



Theme: God's Dreams

"Dreams to Bring Us Hope"

We have a great new way for you to get these Meditation Moments each day directly to your phone. Just text **"med moments"** to **970-426-0700** to receive the **daily Meditation Moment** each morning and start your day grounded in faith and peace.

Weekly Memory Verse:

"For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. – Jeremiah 29:11

Meditation Moments for Monday, September 21 – Read **Jeremiah 29:4-14** – We learned this weekend that Jeremiah is a prophet who lived about 600 years before the time of Jesus. He was writing at a time when the Hebrew people were trying to hold onto their faith while in exile, having been carried off to Babylon, modern day Iraq and Iran, in 587 BCE. A main theme in his book is that God never gives up on his people, and neither did Jeremiah. Before the final conquest of Jerusalem, he wrote a letter to the Hebrews who had already been taken to Babylon. There was no false comfort in his words as he told them they should settle down and prepare for a long period of exile. But there was a future that Jeremiah dreamed—not just in Jerusalem, but in God's love, if only they would seek God with all their hearts.



Through Jeremiah, God told the Israelites he had "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." But the message began, "When seventy years are completed." Could anything that lay seventy years ahead be a source of hope for you? What makes patience and trust essential as you walk with God?



In a sense, Jeremiah's message of judgment and hope was summed up in Jeremiah 29:13: "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your

heart." How do you understand the meaning of seeking God "with all your heart"? What in your life has driven you to seek God with all your heart, and what steps helped you do that? How have you been able to dream in a way that brings you hope for the future even when that might seem bleak or difficult?

Prayer: *Gracious God, give the courage to dream knowing that you have plans for me. Those plans may not always be concrete or physical, but more about the state of my heart. Help me to seek you with my whole heart, knowing that dream is the best of all dreams. Amen.*

Tuesday, September 22 – Read **Jeremiah 14:7-9** – In the middle of this chapter about drought, famine and sword, there is an appeal to God by the people who are looking for hope. They are literally dreaming of a different present AND future and appeal to God to rescue them, even though they know they have brought their current disaster on themselves by focusing on the wrong things. Have you ever gotten into trouble by focusing on the wrong things and cried out to God for help? If so, then you know how the people in Jeremiah are feeling.



On what basis do the people of God hope God will rescue them? What do you think was the most effective part of their appeal? When have you cried out to God as a source of hope? Were you comforted in crying out to God? How was your prayer answered (or not)? We are encouraged by God to bring our troubles to him in prayer. Do you find that helpful?



We have often talked at Summit about the reality that the most common way that God answers prayer is through people. Can you look back on your life and see where a person has been an answer to your prayer? Is there someone (or some cause) in your life that God might be calling you to serve and, in a sense, become an answer to their prayer?

Prayer: *Lord, I know you meet me when times are dark, even when I have brought that darkness upon myself. Be my hope so I might dream new dreams with you at the center of my life. Use me to be the answer to other's prayers, dreaming of a better future for ALL your people. Amen.*

Wednesday, September 23 – Read **Genesis 37:1-11** – The next two days we will read the story of one of the greatest "dreamers" in the Bible, Joseph who was the favored son of Jacob. Andrew Lloyd Weber's, "Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat," is based on this biblical dreamer. Joseph was Rachel's first son, who was the love of Jacob's life. Jacob's older sons were from his first wife, Leah. The "Dreamcoat" (we can't be sure what it looked like) showed Joseph's favored status. Family therapists now know that being a "chosen child" like Joseph often skews emotional growth and relationships. Joseph's strutting misuse of his ability to receive and interpret dreams finally upset even Jacob.



Jacob should have known the danger of parental bias from his own parents – but he didn't. Have you ever been "the favorite" in some setting? Have you had

to relate to someone else who's "the favorite"? What wounds from those experiences undercut your life and the lives of those around you, limiting your dreams, joy and effectiveness?



If we are honest, sometimes we "dream" like Joseph and it creates problems for us as we assume our dreams are more important than other's. It's easy (and such fun!) to feel superior to others as Joseph did. Have your dreams ever caused harm to someone else? Choose one thing you will do this week to show respect to someone you are tempted to feel superior to. End this time in prayer, asking God to help you have genuine humility as you interact with others.

Prayer: *Lord God, teach me when my dreams are causing harm to others and show me how to be humble as I pursue the dreams you place on my heart. Amen.*

Thursday, September 24 – Read **Genesis 37:12-36** – Jacob seemed clueless when he sent Joseph to see his brothers. They acted on their outrage at being lorded over by their brother and undervalued by their father. First, they wanted to kill Joseph. Reuben and Judah talked them out of that, and they sold him to traders. They tricked Jacob, which is meant to be a parallel to Jacob tricking his own brother Esau out of his birthright earlier in Genesis when they were boys. These first families seemed to have issues built into their DNA! Jacob believed his favorite son was dead and mourned the loss bitterly.



Genesis doesn't tell us what Jacob's sons and daughters said as they tried to comfort him – but it didn't help much. Do you know how to comfort a grieving friend or family member? Are you able to honor the process of grieving rather than saying "Get over it"? If not, you might pray for God to give you a calm presence and understanding heart as you interact with others who are grieving. Here at Summit, we have Grief Companions who are trained to walk with people through grief. kristen@summitdurango.org can connect you with one.



Reuben and Judah had enough moral courage to stand up to their brothers and say, "No, don't kill Joseph. We don't want blood on our hands." On the other hand, they couldn't say, "Dad, Joseph isn't dead – we sold him to traders headed for Egypt." Sometimes dreaming is about being a different kind of person and having strength to do the hard thing. How morally courageous are you? In what areas do you want to become braver?

Prayer: *God of Jacob and Joseph, give me courage to live into YOUR dreams for me as I walk with others who are grieving or struggling, and help me to stand up and be your presence when justice is needed to do what is right.*

Friday, September 25 – Read **Genesis 40:14-16**. Joseph is sold as a slave to a man named Potiphar, whose wife falsely accuses Joseph of being inappropriate, when the truth is that Joseph refused her sexual advances. He is thrown into prison by Potiphar, and it is there that he then interprets dreams for two servants from Pharaoh's court. He eventually is called to the court of Pharaoh after several years in prison because he can interpret dreams. Joseph correctly interprets the Pharaoh's dreams, warning the

Egyptian ruler of 7 years of great harvest followed by 7 years of famine. He is eventually put in charge of all the supplies in Egypt and becomes a hero who saves the nation from starvation. His role also brings him back into contact with his brothers later in Genesis and he keeps the Israelites from starvation by sharing food with them as they relocate to Egypt. (In several hundred years, the Hebrews will become slaves in Egypt which is when Moses is raised up by God to free them from slavery in the next book, Exodus.)



These stories about Joseph and his dreams in the book of Genesis can be helpful for us as God teaches us about the importance of not only dreams but how it is those dreams can either take us down or bring us hope. The challenge is to listen for God's voice and the dreaming and to receive humbly the message that God is trying to give to us. In these stories of dreaming in Genesis 39 and 40, we find Joseph using his ability to interpret dreams to bless others rather than to lift himself up. Have you had dreams about blessing others? Have you followed those dreams? What might you do to take that step to bless others?



Joseph's ability to interpret dreams connects him to his brothers at the end of the book of Genesis and he forgives them for the way they treated him and sold him as a slave. He talks about God using even the nightmares he experienced at the hands of his brothers to fulfill a dream that saves God's people. God's dream is for us to reconnect to not only God but to others. Remembering that forgiveness is not about saying what someone did to you is OK, is there someone in your life that needs forgiveness? How might you take the next step towards reconciliation today?

Prayer: *Forgiving God, put your dreams of forgiveness and hope in my heart and help me live them out today and every day. Amen.*

Saturday, September 26 – Read **Luke 1:39-40** and **Matthew 1:18-23**. It's no coincidence that the earthly father of Jesus was named Joseph who has dreams about how to find hope in a dark time. Mary's pregnancy altered Joseph's life as well as her own.

"Because he didn't want to humiliate her, [Joseph] decided to call off their engagement quietly." But "as he was thinking about this, an angel from the Lord appeared to him in a dream..." explained Mary's pregnancy and repeated that the baby's name would be Jesus, which means, "God saves." The child would fulfill Isaiah 7:14's words about a sign that meant Emmanuel, "God with us."



Christianity's central claim is that Jesus was not just a great and noble teacher. He was God—Emmanuel, God with us, come to save us from dark moments in life and from ourselves. Jesus came to bring us dreams filled with hope. How does this claim shape your faith and your life? How can you honor the Bible's claim that Jesus is God in ways that follow his example, extending love and grace even to people with different world views than yours, rather than condemning or mocking them?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, Thank you for speaking into the life of your father Joseph through dreams that were meant to bring hope in a time that must have felt like darkness*

when his life was turned upside down. Speak into my life today. Give me new dreams for new days to come that are filled with your love and grace and mercy. Amen.