



# DETOUR

Finding **PURPOSE** When Life Doesn't Make Sense



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***Joseph & His Nation***  
**Session 4**  
***Genesis 41***



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## Genesis 41:1-8

<sup>1</sup> When two full years had passed, Pharaoh had a dream: He was standing by the Nile, <sup>2</sup> when out of the river there came up seven cows, sleek and fat, and they grazed among the reeds. <sup>3</sup> After them, seven other cows, ugly and gaunt, came up out of the Nile and stood beside



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those on the riverbank. <sup>4</sup> And the cows that were ugly and gaunt ate up the seven sleek, fat cows. Then Pharaoh woke up.

<sup>5</sup> He fell asleep again and had a second dream: Seven heads of grain, healthy and good, were growing on a single stalk. <sup>6</sup> After them, seven other heads of grain sprouted—thin and scorched by



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the east wind. <sup>7</sup> The thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven healthy, full heads. Then Pharaoh woke up; it had been a dream.

<sup>8</sup> In the morning his mind was troubled, so he sent for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but no one could interpret them for him.



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Pharaoh had two vivid dreams the same night.

- In the morning, his mind was **troubled**.
- None of Egypt's magicians or wise men could **interpret** Pharaoh's dreams.



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## Genesis 41:9-13

<sup>9</sup> Then the chief cupbearer said to Pharaoh, "Today I am reminded of my shortcomings. <sup>10</sup> Pharaoh was once angry with his servants, and he imprisoned me and the chief baker in the house of the captain of the guard. <sup>11</sup> Each of us had a dream the same night, and each dream



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had a meaning of its own. <sup>12</sup> Now a young Hebrew was there with us, a servant of the captain of the guard. We told him our dreams, and he interpreted them for us, giving each man the interpretation of his dream. <sup>13</sup> And things turned out exactly as he interpreted them to us: I was restored to my position, and the other man was hanged.”



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The chief cupbearer remembered Joseph and his ability to **accurately** interpret dreams.



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## Genesis 41:14-16

<sup>14</sup> So Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and he was quickly brought from the dungeon. When he had shaved and changed his clothes, he came before Pharaoh.

<sup>15</sup> Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had a dream, and no one can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it."



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<sup>16</sup> "I cannot do it," Joseph replied to Pharaoh, "but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires."



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Pharaoh summoned Joseph and expressed **confidence** in his abilities.

Joseph refused to take **credit** for the ability God had given him.



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## Genesis 41:25-32

<sup>25</sup> Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, “The dreams of Pharaoh are one and the same. God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do. <sup>26</sup> The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good heads of grain are seven years; it is one and the same dream.



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27 The seven lean, ugly cows that came up afterward are seven years, and so are the seven worthless heads of grain scorched by the east wind: They are seven years of famine.

28 "It is just as I said to Pharaoh: God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do. 29 Seven years of great abundance are coming throughout the land of



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Egypt, <sup>30</sup> but seven years of famine will follow them. Then all the abundance in Egypt will be forgotten, and the famine will ravage the land. <sup>31</sup> The abundance in the land will not be remembered, because the famine that follows it will be so severe. <sup>32</sup> The reason the dream was given to Pharaoh in two forms is that the matter has been firmly decided by God, and God will do it soon.”



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Joseph tells Pharaoh that:

1. Both dreams have the same **meaning**.
2. God is **revealing** what He is about to do.



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3. Seven years of **abundant** harvest will be followed by seven years of **famine**.
4. The repetition of the dream means it is **definite** and **soon**.



## Genesis 41:33-36

<sup>33</sup> "And now let Pharaoh look for a discerning and wise man and put him in charge of the land of Egypt. <sup>34</sup> Let Pharaoh appoint commissioners over the land to take a fifth of the harvest of Egypt during the seven years of abundance. <sup>35</sup> They should collect all the



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food of these good years that are coming and store up the grain under the authority of Pharaoh, to be kept in the cities for food. <sup>36</sup> This food should be held in reserve for the country, to be used during the seven years of famine that will come upon Egypt, so that the country may not be ruined by the famine.”



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Joseph recommended God-centered **solutions** to his nation's **problems**.

1. Look for a person who is **wise** and **discerning** to prepare Egypt for the coming famine.
2. Appoint other leaders under his **authority**.



3. Set aside **20%** of the harvest during the seven years of abundance.
4. Store it and **protect** it against loss.

## Genesis 41:37-39

<sup>37</sup> The plan seemed good to Pharaoh and to all his officials. <sup>38</sup> So Pharaoh asked them, "Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God?"

<sup>39</sup> Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you."



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Pharaoh **entrusted** this role to Joseph because of his **character** and abilities.



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## Genesis 41:40-45

<sup>40</sup> You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you."

<sup>41</sup> So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt." <sup>42</sup> Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his finger and put it on

Joseph's finger. He dressed him in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. <sup>43</sup> He had him ride in a chariot as his second-in-command, and men shouted before him, "Make way!" Thus he put him in charge of the whole land of Egypt.

<sup>44</sup> Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I am Pharaoh, but without your word no one



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will lift hand or foot in all Egypt.”

<sup>45</sup> Pharaoh gave Joseph the name Zaphenath-Paneah and gave him Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On, to be his wife. And Joseph went throughout the land of Egypt.



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Pharaoh delegated Joseph total authority with only one **limitation**.



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Pharaoh gave Joseph **symbols** of his authority.

1. Signet Ring
2. Fine Linen Garments
3. Gold Necklace
4. Second Chariot
5. New Name

## Genesis 41:46-49

<sup>46</sup> Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from Pharaoh's presence and traveled throughout Egypt. <sup>47</sup> During the seven years of abundance the land produced plentifully. <sup>48</sup> Joseph collected all the food produced in those seven years of



abundance in Egypt and stored it in the cities. In each city he put the food grown in the fields surrounding it. <sup>49</sup> Joseph stored up huge quantities of grain, like the sand of the sea; it was so much that he stopped keeping records because it was beyond measure.



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At this point, Joseph was only **30** years old.

The land produced seven years of great harvests just as God had **promised**.

Food was stored locally to provide for the people who had done the **work** and made the **sacrifice**.



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## Genesis 41:50-52

<sup>50</sup> Before the years of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph by Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On.

<sup>51</sup> Joseph named his firstborn Manasseh and said, "It is because God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father's household." <sup>52</sup> The second son he



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named Ephraim and said, "It is because God has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering."



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God **blessed** Joseph with two sons.

- Manasseh means *"God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father's household."*
- Ephraim means *"God has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering."*



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## Genesis 41:53-55

<sup>53</sup> The seven years of abundance in Egypt came to an end, <sup>54</sup> and the seven years of famine began, just as Joseph had said. There was famine in all the other lands, but in the whole land of Egypt there was food. <sup>55</sup> When all Egypt began to feel the famine, the people cried to Pharaoh for food. Then Pharaoh told all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph and do what he tells you."



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After seven years of abundance, the famine began just as Joseph had **predicted**.

The famine extended to other countries, but only Egypt was **prepared**.

When the people cried out to Pharaoh, he told them to go to Joseph and follow his **orders**.



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## Genesis 41:56-57

<sup>56</sup> When the famine had spread over the whole country, Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold grain to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe throughout Egypt. <sup>57</sup> And all the world came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe everywhere.



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Joseph **waited** until the famine was nationwide before he opened the storehouses.

People from all over the world came to Egypt to buy grain from **Joseph**.



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Egypt was **generous** and resisted the temptation to **hoard** their resources.

As a result, Egypt's wealth **increased** and Egypt's position as a global super-power was **strengthened**.



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Only God could elevate a rejected brother, falsely accused slave, and forgotten prisoner to a position of global economic and political **influence**.



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# Our Response

1. What social problem has God given you a **burden** for?
2. What platform of influence has God **entrusted** to you?



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3. What one practical action will you take to **leverage** your influence and bring God-centered solutions to a specific problem in our world today?



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