

When God's Purpose for Your Child's Life Hurts You

Jacob held the blood-stained robe that he carefully wove for his youngest son. The dreams he had in his heart that Joseph told him were shattered. The dreamer father, who told his sons of his dream of angels going up and down a ladder to heaven, treasured Joseph's dreams. The second dream of his brothers bowing toward him that Jacob kept in his heart also died. The son of his love, Rachel, was dead. Joseph running after his brothers in the colorful coat was gone.

Joseph was dead, and the hopes and dreams that Jacob had for him had died. Joseph was dead to his father but starting his destiny in God. His brothers sold him into slavery, yet God was sending him into His purposes.

God doesn't ask our permission when we want His purposes to come to pass in our children's lives. Jacob learned that he had no control over Joseph's future. Just like Jacob, we need to learn that we have no control over our child's future.

What if God asked you: "I'm going to send your son into a hostile pagan country to be a slave and he will go to prison for something he didn't do. Is that OK with you?"

What would you say? I wouldn't want to know if that was in my child's future. Yet how much do we try to control our child's future when He alone wants control.

Stripped of his personhood and the coat of prominence, the once favored prince of a tribal king was now a slave. I believe the slave Joseph cried out to the God of Jacob for help. The stories that Jacob told his sons and daughters of God delivering him from death came alive for Joseph.

I'm speculating that Joseph thought the God of Jacob could help him just as He helped his father who was a slave to his grandfather Laban. Maybe the God of his father could prosper him as he prospered his father, who was lied to and taken advantage of by his grandfather.

Your child needs their own story with God. These stories thrust Joseph into his own story and his own relationship with God. Abba Jacob wasn't around to tell him how to love and follow the one he wrestled with. Now Joseph had to wrestle with his own destiny, his own beliefs and questions and his own identity.

Just as Jacob's dream died for Joseph, I believe that God brings us to a point in time when our dream for our child dies. We have prayers folded into hopes, dreams, desires, decrees spoken over them. We spend hundreds of dollars on lessons and training and we construct an agenda and a plan for our child. And then He steps into the plan and messes it up.

God alone wants to form your child and their future. He steps in and challenges you to trust Him with your child. Trust God that He can reach them and talk to them. Trust God to have His way even when His way makes you cry and wonder if God is even on the scene.

I've learned in my miniscule 30 years of walking with God that He is a Creator beyond our understanding. He will not be bound by your culture and agenda. He is a craftsman who loves to intricately shape a person He hides until history calls for him or her.

God will not work for your comfort or convenience but for the purpose of something greater and grander than our small dreams. God doesn't give Jacob any sign that He would send Joseph into slavery. He gave Jacob clues that Joseph had a prominent calling on his life. But beyond those two dreams recorded in the Bible, Jacob had no idea the ordeal his son

would endure to save a nation.

As parents, we must trust God with our child. We think we know God's calling or purpose in our child's life but their choice and God's relationship with them are a heavenly mystery. Only God knows how to form a man and a woman for His purposes. Only God the Creator knows how to arrange circumstances and people for His glory. For when a man or woman's purpose is revealed, He alone wants the glory for His craftsmanship and design that display His creative splendor and beauty.

I have dreams for my children and I've received prophetic words for them, but I must lay them down at the altar and trust God with their lives. Ultimately my children must know Him intimately and I need to get out of the way. I can't control their lives. My children must have their own story in God.

I pray that you release your son or daughter into the hands of the One who can save and deliver them. Of course I believe that you must do everything you know to do to take responsibility for them by providing safety and security for them. I'm a strong proponent of investing in their spiritual foundation and spending time with them.

But after you've spent thousands of dollars, millions of hours and poured out your heart and faith and they come of age where they are legally adults in our culture—your job is done. Release control and trust Him. Jacob had to trust God when he thought his son was dead.

The day that he met Joseph as the second in command of the most powerful nation in the planet is the day that God showed His glory. That day Jacob met Pharaoh is the day God's splendor shined when He fulfilled His promise with them that He would provide. The son who he thought was dead was alive and in charge of the nation's grain. His son, Joseph, was the savior of the known world.

“God sent me ahead of you to preserve you as a remnant on the earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of his entire household and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, ‘This is what your son Joseph says, “God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; do not delay. And you will dwell in the land of Goshen, and you will be near me, you and your children and your children’s children, along with your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. I will provide for you there, for there are still five years of famine to come, lest you and your household, and all that you have, come to poverty”’” (Gen. 45:7-11).

Joseph tells his brothers that God sent him into slavery to save them. The favor of God sent Joseph into slavery, prison and then catapulted him into the highest office in the land. God’s plan to save Jacob from famine depended on Joseph.

We want our son or daughter to go to college, graduate with a high-paying job, marry and have children. Yet God’s plan may be radically different from your plan. Can you really trust God?

My mom had to trust God when I got kicked out of high school at 16. She had to trust God when I started college at 16 and lived on campus. She had to trust God to protect me and keep me when I wanted to be independent from my parents.

I had a calling from God that I had to answer myself. My mom, my pastor and my counselor couldn’t answer it. I had to answer His calling alone. Release your adult child to answer His call in their own way.

Leilani Haywood, online editor for SpiritLed Woman, is the author of *Ten Keys to Raising Kids That Love God*. She is an award-winning writer and frequent contributor to *Charisma*.