

*Where does my **HELP** come from?*

Genesis 37-50, Psalm 121

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"God doesn't give us more than we can handle?" We've all heard it. We may have even said it ourselves. But is it true?

When the Apostle Paul writes to the Corinthian believers, what does he say? "We were never worried for a second. After all, God won't give us more than we can handle." No. He says, *"For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself."*

It's a question found throughout the Bible, asked in a number of different ways. Who will rescue me from this body of death? Who will save me from my foe? Maybe one you can relate to from Psalm 69: *Save me, O God! The water is up to my neck; I am sinking in deep mud, and there is no solid ground.*

Sounds like what? God allows into our lives more than we can handle. Otherwise, why would we need any help? And so, the Psalmist says in Psalm 121, *I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come?*

We all need help in life, don't we? Despite what we may think, no of us makes it on his own.

If anyone needed help, it was Joseph. Arriving in Egypt in chains, the taunts of his brothers are still ringing in his ears. "Bye, bye Joey! Happy dreams!" What had become of those glorious dreams of his? Dreams of power, dreams of position, dreams of the resources and the riches of the world poured into his lap?

We all have dreams, don't we? Dreams of where we're going in life. Dreams of where we'd like to end up. Dreams of success, dreams of the perfect marriage, the perfect family, dreams of health and wealth and happiness. And what happens to our dreams? Too often, they vanish into thin air. Then what? Then what do we do? How do we respond? Where do we turn? *I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come?*

The LORD was with Joseph and he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. ... Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned.

Who would have thought any good could possibly come out of being betrayed by your family, left in a hole in the ground, kidnapped, and taken away from your country, sold in a foreign slave market, put in a position of great privilege and authority - only to be falsely accused of adultery by your boss's wife and thrown into prison as an innocent man?

Joseph entered Egypt at the age of eighteen. He left at the age of one hundred ten for glory, and for eighty of the intervening years he was the highest lord of the land. God used the tests in Joseph's life to grow trust in his heart, trust that God is faithful and good, no matter what.

Can you say the same thing; that God has a purpose in your shattered dreams? That God is using your broken dreams for a purpose, something deeper and better than you can imagine?

How did the Apostle Paul put it? *So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."*

Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Cor 12:7-10)

How do you respond when your dreams are shattered and life doesn't go as you planned? Where do you turn for help?

Who would have thought that any good thing could come of a troubled childhood ... divorce ... cancer ... job loss ... financial loss ... a worldwide pandemic?

For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. (2 Cor 12:8-9)

Then Joseph said to his brothers ... I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will not be plowing and reaping. But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

God answered Joseph's cry for help in another way. He saved Joseph's family from starvation in Israel by bringing them to Egypt, and then four hundred years later bringing them back to Israel in a mighty deliverance through the Red Sea, providing bread and water in the desert, giving them victory over their enemies, sending prophets to turn their hearts back to Him, and finally, coming down to them, to us, all the way to the cross, suffering punishment for our sin, and rising for our resurrection.

I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? I lift my eyes to Mount Calvary, where does my help come from? The Maker of heaven and earth. The Redeemer of heaven and earth. Your Maker, Your Redeemer.

"God doesn't give us more than we can handle." Really? Where did all of Joseph's trouble come from? Where did it start? God gave Joseph the dream that led to all his troubles ... and all of his great triumphs ... They meant it for evil. God meant it for good.

God was working trust while Joseph was being attacked, in a hole, injured and alone, wondering, unknown ... taken into slavery into a foreign land, thrown in prison ... Where was God? He was alive and well, in the midst of Joseph's dire circumstances ... giving him more than he could handle, so that he would turn to God for help.

God's still at work today ... in the circumstances of our lives, no matter how good or bad; large or small.

Some of you might remember Abby Stanton's 2017 New Year's blog post

"I am not going to lie, 2016 wasn't a great year. It was a hard year filled with things I never thought would become my reality. It made me face my fears, figure out who I am, love myself, learn to fight harder than I thought I could, and Most of all love God.

Not that any of the things I just listed were 2016 working in my life, they were God. 2016 was the year for God and me. He did all those things for me and has drawn me closer to Him than I ever knew I would be.

It kills me to say this, but I have to admit it: I am thankful for these experiences. If it weren't for God giving them to me I wouldn't be as close to Him."

"2016 was the year for God and me." May 2020 be the year for God and you.

You and I were created for a purpose – to live as God's children in relationship with Him, a relationship of total dependence and trust, a relationship where we grow in our love for Him – as we experience His love for us.

I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth. He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber ...

The LORD is your keeper ... The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. ... What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

... Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.
(Romans 8:28-39)