You were built to count, as water is made to run downhill. You are placed in a specific context to count in ways no one else does. That is your destiny.*Dallas Willard, The Divine Conspiracy*

I’ve publicly referenced that quote of the late Dallas Willard more times than I can count.

I’ve shared it with former NFL players, CEOs, retirees, high schoolers, employee gatherings, churches, and with hundreds of fraternity guys nationwide. It is the big idea behind the focus of my life.

That quote is packed with deep truths. Look. More closely at it:

You were built to count, as water is made to run downhill. You are placed in a specific context to count in ways no one else does. That is your destiny.*Dallas Willard, The Divine Conspiracy*

Deep truth #1 – there is a force outside ordinary human beings that creates us – God

Deep truth #2 – God designs each ordinary human being to count or matter to other humans and the universe.

Deep truth #3 – Each human being matters in unique ways (like no one else does)

Deep truth #4– Every human being has a destiny… something we tend to assume is reserved for heroes.

That quote is our focal point today – our big idea - as we dive back into our review of Biblical characters in our spiritual family tree.

My goal today is to show you how those deep truths play out in the life of Joseph and then how they plays out for you.

Joseph’s story is long and crazy and is like a movie or Broadway show…which might explain why it has been made into a Broadway show (image)…an animated movie (image)…novel…Handle oratorio…and, of course, a Veggie Tale (image) .

Joseph’s life and adventures take up a huge portion of the book of Genesis and it serves as one of the key hinge points or transition points in the entire story of God.

* His ending up in Egypt is what leads Abraham’s descendants…the jews… into Egypt for over 400 years before they are led back our by Moses.

Because Joseph’s story it is so long and wild there are plenty of ideas we could to explore…we could

* Learn from how he processed his pain in a dysfunctional family.
* Learn about what it means to be faithful when life is difficult
* Learn how to reject temptation
* Learn how to use your gifts for God
* Learn about honoring family

But I believe His story is one of the most unique and fascinating stories about discovering your destiny as you’ll find anywhere.

Joseph was built to count, as water was made to run downhill. He was placed in a specific context to count in ways no one else could. That was his destiny.

What I want to show you from a survey of his life that there are 4 factors that play into the formation of his and all human destinies:

Four factors that shape a human destiny:

Life story – the good, the bad, the ugly and the wonderous. People and circumstances that influences human beings.

Personality – the combination of characteristics that shape how we think, feel and behave

Skills or gifts – our innate or learned talents or abilities

Passions – the strong feelings and desires that animate or move us

Let’s look at each of those factors in Joseph’s life.

* Note: this will be a survey of his life over 13 chapters in Genesis and not a deep dive into one portion of scripture

Four factors that shape a destiny:

Factor # 1 - Joseph’s life story pointed to his destiny.

His life was a patchwork of both pain and good fortune

* His Pain

Rejection by half-brothers - His brothers hated Joseph because their father loved him more than the rest of them. They couldn’t say a kind word to him. Genesis 37:4

They nearly killed him but at the last minute sold him to traders headed to Egypt

Slavery - When Joseph was taken to Egypt by the Ishmaelite traders, he was purchased by Potiphar, an Egyptian officer. Genesis 39:1

He lived the rest of his life as a refugee away from his homeland.

He did have some success which I’ll return to in minute but as things actually were looking up…

He was falsely accused of inappropriate behavior and jailed for it. - Potiphar was furious when he heard his wife’s story about how Joseph had treated her. So he took Joseph and threw him into the prison where the king’s prisoners were held, and there he remained. Genesis 39:19-20

* His good fortune

Right place at the right time in prison. Two of Pharoah’s imprisoned servants have dreams – Joseph interprets them – eventually is brought before Pharoah who has his own dream - “I had a dream last night, and no one here can tell me what it means. But I have heard that when you hear about a dream you can interpret it.”

“It is beyond my power to do this,” Joseph replied. “But God can tell you what it means and set you at ease.”So Pharaoh told Joseph his dream. Genesis 41:15-17

Joseph interprets the dream which is a prediction of a coming famine.

This peace of bad news impresses Pharaoh which eventually leads to Joseph ascendance to 2nd in command in Egypt – “Since God has revealed the meaning of the dreams to you, clearly no one else is as intelligent or wise as you are. You will be in charge of my court, and all my people will take orders from you. Only I, sitting on my throne, will have a rank higher than yours. So Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of all Egypt.” Genesis 41:39

All of these elements in his story…the good, the bad, the ugly and the wonderous… shaped his destiny…**in particular the pain.**

* Your pain…your struggle…your desolation often is the seed bed from which your destiny grow.
* Misery can give you perspective that others don’t have and lead you to a calling that contributes to other human beings and the world in powerful ways.

More on that in a minute…

Four factors that shape a destiny:

Factor # 1 - Joseph’s life story pointed to his destiny.

Factor # 2 - Joseph’s personality pointed to his destiny.

Here are some things we surmise about Joseph’s personality.

* He was really self-assured (a jerk as a teen)
* Intelligent
* Winsome
* Inspiring
* Outgoing
* Gifted leader and a make it happen kind of guy

Using the enneagram as a base – He has the detail of a “1”, the uniqueness of a “4”, the intelligence of a “5”, the risk assessing skills of a “6”, and the winsomeness of a “7” …. But I’m going to guess he’s a somewhat clueless but inspiring “3”…the guy who can always get you from A to B.

Personality does not define your destiny but it certainly shapes how you go about it…

Four factors that shape a destiny:

Factor # 1 - Joseph’s life story pointed to his destiny.

Factor # 2 - Joseph’s personality pointed to his destiny.

Factor # 3 - Joseph’s skills pointed to his destiny.

Joseph had two obvious skills:

Obvious one – dreamer and interpreter of dreams – Interpreting dreams is God’s business,” Joseph replied. “Go ahead and tell me your dreams. Genesis 40:8

Others – manager/leader – the plan for managing the famine was brilliant and not only saved the lives of Egyptians but many others in the world – including his estranged family.

Like personality, your skills and gifts may not define your destiny but they certainly will show you how to go about it.

Four factors that shape a destiny:

Factor # 1 - Joseph’s life story pointed to his destiny.

Factor # 2 - Joseph’s personality pointed to his destiny.

Factor # 3 - Joseph’s skills pointed to his destiny.

Factor # 4 - Joseph’s passions pointed to his destiny

What were Jospeh’s passions?

* for integrity and God’s will.

“How could I do such a wicked thing? It would be a great sin against God.”

“Interpreting dreams is God’s business”

“It was God has sent me ahead of you to keep you and your families alive and to preserve many survivors.”

* His passion for his family. (review the last part of the story)

But as for you, you meant evil against me; *but* God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as *it is* this day, to save many people alive. Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones.” And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them. Genesis 50:20 New King James Version

* (reading between the lines) I believe he had a passion to serve and protect all human beings.

So…

From this survey of Joseph’s life, we’re reminded that: Joseph was built to count, as water was made to run downhill. He was placed in a specific context to count in ways no one else could. That was his destiny.

**His destiny was to preserve the covenant God made with Abraham and save a lot of people in the meantime.**

What is your destiny?

1. Like Joseph - Your life story points to your destiny – the good, the bad, the ugly and the wondrous.

* Diane grew up in poverty and neglect and a family acquainted with special needs = 30 years a special needs teacher
* Young ATO who realized his grandma had shaped him to help others financially
* Young ethnically Nepalese Indian young woman – successful – reshaping her life to provide care for her people post COVID
* Tricia – emotionally abused and body shamed = now mentoring dozens of young women.

2 Corinthians 1:4 – the comfort we receive we use to comfort others

Your pain and misfortune – though horrible – may point to your destiny more than any one factor of your life.

1. Like Joseph - Your passions will help you focus on where to invest your life. What are they?

* Which broken place in this world moves you?
* What breaks your heart?

1. Like Joseph - Your personality and gifts will shape how you go about living your destiny.

* I talk about them in my book - Brandon and Marc – totally different personalities and skill sets sharing the same passion for ending hatred.

What is your calling? What is your destiny?

What has “God meant for good” through your life?

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