



1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, Hebrews 12:1 (NIV)

Spiritual Giant today is Joseph...

As often happens:

- God didn't include the difficult details.
- God didn't include a time table.

Today's spiritual Giant would say: "Don't give up"

5 One night Joseph had a dream, and when he told his brothers about it, they hated him more than ever. 6 "Listen to this dream," he said. Genesis 37:5-6 (NLT)

7 "We were out in the field, tying up bundles of grain. Suddenly my bundle stood up, and your bundles all gathered around and bowed low before mine!" Genesis 37:7 (NLT)

19 "Here comes the dreamer!" they said. 20 "Come on, let's kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns. (Big pit) We can tell our father, 'A wild animal has eaten him.' Then we'll see what becomes of his dreams!" Genesis 37:19-20 (NLT)

Don't give up:

- Even if it doesn't start off well.

13...I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead,.. Philippians 3:13 (NLT)

12 How thankful I am to Christ Jesus our Lord for choosing me as one of his messengers, and giving me the strength to be faithful to him, 13 even though I used to scoff at the name of Christ. I hunted down his people, harming them in every way I could. But God had mercy on me because I didn't know what I was doing, for I didn't know Christ at that time. 1 Timothy 1:12-13 (TLB)

- Even if those closest to you don't support you.

3 "He's just a carpenter, Mary's boy, and a brother of James and Joseph, Judas and Simon. And his sisters live right here among us." And they were offended! 4 Then Jesus told them, "A prophet is honored everywhere except in his hometown and among his relatives and by his own family." Mark 6:3-4 (TLB)

- Even if your journey is full of surprises.

28 And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. Romans 8:28 (NLT)

- Even if it's taking a long time to realize it.

3 But these things I plan won't happen right away. Slowly, steadily, surely, the time approaches when the vision will be fulfilled. If it seems slow, do not despair, for these things will surely come to pass. Just be patient! They will not be overdue a single day! Habakkuk 2:3 (TLB)

Final words of encouragement:

- "Focus on what happening in you, not to you."

6 So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you have to endure many trials for a little while.

7 These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world. 1 Peter 1:6-7 (NLT)

2 ..consider it an opportunity for great joy. 3 For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. James 1:2-3 (NLT)

- "Remember, Your response to offenses today will determine your future."

20 You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good... Genesis 50:20 (NLT)

- "Count on it, there will be setbacks, but God is always faithful and God is always with you."

8 If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the grave, you are there. 9 If I ride the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans, 10 even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me. Psalm 139:8-10 (NLT)



**TO CREATIVELY LOVE AND LEAD PEOPLE
IN A GROWING RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS.**

Have Questions? Text them to: (559)-464-5754

Questions for Connection Groups:

These questions also work well for personal time with God.

- What scripture and/or point spoke most to you from the Talk on Sunday? Why?
- If you could spend some time with one of the heroes of faith, who would it be? What question would you ask? If you could spend time with Joseph what question would you ask that would help you in your race?
- Do you struggle with the temptation to give up?
- Do you personally find the temptation is greater to quit because of your past? How often does the enemy remind you of your past and bring discouragement? What do you do to overcome this?
- Does it surprise you that even Jesus' family didn't support him? Do you have family that doesn't support your spiritual journey? Do they remind you of your past? What bring the discouragement?
- Do untimely and difficult surprises bring discouragement? Explain why and how you overcome this?
- Does a long season of difficulty use discouragement?
- What does it mean to focus on what's happening in you, not to you? What is God shaping in you during this process?
- If Joseph would have allowed himself to carry the offense of his brothers it would have derailed God's plan. Is there an offense that you need to forgive to keep God's plan from being derailed in your life?
- Why is it difficult to believe that God is always with us?

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