faith of your mother and grandmother, Timothy. Remember that faith is in you too, Timothy.

And I think that's the point.

Values are worth buying with our time and energies. If Joseph had a statement of a life purpose, I think it might be I will continue to lead a virtuous life full of faith that is intentional and calculated at every turn to unlock the amazing blessings that God will fulfill through my family.

We can see the thread through his entire experience of his life.

Godly values, my friends. Godliness inside. It's the sure foundation of every success. Number two. Godly tools.

Godly tools. Now that we have godly values, we need to look at the tools that God gave Joseph. What tools were they? They were latent power. It was sleeping talent that was ready to go to work with God's timing.

Joseph had to wait, didn't he?

This latent power was ready to go to work with God's timing, God's strength and his motivation. Godly tools. They're sleeping talent that when activated, allow us to live in the power of God, the awesome power of God. Now, I can tell you this from experience.

It's really hard sometimes to pinch off the desire for affirmation and adoration from the world.

But that's when the sleeping talent of the tools of God come into play. Now let's Take a look at Joseph. When Joseph In Genesis chapter 39, he was 24 years old, about 24 years old. He was diligent in Potiphar's house. He gained a good reputation.

He was diligent because of his godly values. By the way, Potiphar noticed that he advanced Joseph. Potiphar put him in charge of his house.

You remember, Joseph was falsely accused of assaulting Potiphar's wife, and Joseph was thrown in the king's prison. But he maintained his dignity because of his diligence, because of his godly values that came from his dreams.

The godly tools that he used gave him victory when evil invaded his life, and here are some of the godly tools that Joseph used in this experience. Self control.

The virtue. Patience. Godliness. Joy. Peace.

When Joseph was assaulted by Potiphar's wife, you know what? He wasn't deceived by her. He ran away.

He told the truth about the experience. He was put in prison unjustly. He suffered because of evil men, and what are the lessons to us? Well, when we're assailed by evil, don't be deceived.

Run away. Tell the truth about the experience. You might be put in prison, you might suffer because of evil men, but God is watching and working, and he's working out something important for you, and Joseph was given these godly tools by his Father and his heavenly Father, and we are given these tools as well.

Todd Alexander - Josephs Gift

Like Joseph, we must use them when evil invades our life, and when we use those godly tools, when we let that latent sleeping power of God rise up in our life to fight the flesh, the fleshly tendency inside of us, we will be doing the will of our heavenly Father. So like Joseph, we must do the right thing, knowing that our Father in heaven allowed Joseph to be put in prison. Our Father in heaven allowed you to have bad things happen to you.

By the way, my uncle Jim Parkinson told me, he says, you know the king's prison, it was a great place for Joseph to be put in. He says it was probably the best place for him to learn about governing from his fellow prince prisoners. Isn't that cool? He'd need that.

Joseph's brothers teach us that if you do not humble yourself before God, you will be spiritually blind.

Number three, worldly challenges. Worldly challenges are lifelong opportunities from God to build mature faith. We find these experiences in Genesis chapter 40. When he was about 28 years old, he's in prison, and Joseph interprets the dreams of the butler and the baker.

You Remember that story. I love those stories, and by the way, thank you for all you Sunday school teachers who taught me these stories as a kid because they live in my heart. You know what I'm talking about, don't you sis?

Joseph interprets the dreams of the butler and baker. Joseph asked the butler to remember him. The butler forgot. He forgot about Joseph for two years.

But Joseph's godly values and the godly tools that he was using because of that diligence of his, of his godly values, they helped him frame up his challenges and see those challenges as really opportunities, and that's the challenge for you, especially you young people. You have some insurmountable challenges today. Make sure that you have rock solid values. Make sure that you use the latent power of God's tools that he's given you to succeed.

And make sure that you frame up the challenges as really opportunities to drive you closer to God. Like Joseph now, in contrast, the bad values of his brothers turned into wicked fruit. Have you considered the wicked fruit of his brothers? They had the opportunity to develop the same godly values as Joseph, but they did not seize that opportunity. How about this?

They maintained a lie to their father about Joseph's disappearance.

How about this? They gave his coat, his blood, Joseph's blood stained multicolored coat to their father and let their father come up with the wrong conclusion. Wow.

Do you see the wicked fruit of their bad values? They actually shifted the blame of Joseph's death onto their father and Jacob put the blame on himself for sending Joseph to check on his brothers. Wicked fruit. Wicked fruit.

In difficulty in Egypt, Joseph found the opportunity to be developed as a servant under the very difficult but mighty providence of God.

The Israel poet King David tells us that God sent Israel into captivity in Egypt in order to preserve and grow them into a powerful nation and to make them thrive.

He says this in Psalm 105.

Todd Alexander - Josephs Gift

Perhaps we can see an example in this experience for us too. God has sent us to Egypt to preserve us and to grow us into a powerful nation, into a powerful spiritual nation by giving us the opportunity to develop mature faith, to bring us together and thrive into one purpose. Now Joseph's gift to us is the lesson that bad things do happen to righteous people. But like Joseph, God has given us the godly tools which when we use them, give us strength and motivation in God's timing.

But like Joseph, it requires a strong mind. Here's some thoughts for you. When your mind is weak, what happens? Well, every situation is a problem when your mind is balanced. Every situation is a challenge, but when your mind is strong, every situation is an opportunity, and that's the way we need to look at these experiences while we're in Egypt.

Joseph's mind was strong, but his brother's were weak. Joseph reacted to that training differently, and God came alongside Joseph dreams, and Joseph held on to those dreams. He held onto those dreams as touch points in his relationship with his brothers, his family, his father, his heavenly father.

Brethren, what dreams has God given you?

How are those dreams guiding your life? How are you sharing those dreams with your children, your spiritual children? Let's make sure that we help our children envision dreams about the sure promises of God.

Number four, response.

Our response in leveraging godly power over fleshly will. Indeed, the greatest battle we will fight is the battle over our flesh.

We find these In Genesis, chapter 41, the experiences of Joseph when he was about 30 years old. Joseph delivers God's interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams, and Pharaoh sees the spirit of God working in Joseph. Gosh, have you ever worked for somebody that really appreciated the spirit of God that was working in you? I did.

And what happened? Pharaoh set Joseph over all of Egypt. Now in this situation where he interpreted Pharaoh's dream, he actually reacted to something that was out of his control. He had no control over the dreams of Pharaoh. God can put anything inside the mind of anybody he wants that we interact with.

And we got to be diligent. We have to have strong values. We have to be able to use godly tools, and when we do that, we have the opportunity to respond to challenges that we have.

It was a deep test of Joseph's character. He looked to God for the interpretation. Do we look to God for the interpretation or do we experience the fear of man when we speak, do we fear what other people will think of us? Or do we look for God for the interpretation of these dreams?

He faithfully delivered the interpretation that God gave him to Pharaoh. Basically, he simply told the truth and he was content to trust in God to do the work on Pharaoh's heart.

Joseph's example in Pharaoh's court was the light that Pharaoh saw, and it could only come from godliness inside Joseph.

Todd Alexander - Josephs Gift

His response to the challenges that he had in his life were the demonstration of his godliness. It allowed that godliness to come out and interact with everybody that he touched. The response to those challenges and those responses were the living proof of his father's training and Joseph's conversion of that training into action.

I think what defined Joseph was how he rose up after being Treated unjustly, and what we learn from Joseph is that little boys with dreams turn up to be men of great vision.

Let me restate that. Little boys and little girls with dreams turn out to be fine men and women with great vision.

Joseph had a heart that clung to the dreams that God gave him, and Joseph shows us that when we cling to God, God shields us from feelings of anger and bitterness that is inevitable in the worldly minded.

I think Joseph's gift to us, he wraps it up in a nice bow, doesn't he? The gift of his experience, the gift of his example. He wraps it up.

It's a little bit like photosynthesis. You ever in science class, do you remember photosynthesis from your science teacher? I think Joseph shows us how to turn light from God into energy for life. Joseph shows us how to turn the light from God into energy for life. Do you feel unmotivated sometimes?

Do you go through life having hard time with motivation? You know the truth. You know it inside and out.

I think Joseph shows us. He blazes the trail and shows us how responding to the earthly challenges gives us the motivation that we need to do it. Do what God wants us to do. That's our identity. You don't need to get your identity from Egypt.

You don't need to get your identity from your job. Your identity comes from God, and Joseph gives us the pattern. It's like photosynthesis. He shows us how to turn light from God into energy for life.

My friends, faith dies in darkness.

If you are not spiritually awake, you'll miss the promise of Joseph's gift, and if your faith is dying, especially some of you young people got a lot of challenges out there, a lot of competitions for your time. If your faith is dying, move out of the darkness and into God's marvelous light. Number five, purpose. A renewed, focused strength by consolidating victories into action.

Look back on the successes. Hitherto hath the Lord helped us. Put an Ebenezer stone down there, make it an anchor for your faith, for your children's faith. But we find this in Genesis, chapter 42, verses 3, chapter 42, when Joseph was about 38 years old, he's in a position of power. He's the viceroy of Egypt.

He's number two, and guess what? His brothers came to buy food.

And Joseph remembers his dreams of authority. Brethren, have you ever stood on that Ebenezer stone and looked back on your dreams that you converted into values and said, hitherto hath the Lord helped us? This is the type of Joseph's gift.

Todd Alexander - Josephs Gift

He used his power, however, to become a spiritual leader of all Israel, to point Israel to God, to consolidate the nation of Israel as one people under God.

And this is what he says to his brothers in Genesis, chapter 18, 20, 21, and his brothers also went down and fell down before his face, and they said, behold, we be thy servants, and Joseph said unto them, fear not, for am I in the place of God. But as for you, you thought evil against me, But God meant it unto good to bring to pass, as it is this day to save much people alive.

Now, therefore, fear ye not. I will nourish you and your little ones, and he comforted them and spake kindly unto them.

In the beginning and until the end of Joseph's story, Joseph received his power from God, and Pharaoh was wise enough to recognize that Pharaoh was content enough to receive the blessing of Joseph's power that he received from God. Another message for you young people. If you're in the job market, try to find an employer who is wise enough to recognize that you receive your power from God.

Now, brother Tim Malinowski talked about empathy, and I have a nice definition of empathy here that I think Joseph shows us in this response to his brothers. He says in Genesis, well, no, this isn't a scripture. But empathy is seeing with the eyes of another, listening with the ears of another, and feeling with the heart of another, and I think we can find three stages of Joseph's spiritual growth. The first stage is defined by immaturity, when we project authority onto other people.

When he was 17 years old, he had an immature faith. He projected authority onto his brothers, and we kind of look to other people in our immature faith to determine our beliefs and establish moral codes of conduct, and this might be the reason why Joseph shared his dreams with his brothers. He was looking for approval.

He was looking for affirmation. He was looking for common ground.

The second stage is maturity, when we stop placing authority on others, when we become responsible for all of our actions and behaviors, and we attain that through a personal commitment to righteousness. Joseph was an empathic leader. He clothed himself in righteousness. You know, the symbol of his father's multicolored coat was long gone.

But Joseph now graduated from an external beauty to an internal beauty, a beauty of the inner man.

He was clothed with the beauty of the fruit of his righteous behavior, and his brothers finally saw Joseph clothed with the favor of God. He wore the mantle of leadership well, but it was forged like steel in the crucible of struggle.

Number six, the gift. The Testimony of a new identity rooted in God's promises. We find this in Genesis, chapter 45. We remember the story. Joseph reveals himself to his brothers.

Joseph testifies that God orchestrated the events. Joseph reaches out to his father with a renewed purpose. Gosh. The prospect of fellowship with his father and the shared hope of the Abrahamic promise. Can you imagine that moment?

Can you imagine Joseph's hindsight of seeing how God orchestrated each of his experiences even with his father in fellowship? Joseph and Jacob in fellowship, How God orchestrated each of their

Todd Alexander - Josephs Gift

lives. After the counsel of his own will, Joseph gives us his gift. He packages it up for us.

Number one. Receive the dreams of the future from God. Receive those promises. Number two. Use the tools that God gives you to go to work and count on God's timing, strength and motivation.

Number three. Realize that you'll be presented with challenges. These are opportunities for you to build a mature faith. Number four. Your response to the challenges.

Must leverage godly power over your own fleshly will, and I'm the poster child for that being really hard. Really hard. Number five. Enjoy a renewed purpose by consolidating the lessons learned from a lifetime of doing justly, loving mercy and walking humbly with your God.

Number six. Give the gift. Give this gift. Give the gift of your success and your experience. Give their gift generously and liberally to others.

Give them the confidence in God. Go light your world. So there you have it.

You've received Joseph's gift, and the Apostle Paul warned Timothy about the evil stories that would be told during the last day. The Apostle Paul warned Timothy about these evil stories that would be told during the last day that would anchor people's beliefs and deceive them.

The only thing that would change their mind and our mind is a better story, and Joseph had a better story, and he gave it to you. My brethren. Delete the evil stories from your life.

Delete the evil stories from your life. Like an unwanted email swipe, gone. Don't even respond.

We open emails because we care. We delete emails because we don't care, and Joseph teaches us that opportunities are multiplied when they are seized and they die when those opportunities are neglected.

Joseph teaches us that over every mountain there is a path, even though it cannot be seen from the valley.

Well, brethren, when things in our life seem to go wrong, we often feel like it's the end of the world. Because only our dreams can help us see further than what's right in front of us in perilous times. But like Joseph, when we look back after we've survived that storm of evil. Have you ever survived a storm of evil like Joseph? When we look back and we survived that storm of evil, we realize that those broken parts of our experiences are the pieces that make up the beautiful picture of our new identity as the children of God.

Those broken pieces are a treasured opportunity to become part of the Bride of Christ, and like Joseph, sometimes things fall apart in our life before everything comes together. Like Joseph, not getting what we want as a young man or a young woman can be a huge step forward to reaching a bigger dream.

God was preparing Joseph to be a leader. A leader for his brothers, a leader for the nation of Israel, a leader as a type for the Bride of Christ.

Effective leadership requires being challenged before we can lead others through their own challenges.

Todd Alexander - Josephs Gift

Let us learn by observing Joseph and thus untie the bow of his beautiful gift, that precious gift of his example during our perilous times. God be with you. God be with you. God be with you. Amen.