

Breakfast In Prison; Dinner In A Palace

"Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God?" Genesis 41:38

In reading only the last portion of Genesis, Chapter 41, perhaps you would assume that Joseph's rise to power in Egypt was a fluke, a stroke of extraordinary luck, or perhaps the result of some inside connection. How else can you explain Joseph's seemingly meteoric rise to kingship in Egypt?

In an instant, Joseph was wearing the finest robes, riding a kingly chariot, and wearing the signet ring of a Pharaoh. Everywhere he went, the people were ordered to bow low. And all of this at the age of 30. But before we agree that Joseph was obviously born to be a king, let's take a step back, and observe the path that led Joseph to the throne of Egypt, a path that first led him to the darkest dungeons of a nation.

Today, just as it was true in Joseph's day, we must come to grips with one simple fact: there is no such thing as a born leader. No one on this earth, at any time, came out of the womb as a leader of men. There are, however, born manipulators. A manipulator gets people to do things for his own benefit. Now notice the difference: a leader gets people to do things for their benefit. But what is the missing ingredient that separates true leaders from manipulators?

The difference between leaders and manipulators is CHARACTER. The reason there are no born leaders, is because no one is born with character. It is not hereditary. It is not contagious. You can't get character from drinking after somebody, and you can't get it through osmosis. Character must be produced on demand, and you are the factory where it is manufactured.

We now understand that character must be produced. But we must also realize that there is a specific way in which character develops. We learned that your body is the factory in which character is manufactured, but what other factors do we need to consider when it comes to the formation of character?

There are certain guidelines under which character can be produced. Character simply can't be produced when everything is going your way. It won't suddenly appear the day of a big promotion, or the day you win the lottery. Character cannot be produced on the mountain top. No, character is produced on the side of mountains, in times of frustration, distress, disappointment, loneliness, and anxiety.

Character is an option. You can choose to develop character at any time. Joseph spent years in an Egyptian prison, but while he was there, he was developing the character that made him ruler of a nation. What do you do when you're in the dungeon? None of us want to experience anything less than luxury and comfort, but when facing a situation that is less than comfortable, my suggestion is, don't waste the pain. Use this experience as an opportunity for personal growth- to develop character. Always remember that in these times of pain, the opportunity for character will never be closer.

(This devotional is excerpted from Mark's talk entitled, "Becoming A Leader." If you would like to learn more about this or other titles Mark has to offer, visit us at www.markgorman.com)

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