

God has a general will for all human beings (Matt. 22:34-40; 2 Peter 3:9; 1 Tim. 2:3-6; Gal. 5:16-25; 1 Thess. 4:3; James 4:7; 1 Peter 2:13-15). God also has a specific will for all human beings (Psalm 139:16; Eph. 2:10; Romans 12:6-8). You may not know what God wants you to do, but you can be certain that He has a plan for your life and wants you to fulfill that plan.

Three reasons people do not fulfill God's plan for their lives:

1. Ignorance – Some people do not know God created them to fulfill a purpose.
2. Apathy – Some people do not care about fulfilling their purpose.
3. Misfocus – Some people are more focused on their past or present than their future.

Joseph did not live focused on his painful past or unpleasant present. Joseph stayed focused on his future because he believed God had a purpose for his life.

- You must believe God has a purpose for your life to stay focused on your future.

Genesis 41-50 records the last chapter in Joseph's life...

1st – Joseph is a remembered prisoner. Genesis 41:1-13

The king of Egypt had a dream about seven fat, healthy cows being devoured by seven ugly, gaunt cows. Then, he had another dream about seven plump heads of grain being devoured by seven shriveled heads of grain. Pharaoh was so frightened by these dreams that he called in all his magicians and advisors early the next morning to interpret his two nightmares. But none of them could tell him what the dreams meant. Then, the chief cupbearer remembered a Hebrew prisoner who could interpret dreams.

2nd – Joseph is a remarkable person. Genesis 41:14-40

Joseph told the king that his two dreams were about the same thing. The seven fat cows and seven plump heads of grain represent seven years of plenty, and the seven thin cows and seven thin heads of grain represent seven years of famine that will consume the seven years of plenty. Joseph then advised Pharaoh to choose a wise man to oversee storing 20 percent of the grain during the seven years of plenty to live on during the seven years of famine. Then, Pharaoh made Joseph the second most powerful man in the world!

3rd – Joseph is a royal governor. Genesis 41:41-50:26

Joseph stored food during the seven years of plenty, then opened the storehouses and gave food to the Egyptians. Then, as the famine worsened, Joseph sold food to those around Egypt (Gen. 41:53-57). *Was Joseph happy during this time?* He was certainly happier as a governor than a slave or prisoner. But Joseph felt unfulfilled. He knew there was something bigger the Lord wanted him to do. So, he kept looking focused on the future, searching for God's eternal purpose for him.

- To stay focused on your future, you must believe God will reveal your purpose.

Sometime during the famine, Jacob sent Joseph's older brothers to buy food in Egypt. Then, Joseph learned his purpose. God made him the governor of Egypt to save the nation of Israel (Gen. 42:6-9)!

Genesis Chapters 42-50 tells us how Joseph revealed himself to his brothers and brought his entire family to Egypt to save them from the famine (Gen. 45:3-11). The book of Genesis concludes with Joseph telling his brothers how God used the pain they caused him for good.

“You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people.” Genesis 50:20 NLT

- To stay focused on your future, you must believe God can use bad for good.

You will get discouraged and become past or present-focused if you do not believe God is able to take all the bad in your life (hurts, failures, mistakes, sins, shortcomings, and stupid decisions) and use them for good. God can turn our messes into masterpieces!