



# HOME GROUPS

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Series: **Joseph Part 6**  
Kensington Commons  
Read: Genesis 41:1-36

## SUMMARY:

This week we are turning a new corner in Joseph's story. But it is important to realize that the ancient writers who put the book of Genesis together were familiar with our desire to quickly move past difficult moments, and therefore intentionally included those points in the story where we need to pause and marked them using the Hebrew grammar and punctuation. Last week, we were invited to pause our conversation after the chief cupbearer forgot all about his friend Joseph and left him in prison for another two years. Today we are looking at more dreams and what it means to speak peace in wisdom.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How has the story of Joseph resonated with you so far? What has helped you to see it not just as an ancient but also a human story with the same human emotions we experience today?

Alternatively, share how, or if, you connect with this quote by Frederick Buechner in terms of your experience of God's presence in the moments when like Joseph you felt forgotten.

*"But I believe that there are some things that by and large God is always saying to each of us. Each of us, for instance, carried around inside themselves, I believe, a certain emptiness—a sense that something is missing, a restlessness, the deep feeling that somehow all is not right inside their skin... Part of the inner world of everyone is this sense of emptiness, unease, incompleteness, and I believe that this in itself is a word from God, that this is the sounds that God's voice makes in a world that has explained God away. In such a world, I suspect that maybe God speaks to us most clearly through God's silence, God's absence, so that we know God best through our missing God."*<sup>1</sup>

2. Read Genesis 41:1-7, paying attention to the time references, numbers, and repetitions. The storyteller uses the same word to introduce Pharaoh's dream/s that Joseph used to share his dream/s with his brothers in Genesis

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<sup>1</sup> F. Buechner, *Secrets in the Dark*

37:5,9: “Behold, Pharaoh was standing by the Nile...” and “Behold, I had a dream...”

What have been the indications in the story so far that sometimes dreams are more than just dreams?

In your personal experience, what helps you to know when some of your desires, dreams or great ideas come from God and when they do not?

In what way has community been part of your discernment process when you had to make a decision or needed clarity whether God was really moving you towards something?

3. Read Genesis 41:8-16, noticing what key word is being repeated in this part of the story over and over again and how it points to the major turn that is about to happen. Where does the narrative take an unexpected turn and who’s involved?<sup>2</sup>

4. A troubled Pharaoh seeks wisdom in an unexpected place.<sup>3</sup> How would you differentiate between knowledge and wisdom, or what makes a smart person wise? What have been some of the sources of unanticipated wisdom in your life lately?

Compare Joseph’s response to Pharaoh in 41:15-16 and his response to the chief baker and cupbearer in 40:8. How are they similar and what does it tell you about Joseph?

5. Read Genesis 41:15-36. How is Pharaoh’s personal retelling of his dream to Joseph different from the narrator’s description in vv.1-7? Why do you think Joseph succeeds in his conversation with Pharaoh while the best magicians and

wise men of the country skilled in dream interpretation do not?

6. How does the storyteller communicate to us Joseph’s certainty about God’s plan? Why do you think God reveals the future to Pharaoh?<sup>4</sup>

7. Compare this Joseph and how he approaches and treats dreams now with the Joseph we met at the beginning of his story in chapter 37. What do you see? How does he bring peace to Pharaoh here?

## BENEDICTION

*May you dream well, and listen well, and learn well  
and become wise and courageous as you do.*

*So that when you need to speak  
you will be more than smart,  
And you will have the wisdom  
to have all of your experience come to bear,  
to speak truth that brings peace that defies expectation,  
that reaches past what someone wants you to say,  
may your earned wisdom speak truth  
and bring real peace to those who need to hear what you  
have to say, Amen.*

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<sup>2</sup> a) Nile - this river was the source of Egypt’s - and so Pharaoh’s - power, fertility, life. b) “Magicians and wise men” refers to the most skilled magicians in Egypt, specializing in interpreting of dreams. c) Joseph’s change of clothes signals his change of status according to Waltke, *Genesis*, 530-531.

<sup>3</sup> “It is very unusual in Egypt for the Pharaoh to be in need of an interpreter of his dreams. Since the Pharaoh was considered divine, the gods would communicate to him through dreams, and the meaning was typically presented as transparent to him.” Matthews, V. H., Chavalas, M. W., & Walton, J. H. (2000). [The IVP Bible background commentary: Old Testament](#) (electronic ed., Ge 41:8–16). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

<sup>4</sup> 41:16. God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires, literally “God will answer the peace of Pharaoh” Waltke, *Genesis*, 531