

## Good Work

**The Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them” (Acts 13:2).**

**Scripture:** Acts 13:1-5

**Song:** “Take My Life and Let It Be “

“I think I’m going to be a Sparks leader,” my husband announced. He had just returned from picking up our 5-year-old son from our church’s Bible program for children.

“Really?” I asked. “Why Sparks?”

My husband shrugged and smiled. “They said they need leaders, and it’s something I can do.” A few years after becoming a Sparks leader, my husband and I became Sparks directors. It turned out to be a good fit for both of us.

Sometimes God’s call is dramatic, like when the Holy Spirit spoke to the believers in Antioch and set apart Saul and Barnabas, but most of the time God’s call is subtle. He has work for every believer to do, but He needs us to be willing to say yes when He shows us a need or an opportunity. God knows the skills He’s gifted us with, the skills He wants to develop in us, and how He wants us to serve. Take a few minutes to worship and be still before the Lord. Be willing to do the good work He has for you today.

**Father**, open my eyes to the opportunities around me. Help me to serve You fully. In Jesus’ name, amen.

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September 7–13. **Katie Robles** is a paraprofessional in a special-needs school in Delaware. She has four sons and loves to travel and write.

## My Testimony

**“Things turned out exactly as he interpreted them to us”**  
(Genesis 41:13).

**Scripture:** Genesis 41:9-13

**Song:** “Testify”

The famous actor being interviewed on TV had just battled cancer. He had struggled with drugs in his younger days, but when he got saved, his life changed dramatically. As I listened to him speak about what God had done in his life, my initial excitement took a downward turn. “You can’t have a testimony without a test,” he said several times. “That’s why it’s called a testimony.” My heart fell. I was saved at a young age and never had a time of “falling away.” What was I supposed to do—go live a life of sin so that God could be glorified when I turned away from it? Ask God to give me cancer so I could be tested? My testimony felt cheap and useless.

Then a few weeks later, I heard another Christian say, “Don’t forget the test of time.” My heart filled with joy at this new perspective. I had been following Jesus for more than 20 years, and He had never let me down. That was a testimony worth sharing.

The cupbearer unknowingly gave testimony to Pharaoh of the good for all people that God was preparing to do through Joseph (Psalm 105:16-22). But we know God’s work in our lives and can give testimony of how He has saved our souls and also of how He is loving and caring for us even today.

Who can you share your testimony with today?

**Father,** Your love withstands the test of time. Help me to testify to others about who You are and what Jesus has done for me. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## Powerless

**“I cannot [interpret your dream],” Joseph replied to Pharaoh, “but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires” (Genesis 41:16).**

**Scripture:** Genesis 41:14-24

**Song:** “Mighty to Save”

“I give up,” I told God. I had just walked away from a spirited, hours-long debate with a friend about Christianity. It wasn’t our first discussion about sin, salvation, and forgiveness; but this particular conversation had made it clear that he understood what the Bible said but didn’t see his need for a Savior. I’ve always known that it’s Jesus who saves people, and not man’s efforts, but I had never felt my powerlessness as keenly as I did that day.

Like Joseph conveyed to Pharaoh, “I cannot . . . but I know God can.” Salvation is God’s work. I continue to pray for my friend’s salvation and I continue to talk about Jesus, but now I pray with an attitude of surrender because it’s not my effort or my words that will save him. I cannot change him, but God can.

The interpretation of Pharaoh’s dream was something only God could do. And He was glorified not only in front of Pharaoh but throughout Egypt, as Joseph was promoted and word spread that the God of Israel had spoken. Open your hands in surrender as you praise God for the things that you cannot do but that He can.

**Father,** thank You that You are all-powerful. Help me to be faithful to what You call me to do and to trust You for the results. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## Store Up

**“Commissioners . . . should collect all the food of these good years . . . to be used during the seven years of famine that will come upon Egypt, so that the country may not be ruined by the famine”** (Genesis 41:34-36).

**Scripture:** Genesis 41:34-36

**Song:** “When I Look Back Down the Road”

In 2014, our family drove from Delaware to Iowa to say goodbye to my grandfather. Grandpa had a tumor in his jaw, and a nasty fall had put him in a wheelchair. He was getting worse, and I knew it was probably the last visit I’d have with him. I treasured every moment of those two days. I soaked in his mannerisms and the way he looked at my grandmother. I told my kids stories about visits to his farm when I was young, and I laughed at his jokes. After our last conversation, I pulled out a notebook and wrote down everything he’d said. I wanted to store up the good memories while I could.

We don’t always know when hard times will come—but God does. God warned Pharaoh so that Egypt could be ready for the famine and God’s people could come and be saved through Joseph. It’s important to store up and take note of the good times. Consider keeping a journal where you record your prayers to God and how He answers you. When hard times come, it’s encouraging to look back on the blessings you’ve stored up.

**Father**, when hard times come, help me not to forget the good times and the ways You’ve loved me. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## Wealth Beyond Measure

**Joseph stored up huge quantities of grain, like the sand of the sea; it was so much that he stopped keeping records because it was beyond measure** (Genesis 41:49).

**Scripture:** Genesis 41:41-49

**Song:** “Oh, the Unsearchable Riches of Christ”

When John D. Rockefeller was a child, his mother taught him to tithe to the church and give to charity. He tithed his whole life—whether he was making 34 cents a day picking potatoes at age 9 or, later, making hundreds of millions of dollars with his Standard Oil Company. He taught his children and grandchildren to do the same. Though his business practices were often criticized, he was a great philanthropist, donating millions of dollars to educational, medical, and scientific pursuits. Rockefeller said, “I believe the power to make money is a gift of God . . . to be developed and used to the best of our ability for the good of mankind.”

Joseph’s fortunes plummeted in his youth: he went from being the favorite son of a rich father to being a slave and a jailbird. But Joseph kept his integrity and his faith in God, and God gave him power and wealth in a prosperous nation. God also blessed Egypt with so much grain, they couldn’t measure it.

We may not have Rockefeller’s or Joseph’s fortune, but we have been blessed in countless ways in our daily lives and blessed beyond measure for eternity. Thank God for His many blessings, and ask Him to touch your heart to give to bless others.

**Father,** You are a generous God. Help me to be generous with others and to be faithful to You, no matter what amount is in my bank account. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## A Needed Friend

**There was famine in all the other lands, but in the whole land of Egypt there was food** (Genesis 41:54).

**Scripture:** Genesis 41:53-57

**Song:** “And My God Will Meet All Your Needs”

My husband, Ed, moved from Peru to the United States when he was 11 years old. He started seventh grade in the middle of the year, and he was not only the new kid; he also didn't speak English. Ed was lonely, so he asked God for a friend, and God sent him a classmate named Todd. The kids at their school were mostly from rough neighborhoods, but Todd was kind and exactly the friend Ed needed. Ed moved to another state a year later, but he never forgot how God provided a good friend when he needed one. Ed looks back on that first year in the States as a time of spiritual growth, when he realized that God heard and answered prayer.

God knew that Egypt, the lands around it, and His chosen people (the Israelites) would need food during the famine. He warned Pharaoh and placed Joseph in a position of power in order to provide what the people needed. God knows what we need and loves us enough to provide. Set a timer for one minute and list all your needs; then set the timer for two minutes and thank God for providing what we need.

**Father,** thank You that You know what I need before I do. Thank You for hearing my prayers. I trust You to take care of me. In Jesus' name, amen.

## Ready for Fifth Grade

**“It is just as I said to Pharaoh: God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do.” . . . Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you” (Genesis 41:28, 39).**

**Scripture:** Genesis 41:25-33, 37-40, 50-52

**Song:** “I Can Only Imagine”

A few weeks before my son Edson entered fifth grade, he received a letter in the mail from an older student. Edson’s teacher had had his graduating fifth graders write letters to the upcoming group to prepare them for a successful year. The letter told Edson how much fun he would have in fifth grade; and it was full of advice like “work hard,” “don’t cheat,” and “wear deodorant.” When school started a few weeks later, Edson was ready.

God prepared Egypt for the famine by telling Pharaoh what to expect and sending Joseph to give him advice. Pharaoh recognized that Joseph was wise and discerning because he listened to God. God has told us in the Bible what to expect not only in this life but in our eternal life to come. He wants us to be prepared, and we are wise and discerning if we listen to Him. Take a few minutes to be still and ponder the fact that God is in control and guides us because He loves us.

**Father,** I praise You because You know the future, and I thank You for giving us the Bible to prepare and guide us. Help me to be wise and to trust You as You guide me. In Jesus’ name, amen.