

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

THE PIT IS NOT THE END

GENESIS 37:12-36

Obedience Does Not Exempt You from Difficulty

Genesis 37:12-17 NKJV 12 Then his brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. 13 And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers feeding the flock in Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." So he said to him, "Here I am." 14 Then he said to him, "Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me." So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron, and he went to Shechem. 15 Now a certain man found him, and there he was, wandering in the field. And the man asked him, saying, "What are you seeking?" 16 So he said, "I am seeking my brothers. Please tell me where they are feeding their flocks." 17 And the man said, "They have departed from here, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan."

- Jacob sends Joseph to check on his brothers in Shechem, and Joseph obeys immediately
- What's interesting is that Joseph is *at home* and not tending sheep with his brothers
- Jacob sends Joseph to Shechem to check on his brothers, the flock and report back to him
- Joseph, in his *coat of many colors*, heads toward Shechem to find his brothers
- Joseph gets to Shechem, but he's told his brothers and flock have moved on to Dothan
- Joseph's suffering begins not because of *rebellion*, but because of *obedience*
- Sometime obedience leads *directly* into seasons of testing and trials
- Joseph obeys his father, but betrayal is waiting for him

Bitterness Can Turn People Against You

18 Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him. 19 Then they said to one another, "Look, this dreamer is coming! 20 Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, 'Some wild beast has devoured him.' We shall see what will become of his dreams!" 21 But Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, "Let us not kill him." 22 And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit which is in the wilderness, and do not lay a hand on him"—that he might deliver him out of their hands, and bring him back to his father. 23 So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the tunic of many colors that was on him. 24 Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit was empty; there was no water in it.

25 And they sat down to eat a meal. Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry them down to Egypt. 26 So Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? 27 Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh." And his brothers listened. 28 Then Midianite traders passed by; so the brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

- As Joseph came to Dothan, his brothers *see him* even though Joseph is a great distance away
- They could see Joseph *easily* because he was wearing the coat of many colors his father gave him
- The coat was a visible reminder of his favor with his father, his preference over them and the dream he had that he would one day rule over his entire family

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- The brothers were also probably dreading seeing Joseph because they knew Joseph would report whatever they did wrong back to their father
- As soon as they saw him, they immediately began to plan a way to get rid of him
- They mocked him, “here comes that dreamer”
- They were mocking his dreams, his perceived superiority, his claims of future authority, and his favored status
- Their envy had gotten to the point where they wanted him dead
- They wanted to kill him and throw him in a pit and then tell their father a wild beast attacked him and killed him
- The brothers said, “What then will become of his dreams?”
- Joseph’s life tells us a lot about God’s Word: God’s Word **NEVER FAILS!**
- The pit didn’t happen suddenly
- The pit began with comparison, envy, resentment and bitterness **Hebrews 12:15 Look after each other so that none of you fails to receive the grace of God. Watch out that no poisonous root of bitterness grows up to trouble you, corrupting many.**
- The enemy often works through jealousy, bitterness, opposition and discouragement to attack your God-given purpose
- Reuben, the oldest brother, talked the other brothers out of killing Joseph, instead they would throw Joseph in a pit
- The brothers strip Joseph of his coat of many colors
- The brothers strip Joseph of his visible favor, his status, and his distinction
- Before Joseph could wear Egyptian authority later, God allowed the first coat to be removed
- The brothers take Joseph’s coat and throw him into an empty pit
- The pit reveals Joseph’s helplessness, isolation, and vulnerability
- While their brother Joseph is literally crying for his life, these “brothers” could sit down to eat
- Hatred has desensitized them
- Another brother Judah comes up with the idea of instead of killing Joseph, let’s monetize him, we can make a profit off of Joseph
- They decide to sell Joseph into slavery
- The brothers sell Joseph for 20 pieces of silver, and they have gotten rid of him
- We must not allow envy, comparisons, offense to resentment to take root in our hearts
- But while the brothers think they are destroying Joseph, God is still working

God Uses the Pit to Develop Character

23 So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the tunic of many colors that was on him. 24 Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit was empty; there was no water in it.

- Joseph has been stripped of his coat, thrown into an empty pit and left powerless
- God allowed it all to be removed
- A pit is not only a physical place, but it is also a mental place; a state of mind, it’s also a spiritual place
- Before Joseph can wear authority in Egypt, God has to strip away pride, dependence, and immaturity

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- The pit becomes Joseph's *1st classroom* of character development
- Before the pit, Joseph was gifted, favored and immature
- In the pit, God begins developing humility, dependence, endurance, and wisdom
- God is not just getting Joseph to Egypt, God is trying to get Egypt-ready character into Joseph
- Remind yourself that where you are *now* is not the place you saw in your dream, therefore this can't be the end
- Remind yourself that whatever situation you are in God can deliver you out of
- That means you need to make the most of your pits in life
- You have to view the pits in life differently that you do now
- How you handle your pits in life can make or break your dreams coming to pass

Lies From the pit:

- Blame someone else for where you are
- Complaining and grumble
- God's doing this to me

Lessons From the pit

The pit is a place of:

- Preparation – The pit prepares you for what is coming next.
- In the pit, you rediscover prayer as vital communication with God
- In the pit, you have time to take an inward look at your life and repent
- You can't accomplish what's next until you've overcome the issues where you are
- Perspective – The ability to see God in all the you're going through
- The enemy will try to get us to focus on your problems instead of believing God is working all things for your good
- Process – The testing God takes us through to strengthen our faith and develop our character
- The pit will test your faith in God.
- God will use the pit to test you to see if you really believe God can bring your dreams to pass
- The pit is at temporary place – The pit is a place to receive what you need and keep going toward your destiny
- Sometimes God allows setbacks, disappointment and difficult season in our lives, because He is developing patience, integrity, maturity, etc.
- The pits in your life are not permanent; they are "pit stops", that prepare you to continue *and* finish the race
- The pit is not punishment, it *is* preparation

Evil People Can't Stop God's Purpose

28 Then Midianite traders passed by; so the brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt. 29 Then Reuben returned to the pit, and indeed Joseph was not in the pit; and he tore his clothes. 30 And he returned to his brothers and said, "The lad is no more; and I, where shall I go?" 31 So they took Joseph's tunic, killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the tunic in the blood. 32 Then they sent the tunic of many colors, and they brought it to their father and said, "We have found this. Do you know whether it is your son's tunic or not?" 33 And he recognized it and said, "It is my son's tunic. A wild beast has devoured him. Without doubt Joseph is torn to

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pieces.” 34 Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist, and mourned for his son many days. 35 And all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and he said, “For I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning.” Thus his father wept for him. 36 Now the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard.

- Joseph’s brother’s plan was working to perfection
- They thought when they sold Joseph into slavery, that was it
- They could just tell their father Joseph died and that would be it
- They took Joseph’s coat and dipped in blood, and it looks like he must have been attacked and killed by a wild beast
- What Joseph’s brothers did not plan on was the sovereignty of God
- What they did not realize is that God is in control
- They didn’t know God was positioning Joseph exactly where he needed to be
- God’s sovereignty is operating even when His presence seems hidden
- Sometimes the betrayal, rejection, job loss, painful chapters in life become the very thing God uses to reposition your life
- What feels like a setback may be divine positioning
- Joseph’s dream did not fail in the pit, it was prepared there
- The pit humbled him, developed him, strengthened him and prepared him
- They worked their evil plan to perfection, but they did not consider “the God factor”
- It was no coincidence that all this happened this way, it was the God factor
- The Bible declares in ***Psalm 40:2 (KJV) He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.***
- You are coming out of the pit and when you come out you will be exactly where you need to be for your dream to come to pass
- What God did for Joseph, He’s doing for you
- The pit is not the end