

A NEW BEGINNING: STAYING FOCUSED

Scripture used: [Genesis 41:33-36 \(NLT\)](#)

OVERVIEW

This is Pastor Hurmon's fourth sermon on how to achieve a new beginning. While there is brokenness everywhere, we can have fruitful and impactful lives by submitting ourselves to God's redemptive work. A new beginning happens through connection with God's process. In previous messages, Pastor Hurmon focused on learning to say goodbye to turn the page on the past and on improving our focus to avoid going through life with aimless distraction. Now he shares insights in how we should stay focused - all to execute on God's vision for ourselves and the world.

KEY POINTS

- 1) We are studying the life of Joseph in our Scripture. Joseph was favored by his father but hated by his jealous brothers. They trafficked him out of their country, which took him into exile and later prison. But one day Joseph was in a position to explain to the Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt, a prophetic dream he had had, foreshadowing a time of prosperity followed by a time of "famine and pestilence." This was Joseph's special calling and focus that saved the lives of hundreds of thousands of people. Dr Martin Luther King Jr. had a particularly powerful prayer where he pleaded to God: "Use me, God, for a purpose greater than myself." This is the very definition of focus.
- 2) Pastor Hurmon walked us through the "anatomy of being focused." It starts with a definition of "What, by when", so we are clear on our goals and we write them down. For Joseph, it was to help lead Egypt through a time of intense disruption over 14 years. We must then go through a series of S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-Based) goals, whereby we evolve from wishful thinking to identified wins. In our Scripture, this entailed appointing a wise leader, and supervisors to oversee operations in the field, and building a surplus and reserve to have distributed and secure supplies during the times of penury. We have to manage our distractions. And we have to obsess over the process, not the product. A good example is a very common goal of losing weight that might focus on the outcome, when in fact the process of exercising, eating well, and paying attention to healthy living is really what matters.
- 3) The good news about focus is that God is always focused on fulfilling His purposes for our lives, no matter what hardships or struggles we are facing. [Romans 8:28](#) reminds us that God is able to work all things for our good and for His purpose; this assurance of God should bring us comfort in times of trouble.
- 4) Scripture speaks of God's overarching focus on relationships; people matter to God, and how we love others around us matters to God. In this way, God's focus also challenges us - how can we faithfully follow God in prioritizing relationships over ideology and partisanship. So many families and friends are divided by politics today (and sometimes by other quarrels such as money or business or other forms of conflict). But we can't let anonymous symbols and abstract allegiances (including whoever is President at any given time) break the bonds we have with our loved ones whose close and concrete presence in our lives matters most. [1 John 4:20](#) says we cannot love God if we hate our brother or sister. [Genesis 45:2-5](#) shows how Joseph was able to be open-hearted toward relationships that could have been permanently marred by past sin and bitterness. More than ever, we should say "Come close to me" to the ones who have become estranged from us because of division, political or otherwise. We must empty our hearts of anguish, trust God with the mandate of reconciliation, and always prioritize relationships. On their deathbeds, no one has ever mentioned the President, but all have expressed regrets about broken relationships and missed opportunities for reconciliation.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Consider a relationship in the past where you have experienced some measure of reconciliation. What was that process like?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - What goals do you have for this year? Consider applying a SMART framework to ensure the goal is concrete, and not just wishful thinking. In Joseph's story in [Genesis 41-45](#), how did God connect His larger purpose of rescuing people from the famine to Joseph's own reconciliation with his family? How were these areas interconnected for the remainder of Israel's history?
- 3) **DO** - Who is God placing on your heart to forgive or reach out to?