

HWMR: THE ENJOYMENT OF CHRIST AND OUR GROWTH IN LIFE UNTO MATURITY
(Week 5)

Scripture Reading: Gen. 41:39-44, 51-52; 45:5-8; 47:14-23; 50:15-21

The Reigning Aspect of the Mature Life Seen in the Life of Joseph

- Genesis 41:39 And Pharaoh said to Joseph, Since God let you know all this, there is no one as discerning and wise as you.
- Genesis 41:40 You shall be over my household, and according to your word all my people shall be ruled; only in the throne will I be greater than you.
- Genesis 41:41 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.
- Genesis 41:42 And Pharaoh took off his signet ring from his hand and put it upon Joseph's hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen, and put a gold chain around his neck.
- Genesis 41:43 And he made him ride in the chariot of his second-in-command, and they cried out before him, Bow the knee! And he set him over all the land of Egypt.
- Genesis 41:44 And Pharaoh said to Joseph, I am Pharaoh, yet without your consent no man will lift up his hand or his foot in all the land of Egypt.
- Genesis 41:51 And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh, for, he said, God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father's house.
- Genesis 41:52 And he called the name of the second Ephraim, for, he said, God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.
- Genesis 45:5 And now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life.
- Genesis 45:6 For the famine has been in the midst of the land these two years, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest.
- Genesis 45:7 And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth and to keep you alive by a great deliverance.
- Genesis 45:8 So now it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt.
- Genesis 47:14 And Joseph collected all the money that was to be found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan for the grain which they bought, and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house.
- Genesis 47:15 And when the money from the land of Egypt and from the land of Canaan had been spent, all the Egyptians came to Joseph saying, Give us food, for why should we die in your presence? For our money is gone.
- Genesis 47:16 And Joseph said, Bring your livestock, and I will give you food in exchange for your livestock, if your money is gone.
- Genesis 47:17 And they brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them food in exchange for the horses and for the flocks of sheep and for the herds of cattle and for the donkeys; and he fed them with food in exchange for all their livestock that year.
- Genesis 47:18 And when that year had ended, they came to him the second year and said to him, We cannot hide from my lord that our money has been spent, and the herds of cattle are my lord's. There is nothing left in the sight of my lord except our bodies and our lands.
- Genesis 47:19 Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land in exchange for food, and we and our land will become servants to Pharaoh. And give us seed that we may live and not die, and that the land may not be desolate.
- Genesis 47:20 So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for every Egyptian sold his field, because the famine was severe upon them; and the land became Pharaoh's.
- Genesis 47:21 And as for the people, he removed them to the cities from one end of the border of Egypt even to the other end.
- Genesis 47:22 Only the land of the priests he did not buy, for the priests had an assigned portion from Pharaoh, and they lived off their portion which Pharaoh gave them; therefore they did not sell their land.

Genesis 47:23	Then Joseph said to the people, Now that I have this day bought you and your land for Pharaoh, here is seed for you that you may sow the land.
Genesis 50:15	And when Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, What if Joseph bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the evil which we did to him?
Genesis 50:16	And they sent a message to Joseph, saying, Your father charged before he died, saying,
Genesis 50:17	Thus shall you say to Joseph, Please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin, for they did you wrong. So now please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father. And Joseph wept when they spoke to him.
Genesis 50:18	And his brothers also went and fell down before him and said, We are here as your servants.
Genesis 50:19	And Joseph said to them, Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God?
Genesis 50:20	Even though you intended evil against me, God intended it for good, to do as it is this day, to preserve alive a numerous people.
Genesis 50:21	Now therefore do not be afraid; I will sustain you and your little ones. And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

Day 1

Genesis 37:7-8 - There we were, binding sheaves in the field, when suddenly my sheaf rose up and remained standing; and then your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf. And his brothers said to him, Will you indeed reign over us and actually be a ruler among us? So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

I. According to spiritual experience, Jacob and Joseph are one person; **Joseph represents the reigning aspect of the mature Israel, the constitution of Christ in Jacob's mature nature; as a mature saint constituted with Christ, the perfect One, Jacob reigned through Joseph—Gen. 41:39-44; Heb. 6:1a; Gal. 6:8; 5:22-23:**

- A. The reigning aspect typified by Joseph is **Christ constituted into our being**—4:19.
- B. Joseph, a “master of dreams” (Gen. 37:19), dreamed that, according to God's view, His people are **sheaves of wheat full of life and heavenly bodies full of light** (vv. 5-11); Joseph's two dreams (vv. 7, 9), both from God, unveiled to him God's divine view concerning the nature, position, function, and goal of God's people on earth:
 1. We have to use the “divine telescope” to see through time and behold the New Jerusalem, where there is nothing but sheaves full of life and stars full of light; thus, the reigning aspect of the mature life **never speaks negatively** concerning the saints or the church—cf. 38:27-30; Matt. 7:1-5; 1 Pet. 3:8-9.

The anger of his brothers afforded Joseph the opportunity to live as a **sheaf of life**. While all his brothers were drowning in the water of anger, Joseph, the reigning aspect of the mature life, lived as a sheaf of life, emerging from the death water of human anger. The record, under God's inspiration, uses fallen anger as the background to demonstrate how much life was in the sheaf. This sheaf was **filled with life**. When all the rest had sunk into the death water of human anger, this sheaf **emerged and survived** in that situation of death.

We all know what it is to lose our temper. I am no exception. It is not a good thing to keep our temper within us. On the contrary, in a sense we feel better when we give vent to it. However, when I am about to lose my temper, the **vision of the sheaf comes**, and the Lord asks me, “Are you a sheaf rising up? If you are, then what about your temper?” As soon as the Lord speaks to me in this way and I respond to Him, my anger is gone. Even if I wanted to lose my temper, I would not be able to do so. It is possible for us all to live without anger and loss of temper. As you are about to lose your temper, the Lord may say, “Are you a sheaf? Are you one in the church, in the Lord's recovery?” As soon as you say that you are a sheaf, your anger will vanish. (*Life-Study of Genesis, chapter 111*)

Day 2

Matthew 5:21-22 - You have heard that it was said to the ancients, “You shall not murder, and whoever murders shall be liable to the judgment.” But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, Raca, shall be liable to the judgment of the Sanhedrin; and whoever says, Moreh, shall be liable to the Gehenna of fire.

Genesis 39:21 - Jehovah was with Joseph; and He extended kindness to him and gave him favor in the sight of the chief jailer.

2. Joseph’s dreams controlled his life and directed his behavior; he behaved so excellently and marvelously because he was **directed by the vision that he saw in his dreams** (cf. Acts 26:19); his brothers vented their anger (Gen. 37:18-31) and indulged in their lust (38:15-18), but Joseph **subdued** his anger and **conquered** his lust (39:7-23), behaving as a sheaf full of life and conducting himself like a heavenly star shining in the darkness.
- C. Joseph’s life under the heavenly vision was the life of the kingdom of the heavens described in Matthew 5—7; by living such a life, he was **fully prepared to reign as a king**; according to the constitution of the heavenly kingdom revealed in these chapters in Matthew, our anger must be subdued, and our lust must be conquered (5:21-32).
- D. The reigning aspect of the mature life is a life that **always enjoys the presence of the Lord** (Acts 7:9); wherever His presence is, there is authority, the ruling power (Gen. 39:2-5, 21-23):
 1. In the **presence** of the Lord, Joseph was **prospered** by Him; while Joseph was under-going ill-treatment, he enjoyed the Lord’s prosperity that came to him under the Lord’s sovereignty.
 2. In the presence of the Lord, Joseph was **favored with the Lord’s blessing** wherever he was; when Joseph enjoyed prosperity, he and those who were involved with him were blessed—vv. 4-5, 22-23.

But in the midst of this darkness we see Joseph as a **bright star shining in the heavens**. Conducting himself as a shining star, Joseph seemed to be saying, “All you people are under darkness, but I am shining upon you. How can I, a bright star, do such a dark thing? I cannot forget my dream. My dream controls me and directs me. As a heavenly star, I would never sell my position.” If you have this light as you come to these chapters, you will see that Joseph was one who lived a life that corresponded to his vision. Joseph was not only a dreamer; he was also one who **practiced**, one who **lived out**, what he saw in his dream.

The function of the vision is similar to that of brakes in a car. In times of danger, we step on the brakes. The vision of the heavenly star is a powerful brake for our spiritual car. We are not driving a car that is without controls. When we are driving properly in the right lane, there is no need to use the brakes. But when the car begins to go out of control, the brakes work immediately. Hallelujah for such a controlling vision! Many of us can testify that before we came into the church life, we were like a car without brakes. But after coming into the church life, we saw the **controlling vision**, and **powerful brakes** were installed in our car. Here in the church life we have the vision of the sheaf and the vision of the star. (*Life-Study of Genesis, chapter 111*)

Day 3

Genesis 40:8 - And they said to him, We have had a dream, and there is no one to interpret it. And Joseph said to them, Do not interpretations belong to God? Please tell it to me.

Genesis 41:16 - And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not of me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer.

- E. Although his own dreams were not yet fulfilled, Joseph had the faith and the boldness to interpret the dreams of his two companions in prison (40:8); eventually, Joseph was released from prison indirectly through his **speaking by faith** in interpreting the cupbearer's dream (41:9-13), and he was ushered to the throne directly through his speaking boldly in interpreting Pharaoh's dreams (vv. 14-46); both release and authority came to him through his speaking:
1. Andrew Murray once said a word like this: the good minister of the Word should always minister more than he has experienced; this means that we should speak more **according to the vision** than according to the fulfillment of the vision.
 2. Even if our vision has not been fulfilled, we should **still speak** of it to others; the time will come when our vision will be **fulfilled**; Joseph's dreams were eventually fulfilled through his interpretation of the dream of the cupbearer.
 3. We should not speak according to our feelings but **according to the heavenly vision**; we are visionaries, seers, of God's eternal economy, so we should speak according to the absoluteness of the truth of His economy—Acts 26:16-19.
- F. If we are living out Christ, **we will bring either life or death** wherever we are (2 Cor. 2:14-16); to the cupbearer, Joseph brought restoration; to the baker, he brought execution (Gen. 41:12-13).
- G. If we seek the Lord, He will put us into a "dungeon"; without the dungeon we cannot ascend to the throne; we must not be a "dungeon dropout"; we must **stay** in the dungeon until we graduate and receive the crown—Eph. 3:1; 4:1; James 1:12.

When some read chapter forty, they may have the desire to speak to the Lord on Joseph's behalf and ask the Lord why He kept Joseph in prison for such a long time. Joseph was seventeen or eighteen years of age when he was first put into prison, and he was about twenty-eight years of age when he interpreted the dreams of his two companions in prison. Although he had been in the dungeon for at least ten years prior to the release of his companions, his own dreams still had not yet been fulfilled. Perhaps you would say, "Lord, this is too much. You have tested Joseph for ten years already. Why didn't You release him when You released his two companions? After Joseph had interpreted the dream of the cupbearer, he asked the cupbearer to remember him. But the cupbearer forgot Joseph, and nothing happened. Lord, it is easy for men to forget. But You are God, and You cannot forget things. Why did You keep Joseph in prison for another two years?" One day I was enlightened to see that Joseph remained in prison for another two full years because **it was necessary for him to reach the age of thirty**.

Today many young people expect to be released from their cage as soon as they turn eighteen. But according to the Bible, we need to reach the age, not of eighteen or even twenty-eight, but of thirty. Those who served God as priests began to do so in a full way at the age of thirty. The ones under thirty were apprentices, not fully functioning priests. When the Lord Jesus began to minister, He also was thirty years of age. Thus, if Joseph had come to the throne at the age of twenty-eight, he would not have typified Christ in this matter. He had to be thirty years of age. After I saw this, I was convinced that these further two years were necessary for Joseph to be qualified. If he had not stayed there for two additional years, he would have been under age. (*Life-Study of Genesis, chapter 114*)

Day 4

- Genesis 49:22** - *Joseph is a fruitful bough, / A fruitful bough by a fountain; / His branches run over the wall.*
- Genesis 41:42** - *And Pharaoh took off his signet ring from his hand and put it upon Joseph's hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen, and put a gold chain around his neck.*

II. Joseph as a fruitful bough (Gen. 49:22) typifies Christ as the **branch (Isa. 11:1-2) for the **branching out** of God through His believers as His branches (John 15:1, 5); in Genesis 49:22 the fountain signifies God, the source of fruitfulness (Psa. 36:9; Jer. 2:13), and the branches' running over the wall signifies that Christ's believers as His branches spread Christ over every restriction, **magnifying Him** in all circumstances (Phil. 1:20; 4:22; Philem. 10):**

- A. In his receiving glory and gifts in his enthronement, Joseph typifies Christ, who **received glory** (Heb. 2:9) and **gifts** (Psa. 68:18; Acts 2:33) in His ascension (Gen. 41:42):
 - 1. The ring, the garments, and the gold chain portray the gifts that Christ received in His ascension to the heavens, which gifts He has **passed on to the church**—v. 42:
 - a. The signet ring signifies the Holy Spirit as a **seal within and upon Christ's believers**—Acts 2:33; Eph. 1:13; 4:30; cf. Luke 15:22.
 - b. The garments signify Christ as our **objective righteousness** for our justification before God (1 Cor. 1:30; cf. Psa. 45:9, 13; Luke 15:22) and as our subjective righteousness lived out of us that we may be qualified to participate in the marriage of the Lamb (Phil. 3:9; Psa. 45:14; Rev. 19:7-9).
 - c. The gold chain signifies the **beauty of the Holy Spirit** given for obedience expressed in submission (cf. Acts 5:32); a chained neck signifies a **will that has been conquered and subdued** to obey God's commandment (Gen. 41:42; cf. S. S. 1:10; Prov. 1:8-9).
 - 2. According to the sequence of spiritual experience, we first receive the sealing of the Spirit for **salvation**; then we receive the garment of righteousness and begin to live Christ (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:20-21a); in order for us to live Christ, our neck must be chained, **our will must be conquered and subdued, by the Holy Spirit**.
- B. After being resurrected from the prison of death and ushered into the position of ascension, Joseph married Asenath, who portrays the church taken out of the Gentile world during Christ's rejection by the children of Israel (Gen. 41:45); Joseph called the name of his firstborn Manasseh (meaning "making to forget") and the name of his second Ephraim (meaning "twice fruitful"); Joseph declared, "God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father's house," and "God has made me [twice] fruitful in the land of my affliction" (vv. 51-52).

Day 5

Romans 5:17 - For if, by the offense of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:21 - In order that just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

III. The record of Joseph's life is a revelation of the **rulership of the Spirit, for the rulership of the Spirit is the reigning aspect of a mature saint; the rulership of the Spirit (a life of reigning in life, being under the restriction and limitation of the divine life in the reality of God's kingdom) is higher than any other aspect of the Spirit—Rom. 5:17, 21; 14:17-18; cf. 2 Cor. 3:17-18; 2 Tim. 4:22; Rev. 4:1-3:**

- A. Although Joseph was full of human feelings and sentiments toward his brothers, he kept himself with all his feelings **under the rulership of the Spirit**; he dealt with his brothers **soberly, wisely**, and with **discernment**, disciplining them according to their need in order to perfect them and build them up that they might be a collective people living together as God's testimony on earth; the life manifested in the story of Joseph is the resurrection life, the life of God—Gen. 42:9, 24; 43:30-31; 45:1-2, 24.

- B. Joseph's living under God's restriction, a portrait of the **human living of Christ**, manifested the **maturity** and **perfection** of the divine life and brought in God's kingdom— John 5:19, 30b; 7:16, 18; 14:10; Matt. 8:9-10.
- C. In Joseph's dealings with his brothers, we see that he lived a calm life, a sober life, and a discerning life with love for the brothers—a **self-denying life** as the practice of the kingdom life—Gen. 45:24; Matt. 16:24; 2 Chron. 1:10; Isa. 30:15a; Phil. 1:9; 1 Tim. 5:1-2; 1 Thes. 3:12; 4:9; 2 Thes. 1:3; Rom. 12:10; 1 John 4:9; Heb. 13:1.
- D. The most powerful person is the one who has the **strength not to do what he is able to do**—this is the real denial of the self and the genuine bearing of the cross—Matt. 16:24; cf. 26:53; 2 Cor. 2:12-16.

Joseph had the position and the power to do whatever he desired. However, he **did not do anything for himself**. More than forty years ago, I heard someone say that the **strongest thing is to be able not to do something that you can do**. You have the power, the position, and the opportunity to do a certain thing, yet you still do not do it. I became familiar with the story of Joseph many years ago. But in the past I did not see that after Joseph had been enthroned to be the ruler of Egypt, he did not use his power to see his father. After Joseph was enthroned, he did nothing to rescue himself from being alone, even though he had been separated from his father for thirteen years. When the brothers first came down to him, he still did not do anything. Joseph had the power and the position to do something about his situation, but he did not do what he had the power to do. This indicates that he was the most powerful person, one who has the strength not to do what he is able to do. **Joseph was such a person because he was under God's hand, under God's restriction.**

It is the same with us today. Do you want to have a pleasant church life? Then you must be **under restriction and deny yourself**. We all need to learn this. Suppose Joseph had not been a self-denying person. In such a case it would have been impossible for the kingdom of God to be brought in and realized in a practical way. Joseph's self-denial, his restriction under God's sovereign hand, was the key to the practice of the kingdom life. Thank God for Joseph's self-denying life. Through such a life God's purpose was fulfilled, and the kingdom was brought in, realized, and practiced. Through this fulfillment, the children of Israel shared in the enjoyment of the kingdom. (*Life-Study of Genesis, chapter 119*)

Day 6

Genesis 50:20 - *Even though you intended evil against me, God intended it for good, to do as it is this day, to preserve alive a numerous people.*

Romans 8:28 - *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.*

- E. Joseph's realization was that it was God who sent him to Egypt; in Genesis 50:20 he said to his brothers, "Even though you intended evil against me, God intended it for good" (45:5, 7; 50:19-21; cf. 41:51-52); this is the reality of Paul's word in Romans 8:28-29; Joseph **received** as from God all that his brothers had done to him, and he **comforted** those who had offended him (Gen. 45:5-8; 50:15-21); what grace, and what an excellent spirit, he had!
- IV. Because Joseph **suffered** and **denied** himself, he **gained** the riches of the life supply (*Hymns, #635*); in order to receive food from him as a type of Christ, the people had to pay four kinds of prices: their **money**, their **livestock**, their **land**, and **themselves**—47:14-23; cf. Rev. 3:18:**
- A. Money represents **convenience**, livestock signifies the **means of living**, and land represents **resources**; if we would receive the life supply from the Lord as the Dispenser, we must give Him our convenience, our means of livelihood, and our resources; the more we give Him, the more life supply we will receive from Him.

- B. Ultimately, in order to receive the best portion from the Lord, including food for satisfaction and seed to produce something for others (Gen. 47:23), we must hand **ourselves, every part of our being**, over to Him (Lev. 1:4).
 - C. When we pay the highest price by handing over every part of our being to Him, we enjoy the **best portion of the enjoyment of Christ**.
- V. The universal blessing on Joseph consummates in the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth, in which everything will be new as a blessing to Christ and His believers—Gen. 49:25-26; Deut. 33:13-16; Rev. 21:5:**
- A. **Transformation** is to be metabolically **changed** with the newness of the divine life, **maturity** is to be **filled** with the newness of the divine life that changes us, and **blessing** is the **overflow** of life; the ending of Jacob's life with Joseph was a life of blessing as the zenith of his shining—Prov. 4:18; Heb. 11:21; Gen. 47:7; 48:15-16.
 - B. **Only God is new**; anything that is kept away from God is old, but **anything that comes back to God is new** (2 Cor. 5:17); to be renewed means to come back to God and have something of God put into us so that we are mingled with God and one with God for the Body life (4:16; Rom. 12:1-2).
 - C. The secret of receiving God as our blessing of newness is to **bring everything to God** and let Him get into everything; the universal blessing on Joseph means that blessing is everywhere; our praises turn everything of the curse of the fall into a blessing—Eph. 5:20; 1 Thes. 5:16-18.