

Getting From the Pit to the Palace

When you were younger, what did you dream of? Maybe it's been so long you don't remember. No matter what our age, we need to have a dream for our life. We need to have something to look forward to and work toward. And if we will trust God and do our part, we can see our dreams come to pass—even if they've been shattered and we need to begin again. That doesn't mean things will always go the way we think they will, and it won't always be easy. But when we're determined to be faithful and diligent to do what God is calling us to do, He'll always give us the grace and strength to keep going.

Joseph was a young man with a dream. In the dream that God gave him, Joseph saw himself as a leader and his father and brothers were bowing down to him. In reality, Joseph's brothers were very jealous of him, and when he told them his dream, they decided to get rid of him. In fact, his own brothers threw him in a pit and then pulled him out and sold him into slavery because of it (see Genesis 37:18-28). But in Genesis 41:40, we see Joseph in a whole different situation. Pharaoh says to Joseph, "You shall have charge over my house, and all my people shall be governed according to your word [with reverence, submission, and obedience]. Only in matters of the throne will I be greater than you are." Joseph made it to the palace—his dream came true.

The question we need to ask is why is it that sometimes people's dreams don't come to pass? I believe it's usually because they're not willing to do what Joseph did on his way from the pit to the palace. A lot of times we talk about how great it's going to be when our dreams come true, but we really need to figure out what to do in the middle—because this is where so many people get stuck. It's hard to hang on to your dreams when you have to wait longer than you thought

you would and things are more difficult than you thought they would be. But I can promise you that if you refuse to quit, you will make it to the finish line.

The devil is always trying to dig some kind of a pit for us. It might be a pit of depression, hopelessness, poverty, or sickness and disease. Satan certainly dug a pit for me. I was sexually abused by my father and felt abandoned by my mother, who knew what my dad was doing but didn't have the courage to do anything about it. I spent years not even knowing that I could get out of that pit and have a really great life. But thank God, He didn't leave me there!

If you're in a pit in your life, I want you to know that Jesus is an expert at getting people out of them. He's the One who said if even one sheep has gone astray (or fallen into a pit), He will leave the 99 and go get the one (see Matthew 18:12). And if this is where you are, Jesus wants to come and lift you out of it.

One thing that is so amazing about God is that when we trust Him, He takes the bad stuff that's happened to us and actually turns it into something good in our lives (see Romans 8:28). Joseph went through some very difficult times. He got out of the pit but was sold as a slave. While he was a slave in Potiphar's house, he ended up being accused of something he didn't do and was sent to prison for 13 years. Yet at the end of the whole thing, Joseph's dream came to pass. He was released from prison and placed in charge of all the food left in the land during a devastating famine. When his brothers came and had to bow down before him because they needed food, Joseph said to them, "As for you, you thought evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring about that many people should be kept alive, as they are this day" (see Genesis 50:20).

The times when we're in a pit are testing times. They test our character and can be used by God to develop us into the people

He wants us to be. The thing that determines whether we pass the test or not is the attitude we choose to have while we're in the pit. Pain and negativity can rule our behavior if we're not careful. But if we can learn how to lean on God and His grace to do the right thing while we're hurting—and do it long enough—nothing can keep us from seeing our dreams come true.

Joseph's life is evidence of this. No matter what situation Joseph was in, he had a positive attitude, and people recognized God's favor in his life.

While you're in the middle of your journey from the pit to the palace, have a good attitude. Put your trust in God to do what you can't do, and do what you can do with a smile on your face. Don't give up! Keep dreaming because God has great plans for you. And with God on your side, your dreams can come true!

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