

Do You Believe God Is in Control of Your Destiny?

Most of us know the story of Joseph from the Bible. We know that he had two powerful, prophetic dreams indicating he would one day rule over his brothers and that his brothers' response to learning about the dreams was to sell him into slavery. Talk about an opportunity for offense!

I imagine it never crossed Joseph's mind until his trial was over and he had become second in command in Egypt that all he endured was God's process to prepare him to rule. How would he use his future authority over these brothers who betrayed him? Joseph was learning obedience by what he suffered. His brothers were skillfully wielded instruments in the hand of God. Would Joseph hold fast to the promise indicated by the dreams, seeking God for its purpose?

Perhaps when Joseph had his dreams he saw them as a confirmation of the favor on his life. He had not yet learned that authority is given to serve, not to set you apart. Often during our training periods we focus on the impossibility of our circumstances instead of the greatness of God. As a result we are discouraged and need to blame someone, so we look for the one we feel is responsible for our despair. When we face the fact that God could have prevented our whole mess—and didn't—we often blame Him.

Something like the following must have gone through Joseph's mind: "I have lived in accordance to what I know of God. I've not transgressed His statutes or nature. I was only repeating a dream God Himself gave me. And what's the result? My brothers betray me, and I'm sold as a slave! My dad thinks I'm dead and doesn't come to Egypt to find me."

To him the bottom line was his brothers. They were the force

that had thrown him into this trial. Maybe he entertained thoughts of how things would be different once he was in power, when God put him in the position of authority he had seen in the dreams. How different it would all be if his brothers had not aborted his future!

How often do we hear our Christian brothers and sisters fall into a similar trap of assigning blame? For example:

–“If it weren’t for my wife I would be in the ministry. She has hindered me and ruined so much of what I have dreamed.”

–“If it weren’t for my parents I would have had a normal life. They are to blame for where I am today. How come others have normal parents and I don’t? If my mom and dad hadn’t gotten divorced I would have been much better off in my own marriage.”

–“If it weren’t for my pastor repressing God’s gift in me I would be free and unhindered. He has kept me from fulfilling my ministry destiny. He has turned the people in the church against me.”

–“If it weren’t for my former husband, my kids and I wouldn’t have all this financial trouble.”

–“If it weren’t for that woman in the church I would still be in favor with the leaders. With her gossip, she has destroyed me and any hope I had of being respected.”

The possibilities for offense are endless, and it is easy to blame everyone else for the problems you have and imagine how much better off you would be if it had not been for all those around you. You just know that your disappointment and hurt are their fault.

God Holds Your Destiny

But it’s essential for you to understand: Absolutely no man, woman, child or devil can ever get you out of the will of God!

No one but God holds your destiny. Joseph's brothers tried hard to destroy the vision God gave him. They thought they had ended it for Joseph. They said out of their own mouths, "Come, therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit. ... *We shall see what will become of his dreams!*" (Gen. 37:20, NKJV, emphasis added). They were out to destroy him. It wasn't an accident. It was deliberate! They wanted no chance of his ever succeeding.

Now do you think that when Joseph's brothers sold him as a slave, God in heaven looked at the Son and the Holy Spirit and said, "What are We going to do now? Look at what his brothers have done! They have ruined Our plan for Joseph. We had better think of something quick! Do We have an alternate plan?"

Many Christians respond to crisis situations as if this is exactly what transpires in heaven. Can you just see the Father saying to Jesus, "Jesus, Jim just got fired because a fellow believer lied about him. What are We going to do? Do You have any positions open down there?" Or, "Jesus, Sally is 34 and not married yet. Do You have any available guys down there for her? The man I wanted her to marry got married to her best friend, who gossiped about her and turned his heart away." It sounds absurd, yet the way we react intimates that this is the way we view God.

As I said, no mortal man or devil can supersede the plan of God for your life. If you lay hold of this truth, it will set you free. There is only one person who can get you out of the will of God, and that is you.

Offense Fulfills the Enemy's Purpose

Consider the children of Israel. God had sent a deliverer, Moses, to lead them out of Egyptian bondage into the promised land. After a year in the desert, leaders were sent to spy out the new land. They returned complaining. They were afraid of the nations in the land who were larger and stronger

militarily.

All the people, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, agreed with these leaders. The people felt as if God had brought them out to die. They were offended with Moses and God. Their offense resulted in that generation's never seeing the land God promised they would possess.

Many people have been serving the Lord fervently and have come into difficult life situations because of being mistreated by either wicked men or carnal Christians. The truth is that they have been treated unjustly. But to become offended would only fulfill the enemy's purpose of getting them out of the will of God.

If you stay free from offense you will stay in God's will. If you become offended you will be taken captive by the enemy to fulfill his own purpose and will. Take your pick. It is much more beneficial to stay free from offense.

We must remember that nothing can come against us without the Lord's knowledge of it before it ever happens. If the devil could destroy us at will, he would have wiped us out a long time ago because he hates man with a passion. Always keep this exhortation before you:

"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13).

Notice it says "*the* way of escape," not "*a* way of escape." God has already seen every adverse circumstance we will encounter—no matter how great or small—and He has the way planned for escaping it. And, even more thrilling, often the thing that looks like an abortion of God's plan actually ends up being the road to its fulfillment if we stay in obedience and free from offense.

So remember: Stay submitted to God by not becoming offended; resist the devil and he will flee from you (James 4:7). You resist the devil by not becoming offended. The dream or vision will probably be fulfilled in a different way than you think it will, but God's Word and His promises will not fail. You risk aborting them only by your own disobedience. {eoa}

This article was excerpted from Chapter 3 of The Bait of Satan by John Bevere.