

CHAMP SPORTS DEVOTIONAL



Winter 2024-25

CHAMP Office – 704.341.5387
Weather Hotline – 704.341.5473
www.champsportsinfo.com

Welcome to CHAMP Sports!

Season Schedule

Practices Begin: Week of December 2

Uniform Distribution: Week of December 2

Game Schedules: Week of December 9

Opening Day: Saturday, December 14

Season Ends: Saturday, February 15

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Updated Mon-Fri. at 3:00 PM; Sat. at 7:30 AM

**Join us weekly for Sunday morning
worship at 9:45 AM in person or via livestream.**

Please remember to pray for your players and their families!

Welcome to CHAMP Sports!

Week of December 2-6

Welcome to CHAMP Sports! We are excited that you are here to play basketball!

Each week at CHAMP, we will take some time to talk about what God says in the Bible. Why did God write the Bible? God wrote the Bible because He wants us to know the truth. Why does God want us to know the truth? Because the truth will set us free!

But what is freedom? Is freedom the ability to do whatever we want? According to God, doing whatever we want to do is not freedom. According to God, freedom is the ability to do whatever God says is right. What does God say is right? Jesus was asked this question. How did Jesus answer the question?

Jesus said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 22:37-40).

God's Law is love: Love God and love your neighbor. But, how? How do we love, especially when we don't feel like it?

The "how" is God himself. God is love (1 John 4:7-8; 16). The Christian message is that God will live inside of us if we believe in His Son, Jesus. When God lives inside of us, our hearts are full of God's life. What is God's life like? God's life is "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23).

This season at CHAMP we are going to talk about a man who demonstrated God's love to his brothers, his parents, his masters, his enemies, and in many ways, to the whole world. Can you guess the man's name? The man's name is Joseph.

Joseph's life wasn't easy, but God's plan was good. Joseph suffered, but he also saved many people. Through Joseph, many people saw God's love in action and believed in the one true God! What about you? Do you believe in God?

Jude 1:21

Keep yourselves in the love of God.

Questions: God told us to "love our neighbor." Who is our neighbor? How has God shown His love to you? How do we "keep ourselves in the love of God"?

Please remember to pray for your players and their families!

A Coat of Many Colors (Genesis 37:1-11)

Week of December 9-13

Joseph grew up in a big family. He had lots of older brothers. Ten to be exact. And one younger brother, Benjamin.

God tells us that Joseph's father, Jacob, loved Joseph. In fact, God tells us that, Jacob "loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was the son of his old age" (Genesis 37:3).

When Joseph was seventeen, he was out with his brothers taking care of the sheep. When he returned home, he told his father that his brothers weren't doing a good job. How do you think that made Joseph's brothers feel? Pretty terrible, right?

Because Jacob loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, he made Joseph a coat of many colors. Joseph's brothers saw the gift that their father had given to Joseph and they hated him. To make matters worse, Joseph had some dreams, and when he told them the dreams, they hated him even more. What were the dreams?

In one dream Joseph and his brothers were in the field gathering in the food. His bundle of food stood up, and their bundles of food gathered around and bowed down to his bundle. In another dream, Joseph saw the sun, the moon, and eleven stars bowing down to him. When he told this dream to his family, his father said, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you?" (Genesis 37:10).

When Joseph's brothers heard Joseph's dreams, they were very upset, and they were jealous. First, Jacob loved Joseph more than them. Second, Jacob gave Joseph a coat that made Joseph look like the master of the house. And then, Joseph had dreams about ruling over his family. How could they take it? What would they do?

Jesus is God's beloved Son. In a few days, we will celebrate Jesus' birth. Jesus wasn't the first man to be born into this world, but God has given Him the name that is above every name (Philippians 2:9). God has also given Jesus the place of honor at His right hand (Hebrews 1:3).

This Christmas, think about Jesus. Do you love Jesus? Do you accept Him as Lord and Master?

Philippians 2:5

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.

Questions: What is the Golden Rule? Compare Matthew 7:12 and Philippians 2:4.

Please remember to pray for your players and their families!

Joseph the Slave (Genesis 37:12-36)

Week of January 2-3

Joseph's family had many sheep. Joseph's brothers would take the sheep from place to place to find food. Sometimes they were gone for a long time, and their father, Jacob, would start to wonder how they were doing.

One day, Jacob decided to send Joseph to find his brothers and see how they were doing. Joseph put on his coat of many colors and went out to find his brothers. When he found them, his brothers saw him coming, and because they hated him, they decided that they would get rid of him once and for all by killing him. What a terrible thing to do!

Reuben, Joseph's oldest brother, didn't like his brothers' plan. Maybe because he was the oldest he felt that he needed to protect his brothers. Maybe he was concerned about how sad his father would be if Joseph died. Whatever the reason, Reuben convinced his brothers not to kill Joseph. Instead, they would throw him into a pit and leave him there. Reuben thought that if Joseph was in the pit, he could go and rescue him and send Joseph back to his father, Jacob. So, Joseph's brothers threw him into a pit.

The pit was empty; there was no water in it. Joseph wouldn't last long down there, but as God would have it, while Joseph's brothers were eating, they looked up and saw a caravan of Midianites who were traveling down to Egypt. Judah, one of Joseph's brothers, got the bright idea to sell Joseph to the Midianites. In this way, they could get rid of Joseph without killing him. And so, Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery for twenty shekels of silver, which would be about \$250 today.

When Reuben found out what had happened to Joseph, he was shocked. He didn't want to go home and tell his dad what had happened. So, instead of telling Jacob the truth about Joseph, Joseph's brothers took Joseph's coat and dipped it in animal's blood and gave it to their father. Jacob thought that an animal had killed Joseph, and Joseph's brothers didn't correct him.

When Jesus came into this world, some people loved him and some people hated him. Each one of us has to decide what we think about Jesus. Is Jesus God's one-of-a-kind Son? Has God made Jesus both Lord and Christ? Will we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior?

Philippians 2:6

who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped

Questions: Why did Joseph's brothers dislike Joseph? One reason: envy. What is envy?

Please remember to pray for your players and their families!

Joseph in Prison (Genesis 39:1-23)

Week of January 6-10

After his brothers sold him into slavery, Joseph was taken down to Egypt. In Egypt, Joseph was sold to a man named Potiphar. Potiphar was an important and powerful man in Egypt. He worked for Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, as the captain of the guard.

Potiphar gave Joseph work to do in his house. Did Joseph do a good job? God tells us in the Bible, "The LORD was with Joseph, and he became a successful man, and he was in the house of his Egyptian master" (Genesis 39:2). Why was Joseph successful? Joseph was successful because the LORD was with him.

What does it mean for the LORD to be with us? It means the LORD is watching over us, teaching us His ways, giving us His wisdom, and doing many other good things in our lives. When the LORD is with us, we will be successful.

Joseph worked hard in Pharaoh's house, and eventually Potiphar put Joseph in charge of everything that he had. Wow! Potiphar put a lot of trust in Joseph!

However, just when it seemed like things were going really well for Joseph, something terrible happened. Potiphar's wife accused Joseph of something that he didn't do. She lied to Potiphar about Joseph, and Potiphar decided to put Joseph in prison. So unfair!

How do you think Joseph felt when he was in prison? Mopey? Sad? Depressed? Maybe. But maybe not. Joseph had been through a terrible time before when his brothers had sold him into slavery. Maybe instead of feeling sorry for himself, Joseph hoped that God would set things right.

In prison, Joseph once again became successful. The LORD was still with Joseph! Eventually, the keeper of the prison put Joseph in charge of all of the prisoners, and "whatever was done there [in the prison], Joseph was the one who did it" (Genesis 39:22).

Jesus told us, "And he who sent me [God the Father] is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him" (John 8:29). God the Father is with Jesus and everything that Jesus does is successful! Are you thankful that God has put Jesus in charge?

Philippians 2:7

but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

Questions: In what ways has Jesus served us? In what ways can we serve others?

Please remember to pray for your players and their families!

Joseph Saves Egypt (Invitation Week)

Week of January 13-17

Dreams were a big part of Joseph's life. When he was young, Joseph had a dream where the sun, the moon, and the stars bowed down to him. Later on, Joseph met two men in prison who had dreams that they didn't understand. They shared their dreams with Joseph, and God gave Joseph the wisdom to interpret them.

After that, Pharaoh had two dreams. In the first dream, Pharaoh saw poor, ugly, and skinny cows eat seven plump and attractive cows. In the second dream, Pharaoh saw seven thin and mildewed ears of corn eat seven healthy and good ears of corn. Pharaoh was troubled by his dreams. He didn't know what they meant. He asked all of the wise men of Egypt if they could interpret his dreams, but none could. Then, one of the men who had told his dream to Joseph in prison remembered that Joseph had correctly interpreted his dream. He told Pharaoh about Joseph, and Pharaoh called Joseph out of prison to see if Joseph could interpret his dream.

Joseph listened to Pharaoh's dreams and then he said to Pharaoh, "The dreams of Pharaoh are one; God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do. The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good ears are seven years; the dreams are one. The seven lean and ugly cows that came up after them are seven years, and the seven empty ears blighted by the east wind are also seven years of famine" (Genesis 41:25-27).

Pharaoh was pleased with Joseph's explanation of his dreams, but what to do next?! How would Egypt prepare for the seven years of famine? Joseph had a plan. Joseph told Pharaoh that he should appoint a wise man to collect food and save it during the seven good years and then Egypt would have food ready for the seven bad years.

Pharaoh liked Joseph's plan, so Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find a man like this, in whom is the Spirit of God?" Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you are. You shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you command. Only as regards the throne will I be greater than you.' And Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt'" (Genesis 41:38-41).

With the authority and power given to him, Joseph saved Egypt! Jesus is our Savior. Jesus has the authority to forgive our sins! Jesus has the power to fill us with the Holy Spirit! Do you believe in Jesus?! Do you want to?

****Coaches, please present "The Gospel" devotion on the next page. If any players on your team respond by praying to receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior, have them sign their name in their own handwriting on the card provided. Please return signed cards to the equipment closet. When we follow up with players we will give them their signed card to take home. Thank you!*

Philippians 2:8

And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Please remember to pray for your players and their families!

The Gospel

Invitation Week Continued (January 13-17)

What is the Gospel? The Gospel is God's good news about His Son Jesus Christ.

What is the good news? The good news is that God sent Jesus Christ into the world to save sinners.

How did we become sinners? By disobeying God. Adam and Eve disobeyed God. Each one of us has also disobeyed God.

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6).

The bad news is that:

"The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23a).

The good news is that:

"the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23b).

How do we receive God's free gift?

"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31).

What does it mean to "believe in the Lord Jesus"?

It means that we believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that He died to pay the penalty for our sins, that He was buried, and on the third day God raised Him from the dead. It means that we receive Christ as our Savior and surrender our lives to Him as our personal Lord and Master.

Jesus promised, "Everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32-33). Today, "if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9).

If you want to believe in Jesus and confess Him as your Savior and Lord today, please raise your hand. If you have raised your hand, please pray this prayer with me.

Heavenly Father, today I believe in your Son, Jesus. I believe that He died to pay the penalty for my sins and that He was raised from the dead so that I could be justified and receive eternal life in His name. Today, I surrender my life to Jesus as my Lord and Master, and acknowledge Him before men. Thank you, Jesus, for saving me! Amen.

Please remember to pray for your players and their families!

Joseph Sees His Brothers (Genesis 41:37-42:11)

Week of January 20-24

Joseph went from being a boy to being a slave to being a prisoner to being the second most powerful man in Egypt. As Pharaoh's right hand, Joseph had a lot of responsibility and power.

For seven years, Joseph stored up the food in the land of Egypt in preparation for the famine that was coming. Joseph stored up so much grain that he stopped measuring it because there was too much to measure!

And then the famine came. The famine was severe and terrible and throughout the earth. When people outside of Egypt heard that there was grain in Egypt, they came to Egypt in order to buy food for their families. When Joseph's father, Jacob, heard that there was food in Egypt, he sent ten of Joseph's brothers down to Egypt to buy grain, but he did not send Benjamin, his youngest son.

When Joseph's brothers got to Egypt, Joseph recognized them. Can you imagine!? What would you do if you were Joseph? Would you throw your brothers into prison to teach them a lesson? Would you make them into slaves so they could get a taste of their own medicine?

When Joseph's brothers came to him, they bowed down before him, but they did not recognize him because he was clothed in the power and glory of Egypt. As Joseph looked at his brothers, he remembered the dreams that he had had of his brothers bowing down to him.

How do you think Joseph felt? Proud? Happy? Powerful? Maybe, but probably not. Joseph wanted to know if his brothers had changed. Joseph wanted to know if his brothers were sorry for what they had done to him, so Joseph didn't tell his brothers who he was. Instead, he said "You are spies." But they said "No, my lord, your servants have come to buy food. We are all sons of one man. We are honest men" (Genesis 42:9-11).

Were Joseph's brothers honest men now? Maybe. Certainly they hadn't been honest men when they had taken Joseph and sold him into slavery. So, Joseph came up with a plan to test his brothers to see if they had changed. Next week we will learn about that plan!

Philippians 2:9

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name

Questions: Where is Jesus right now? [He is at the right hand of God (1 Peter 3:22).] Does God test our hearts? [Yes, compare Exodus 16:4 with 1 Corinthians 3:11-13.]

Please remember to pray for your players and their families!

Joseph Tests His Brothers (Genesis 42:12-43:14)

Week of January 27-31

Last week we talked about how Joseph's brothers came to Egypt to buy food during a great famine. When they arrived in Egypt they bowed down before Joseph, but they did not know who he was because it had been twenty-two years since they had last seen him and a lot of things had changed. Joseph wanted to know if his brothers had changed so he came up with a plan to test them.

Joseph said to his brothers, "By this you shall be tested: by the life of Pharaoh, you shall not go from this place unless your youngest brother comes here. Send one of you, and let him bring your brother, while you remain confined, that your words may be tested, whether there is truth in you. Or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies." And he put them all together in custody [something like jail] for three days" (Genesis 42:15-17).

"On the third day Joseph said to them, 'Do this and you will live, for I fear God: if you are honest men, let one of your brothers remain confined where you are in custody, and let the rest go and carry grain for the famine of your households, and bring your youngest brother to me. So your words will be verified, and you shall not die" (Genesis 42:18-20).

Joseph chose his brother Simeon to stay in jail in Egypt and sent the rest of his brothers home to their father, Jacob. Before they left, Joseph put the money that they had paid for the grain back into their bags. When his brothers discovered the money in their bags, they were terrified. They thought, surely Joseph will think we have stolen from him and from Egypt. We are in big trouble now!

When Joseph's brothers arrived home, they told Jacob what the man in Egypt wanted—he wanted them to bring their youngest brother, Benjamin, back to Egypt with them. Jacob hated that idea. Joseph was gone! Now Simeon was gone! Jacob couldn't bear to lose Benjamin too!

However, there was no choice because there was no food in Canaan because of the famine. So, finally Jacob agreed to send Benjamin to Egypt with his brothers. Joseph's brother, Judah, promised Jacob that he would be Benjamin's protector. Maybe Joseph's brothers had changed! Joseph still wanted to know!

Philippians 2:10

so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth

Questions: Why did Joseph's brothers bow down before him? Why should we bow down before Jesus? Who should we worship? [God the Father, His Son, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit!]

Please remember to pray for your players and their families!

Joseph Sees Benjamin (Genesis 43:15-44:2)

Week of February 3-7

When Joseph's brothers arrived in Egypt for the second time, they were truly afraid. What if Joseph didn't give Simeon back to them? What if he took Benjamin from them? What if he put them all in prison because of the money that they had found in their bags? But there was nothing they could do. They had to go to Joseph and beg for mercy.

When they came before Joseph, Joseph saw his brother Benjamin. A good start! When Joseph saw Benjamin, he told the servant of his house to prepare a meal at his house for his brothers. When his brothers heard this they were terrified. They thought that Joseph was taking them to his house in order to turn them all into slaves!

So, Joseph's brothers went to Joseph's servant and said, "'Oh, my lord, we came down the first time to buy food. And when we came to the lodging place we opened our sacks, and there was each man's money in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight. So we have brought it again with us, and we have brought other money down with us to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks.' He replied, 'Peace to you, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has put treasure in your sacks for you. I received your money.' Then he brought Simeon out to them" (Genesis 43:20-23).

When Joseph came home, he asked his brothers how they were and about their father—his father. Was he still alive? They said, "Your servant our father is well; he is still alive." This was good news! When Joseph saw his little brother, Benjamin, he was so moved that he had to step out of the room and find a place to weep. Imagine! Twenty-two years since Joseph had last seen his little brother!

When Joseph returned, he asked for the food to be served, but Joseph did not eat with his brothers. As his brothers ate, they looked around the table and realized that they were seated in the order of their birth! Strange! Was this an accident? Or did Joseph know how old each one of them was?

After they ate, Joseph commanded that his servant fill his brothers' sacks with food and with their money. However, this time Joseph asked that his special silver cup be placed in Benjamin's sack. Uh oh! What will happen to Benjamin? Next week, we'll find out!

Philippians 2:11

and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Questions: Why did Joseph put his brothers' money back into their sacks? Did Joseph love his brothers?

Please remember to pray for your players and their families!

Joseph Forgives His Brothers (Genesis 44-50)

Week of February 10-14

Joseph's brothers felt great as they left Egypt. Simeon was with them! Benjamin was with them! They weren't slaves! They had plenty of food! Their father, Jacob, would be so happy!

They had gotten up early, and Egypt was now behind them, but then they saw Joseph's servant coming. He stopped them and said, "Why have you repaid evil for good?"

What was he talking about? He was talking about Joseph's silver cup! Of course, none of Joseph's brothers thought that any of them would have taken Joseph's silver cup, so they said, "Far be it from your servants to do such a thing! Whichever of your servants is found with it shall die, and we also will be my lord's servants." And Joseph's servant said, "Let it be as you say: he who is found with it shall be my servant, and the rest of you shall be innocent" (Genesis 44:9-10)

Where was Joseph's silver cup? It was in Benjamin's sack! Did Benjamin put it there? No! Did Benjamin's brothers know that? They couldn't be sure! This day was turning into a nightmare!

When Joseph's silver cup was found in Benjamin's sack, Joseph's brothers tore their clothes in grief. What would happen next? Would Benjamin really have to stay in Egypt and be a slave? What would Jacob, their father, say? He would be heartbroken.

Judah, Benjamin's brother, begged Joseph to take him as his servant instead of Benjamin so that Benjamin could go free. In that moment, Joseph saw that his brothers had changed. Judah was willing to sacrifice himself for his brother! And so, Joseph told his brothers, "I am Joseph!"

When Joseph told his brothers who he was, they just stood there in shock. Was this really Joseph? What was happening? What would Joseph do to them?

Once everything had become clear, Joseph's brothers begged him to forgive them for what they had done to him. "But Joseph said to them, 'Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today'" (Genesis 50:19-20).

Joseph's life reminds us of Jesus. Jesus was sold for a bit of money, falsely accused, punished on account of our sin, and given all authority in heaven and on earth. Jesus has forgiven us like Joseph forgave his brothers, and now Jesus promises good to us if we accept Him as Lord! Is Jesus your Lord?!

Philippians 2:13

For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Please remember to pray for your players and their families!