

## WHEN WE DON'T UNDERSTAND

*"The Upside of Down"*

**Genesis 40:1-23**

### INTRODUCTION:

1. Joseph was around 17 years old about the time he was sold into slavery.
  - a) **Genesis 37:2**
  
2. In **Genesis 41:46** we learn that Joseph was 30 years old when he became prime minister of Egypt.
  
3. In **Genesis 41:1** that the events of Chapter 40, occurred in the 2 years before he was made prime minister.
  
4. **Vs 8-13**
  - a) **The Cupbearers Dream**
  
5. **Vs 16-19**
  - a) Hearing the good news, **the Baker told Joseph his dream!!**
  
6. **Vs 14-15**
  
7. **Vs 23**
  
8. **HERE'S WHAT WE HAVE SO FAR:**
  - a) Joseph was thrown into a pit by his brothers.....he did not complain!
  - b) And now he is in prison 2 years.....he waits patiently.
  
9. **Either way, Joseph has done no wrong!!!**
  - a) **WOW!!!** This was a time, under these circumstances, for Joseph to discover God's purpose.

## FIVE REASONS WHY GOD ALLOWS ADVERSITY IN OUR LIVES

### I. ADVERSITY LEADS TO GREATER OPPORTUNITIES

1. **Interesting Fact:** Paul wrote 4 Prison Epistles
  - a) Ephesians
  - b) Philippians
  - c) Colossians
  - d) and Philemon

2. John Bunyan wrote "**Pilgrim's Progress**" while he was in prison.
  - a) Pilgrim's Progress is a journey from this world to that which is to come.
  - b) Written in 1678 and is a Christian allegory (symbolic or figurative)
  - c) Pilgrim's Progress is regarded as one of the most significant works of theological fiction in English literature.
  
3. It was because he was in prison with the Cupbearer that he would eventually come in contact with Pharaoh.
  - a) And Pharaoh would put him in the position that would lead to the fulfillment of his dreams as a teenager.
  
4. **EXAMPLE:** Chuck Colson
  - a) Chuck Colson was the former White House legal counselor to President Nixon.
  - b) Colson spent 7 months in a prison for his part in the Watergate scandal.
  
5. **How can that be?**
  - a) Because prison humbled him and gave him an opportunity to learn to walk with God and to learn about the spiritual needs of prisoners.
  - b) Out of Colson's Prison experience came "***The Prison Fellowship Ministry***"
  
6. **Here's what's listed on their Website:**

*"Every person is made in the image of God. No life is beyond His reach. Founded in 1976, Prison Fellowship® exists to serve all those affected by crime and incarceration and to see lives and communities restored in and out of prison—one transformed life at a time."*

## 7. **ADVERSITY IS NOT FUN!!!!**

## II. **ADVERSITY STIMULATES SPIRITUAL GROWTH**

1. The problem with problems is that they have the potential to make us bitter.
  
2. **LISTEN UP:** The same trial that God allows in our lives to strengthen us and draw us closer to Him, is the very same trial that Satan uses to pull us away from God.
  
3. **Psalm 105:17-18**
  
4. **VERY IMPORTANT:** God uses the same kind of people today!!!
  - a) **2 Timothy 3:12**

### III. ADVERSITY REVEALS CHARACTER

1. Nothing will test who you really are more than adversity!!!
2. **WOW!!!** It's when life turns against us that we are called upon to demonstrate that our character is genuine.
  - a) **Reputation** is what others think we are!!
  - b) **Character** is who we really are!!
  
  - c) **Reputation** is what's chiseled on our tombstone.
  - d) **Character** is who we are when stand before the throne.
  
  - e) **Reputation** may change with circumstances.
  - f) **Character** should never change.

### IV. ADVERSITY GENERATES DEPENDENCY ON GOD

1. **Genesis 39:20-21**
2. The Lord was with Joseph in prison, which shows us that circumstances cannot separate us from the Lord.
  - a) **But sin can!!!**
3. **Romans 8:28; 38-39**
4. Example of - **Corrie Ten Boom**

### V. ADVERSITY EQUIPS BELIEVERS FOR MINISTRY

1. **Genesis 40:6-7**
2. Instead of basking in self-pity, Joseph took the opportunity to minister to the two men who were in need of help.
3. There is no ministry to those who are suffering greater than by one who has suffered.
4. **2 Corinthians 1:3-5**

## **CONCLUSION:**

1. If you are going through a difficult time remember these 5 reasons for Adversity:

- #1 - Adversity Leads to Greater Opportunity**
- #2 - Adversity Stimulates Spiritual Growth**
- #3 - Adversity Reveals Character**
- #4 - Adversity Generates Dependency on God**
- #5 - Adversity Prepares Believers for Ministry**