

Choices

Sometimes life puts us in a difficult or unpleasant situation. Maybe our health takes a difficult turn. It is possible that our choices earlier in life contributed to poor health today. Or, perhaps a car accident caused by someone else seriously injured you. Maybe, someone else's decision puts you in a difficult situation today. In any event, what matters now are the choices we make today. Our choices today have much to do with what happens in the future.

There is an Old Testament story about a boy named Joseph. He was the second youngest of 12 sons of Jacob. Joseph was the favorite son of his father, and everyone knew it. To show his favoritism, Jacob made and presented Joseph with an "ornate robe" (as described in Genesis 37:3). That didn't sit very well with Joseph's brothers, who grew to hate him (verse 4). The brothers were tending sheep when Joseph came out to check on them. Joseph's brothers threw him into an empty well and later sold him into slavery (verse 28). They sold him to Potiphar, captain of the guard in Egypt. Joseph had every reason to be bitter toward his brothers. He had done nothing to deserve his fate. His father, Jacob, had chosen to favor him over his brothers.



God used Joseph to preserve Jacob's family and many others during a seven-year famine. Joseph chose to take the "high road" despite his brother's attempts to harm him. (Genesis 50:20).

There is more to the story. Joseph had another opportunity to take the "high road." The Bible tells us that Potiphar's wife had eyes for Joseph. Joseph chose to run from her instead of giving in to her (verses 39:1-12). The result of that false accusation was prison. It doesn't seem fair, but God made something good happen out of a bad situation. While in prison, Joseph displayed his ability to interpret dreams. Word of this skill reached Pharaoh (verse 41), who called on Joseph to interpret his own dream. Joseph's work impressed Pharaoh, so that he made Joseph second-in-command over Egypt.

Joseph's brothers asked him to forgive them. Joseph chose to grant forgiveness. Joseph said, "*You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives*" (Genesis 50:19-20).

So, how about you? When confronted with an unfortunate situation, what choices do you make? Are they choices for good, or do they make the situation worse? Do you allow God to use you for good, or do you wallow in self-pity and anger? Do you retaliate against others or seek something good from the situation?

I think about people who were addicted to drugs or alcohol. As they overcome their affliction, some become excellent counselors or mentors for those facing what they have overcome and conquered. I remember my own life before my son was rescued from being lost in the Amazon rainforest. Clearly, without God's intervention, he would not be with us today. In my transformation from that situation, I went from being a person who put others out in front to share their faith to being willing to share mine.

Just like Joseph, we are called to forgive those who have offended us and to see life's experiences as part of God's plan to help us serve others.