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Joseph Remembers

based on Genesis 37

by Ralph Milton

It wasn't exactly what I had in mind.

When you are lying, bare naked, at the bottom of a pit, and you can't climb out, and all you can see is a circle of sky up above, well, put it this way, it tends to focus your mind.

My brothers had thrown me down there. My own brothers had ripped the clothes off my back and thrown me down the hole. And I could tell from the way they were talking with each other that I came within a hair of being murdered.

So I lay there on my back, looking up at that circle of sky, and I guess for the first time in my life I realized that I was part of a family. Well, I knew that before, of course, but this was the first time I knew what a family was about. And I realized that if you abuse a family, you lose it.

Up to that point, I mostly concentrated on getting my own way. I got pretty good at manipulating father, getting him to think I was just the finest person in the world and that my brothers did everything wrong. It was so easy winding the old man around my finger. That's why he made me that beautiful cloak with the long sleeves that my brothers ripped off of me.

And face it; I was a bit of a twit. I had those dreams, sure. I dreamed that someday I, the youngest, would be the head of the family. But I didn't need to tell my brothers about that dream. Or at least, I didn't have to rub their noses in it. God gave me the dreams, but I chose what to do with them. And I used them to get the whole family mad at me. Funny how you begin to appreciate your family just at the moment you lose it.

I prayed to God to rescue me. I wanted God to come and help me out of that pit, to take me home to my Dad. And God came and rescued me all right, but it wasn't quite what I had in mind. I got hauled out of that pit and sold as a slave to a passing caravan.

It took years before I got my family back. Years of being the only Hebrew in Egypt, years of struggling to survive and learning to live by my wits, years of being the highest level bureaucrat in the whole country.

By the time I was reunited with my family, I knew the value of a family. I'd had all those years by myself in Egypt to think about it. Foreigners in a strange country spend a lot of time by themselves.

So God rescued me from that pit, all right, and because of that, I was able to rescue my whole family from starvation.

Did God plan it that way? Who knows? I honestly think God just nudges us to be the very best person in the very best way, wherever we are. In my case, it all worked out.

But I often wonder. If my brothers hadn't thrown me in that pit, what kind of a person would I have become?

**Ralph Milton has written a number of books,
all of them available through Wood Lake Publishing.**

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