

SCRIPTURES FOR 6/18/06 LIFEGROUP LESSON

Genesis 39:2-10

The LORD was with Joseph and he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. When his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD gave him success in everything he did, Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned. From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the LORD blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the LORD was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field. So he left in Joseph's care everything he had; with Joseph in charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate.

Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, and after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, "Come to bed with me!"

But he refused. "With me in charge," he told her, "my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.

Genesis 39:21-23

the LORD was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there. The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the LORD was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.

Joshua 6:20-23

When the trumpets sounded, the people shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the people gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so every man charged straight in, and they took the city. They devoted the city to the

LORD and destroyed with the sword every living thing in it—men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep and donkeys.

Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, "Go into the prostitute's house and bring her out and all who belong to her, in accordance with your oath to her." So the young men who had done the spying went in and brought out Rahab, her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her. They brought out her entire family and put them in a place outside the camp of Israel.

Luke 16:10

"Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.

Luke 21:1-4

As he looked up, Jesus saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. "I tell you the truth," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

Matthew 6:5-6

"And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.

Ephesians 3:20-21

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

NOTE TO LEADER: There is a lot of material here. Familiarize yourself with it so you know which stuff you are most comfortable with and what you will cut if you get short on time. Try to keep the lesson/discussion 20-30 minutes in length. Good luck and let me know if you have any questions. - Ed

NOTE TO LEADERS: All items in *italics* are for your information and not designed to be read aloud.

INTRODUCTION:

What is the difference between *giving* and *giving our best*? Jeff asked, “What can God do with our best?” and showed us some examples of biblical characters and situations to illustrate. But how does that translate to you and me?

JOSEPH (trust)

Have someone read Genesis 39:2-10.

So after Joseph was sold into slavery by his jealous brothers, he prospered. And even though he was successful, he still sought to live for God. But then Potiphar’s wife framed Joseph and got him thrown into prison. But even in prison, Joseph lived a life of excellence...

Have someone read Genesis 39:2-10.

Finally, the Lord blessed Joseph’s fidelity by making him second in command over all of Egypt and his brothers had to bow down to him. Now this in no way is a promise that you will *always* prosper or that your enemies will *always* fall if you follow God, but it does say something substantial about how God views excellence and what God can do with our best.

What part do you think Joseph’s trust played in his fate?

Where did Joseph choose excellence when other choices would have been easier? How did God respond? What does this tell us about our response to adversity?

JOSHUA (leverage)

Joseph teaches us we should respond in trust and God will honor it. Joshua teaches us that God can leverage our best to an amazing degree.

Joshua sent spies to check out Jericho and they were protected, ironically by a local prostitute who was aware of the God of Israel. She helped the Israelite spies and the spies promised to protect her from God’s destruction of Jericho.

Shortly after that, the Israelites cross the rushing Jordan river that God has supernaturally stopped in its banks. Then, God instructed Joshua to perform this ridiculous battle plan involving walking around and blowing horns. Because he trusted God and His provision, Joshua instructed his army to follow the plan...

Have someone read Joshua 6:20-23.

Of these amazing acts of trust, which impresses you most – Joshua or Rahab? Why?

Rahab was new to God’s family, but Joshua was a seasoned God-follower. What does this say about what God expects of His people?

Have someone read Luke 16:10.

THE WIDOW (motive)

These stories of great trust and faith display God’s appreciation of our excellent efforts, but the story of the widow proves that Jesus looks past the trust-leads-to-blessing equation and examines motive...

Have someone read Luke 21:1-4.

Why do you think the widow gave everything she had? Could you do that?

What does Jesus say by comparing the widow to the rich donors?

Have someone read Matthew 6:5-7.

As mentioned last week, excellence is not about comparison, but it is concerned with motive.

CONCLUSION

Have someone read Ephesians 3:20-21.

Remember three things:

God will honor your trust.
God can leverage your best.
Don’t impress; improve.