

Chapter 3 | Trading in Your Dreams for Another's

People nearing mid-life often crash into some startling and unexpected observations. For instance, we all dreamed big dreams when we were younger. But as we move at a break-neck pace through our twenties, thirties, and forties, we eventually slam head on into the realization that some of our dreams will never be realized.

That observation throws some people into a mid-life crisis. Some don't make it that far with their aspirations, having already given them up somewhere along the way. Some run into conflict that makes them weary and they settle for less. Still others make bold decisions to trade one dream in for another.

That's what Joseph did. Talk about dreams! He had some big ones. At seventeen he dreamed his ten older brothers would bow down to him. It's enough he dreamed that dream. What makes it worse is that he told his brothers about it.

The older brothers already had issues with the younger son. Their father favored Joseph. He had even given him a valuable, multi-colored coat. That's the modern-day equivalent of a parent of four teenagers giving one an iPhone and the other three a stack of quarters each for a pay phone (assuming they could find one on their travels). The brothers banded together and tossed the dreamer in a ditch, eventually selling him into slavery at the first opportunity. The next thing Joseph knew he was waking up in Egypt.

From there his life was a rollercoaster thrill ride. One minute a slave. The next in charge of an Egyptian official's house. The next in prison. The next in charge of the prison. Then he found himself in front of Pharaoh, called upon to interpret the leader's dreams. With God's help he was able to warn Pharaoh he would have seven years of abundant crops that he should be put in storehouses in anticipation of seven years of famine. Recognizing his wisdom, Pharaoh put Joseph second in command of all of Egypt.

And because of God's personal involvement in his life, he was able to save his family. The same family that God was building into a nation. Joseph was in position to bring his family to Egypt and give them the most fertile land to work. And it was definitely fertile. In the time they were there they were "fruitful and increased greatly" (Exodus 1:7).

Joseph could have lost his life getting caught up in the details of his life, chasing his dreams and desires. Instead, he chose a better story. God's story.

You can do the same. If your life's dream has stalled, look to God. If your dream now realized is not all you thought it would be, look to God. He can give you another dream. A better one, not according to the world's standard but God's criterion. Just like Joseph's. Then you'll have a story to tell.