

While I was praying:

- * There are things normal to life and things we take into our lives that don't belong there.
- * We are responsible for living the way God wants us to live; we don't live like animals that can't process life as humans can and do.
- * Appreciate doing things God's way; it will bring joy.

In this Torah portion, Pharaoh had two dreams, one involving 7 cows being eaten by lean cows and another of 7 good looking ears of corn being eaten by bad looking corn. Yosef (Joseph) is able to interpret the dreams for Pharaoh and he puts him in charge of collecting for the famine Yosef predicted. There was going to be 7 years of plenty followed by 7 years of drought. During the drought, Yosef's family hears there is grain in Egypt so his brothers come for food. As the portion ends, Yosef's half-brothers still hadn't recognized Yosef and are torn with grief as Yosef tells them that Benjamin has to stay there.

What Yosef's (Joseph's) brothers did was terrible (selling Yosef as a slave and telling their father he was dead). Perhaps Yosef wanted to keep his brother there to protect him from them because they were the only children of Rachel. Yosef's brothers had been trying to live a normal life after what they did. In the next portion, we come to understand the struggle that is going on because they allowed this terrible sin into their lives.

I have seen first-hand on a number of occasions what loss can do to people and a family. My cousin died from appendicitis when she was 18 and her father died shortly after that in his 50s. I had another cousin who died from a heart murmur when he was 28 and both his parents died in their 50s within two years. I think they died from heartbreak. These were from chance natural medical problems. Sin adds to the stress of life and can bring heartbreak and emotional pain as well.

Yosef's brothers saw the grief their father Ya'akov had over the supposed death of Yosef. They must have also felt bad about what they had done. In the next portion, Yosef's brothers have come to understand the terrible effects of their actions and because Yosef tells them to leave Benjamin behind, they fear their father will die with grief. That is what sin does to our lives and that is what the sin of jealousy did to their family. Any sin whether big or small brings evil into this world and can bring personal pain. The sins of Yosef's brothers toward Yosef had brought tremendous grief and remorse. Sin and jealousy should not be part of our lives.

We are responsible to do what is right and do things God's way. We have a choice; we can either bring good into the world or pain and evil. We are in a spiritual battle. Yeshua talking about the leadership in His day said about them, "The thief comes only in order to steal, kill and destroy;" John 10:10a CJB. This is what people bring into the world by their sin. What happened when Yosef was sold into slavery by his brothers? Relationships were stolen away and destroyed and terrible grief came upon the family at the supposed death of Yosef.

We don't live like animals that can't process life as humans do. Animals are programmed (so to speak) to live and exist a certain way. They understand what's going through the way they have been created to process what they see hear, smell, and so forth. Humans though have the ability to think about how they will act. We can act with an animal like instinct where we look out only for ourselves, be defensively instinctively, or by how we feel; or, we can take into consideration how our actions will affect others and ourselves.

The creator God who knows what's best for us gave us rules to live by that will help us to get past the hurtful and destructive behaviors which come from being led by our shellfish and destructive nature. God

also tells us there are spiritual powers at work which are against us. The Bible says that devil is real and we must resist the devil's suggestions to do what is wrong. We must also resist our own wrong thoughts. We are responsible for what we think and do.

Ya'akov said (James),

"Therefore, submit to God. Moreover, take a stand against the Adversary, and he will flee from you. Come close to God, and he will come close to you. Clean your hands, sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded people! Wail, mourn, sob! Let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy into gloom! Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up."

Take a stand Ya'akov says. Stand up for yourself and for what is right. Take a stand against evil and the adversary, the devil.

What does responsible mean? "Able to answer for one's conduct and obligations: trustworthy."¹

What do you think adversary means?

What is the opposite of adversary?

This is some of what Webster's online dictionary tells us adversary means:²

'Synonyms of adversary

adversarial, antagonistic, hostile, inhospitable, mortal, negative, unfriendly,

Words Related to adversary

adverse, argumentative, combative, conflicting, contrary, disputatious, militant, opposed, quarrelsome, antisocial, cold, cool, disagreeable, disapproving, distant, frigid, icy, biased, prejudiced, discourteous, ill-bred, ill-mannered, impolite, inconsiderate, rude, surly, uncivil, unfavorable, unkind, unmannerly, unpleasant, unsociable, bitter, spiteful, hateful, spiteful, unloving, vindictive.

Near Antonyms of adversary (the opposite meaning)

amiable, amicable, civil, companionable, comradely, good-natured, good-tempered, gracious, neighborly, pleasant, sociable, social, warm, affectionate, devoted, kind, kindly, loving, nice, sweet, accepting, agreeable, approving, empathetic, favorable, understanding, warmhearted, welcoming.'

What a difference! What do you want to do with your life? Do you want to bring all those bad things with you wherever we go or those wonderful attributes? Take a stand, clean up your thoughts and don't allow any bad thoughts into our heads. I tell them to go and say to myself those are not what I am going to do and they are not my thoughts, even if it was my thought.

I may also tell the devil to go in the name of Yeshua (Jesus' real name). We have authority in Yeshua's name the Bible says. Believe in the name of Yeshua (you have authority with faith – faith is important!). I also sometimes say, "I rebuke that thought." Do not be double minded Ya'akov says. In other words, don't budge on doing what is right. People wonder why they do such stupid things sometimes. They are getting blindsided by the devil. Not every thought that comes into our minds are our own thoughts. Don't give in at all.

¹ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/responsible?src=search-dict-hed>

² <https://www.merriam-webster.com/thesaurus/adversary>

Get serious about life and do what is right and God will help us and give us the true joy that comes from doing what is right. Shaul (Paul) said to, "Take every thought captive and make it obey the Messiah;" 2 Corinthians 10:5 CJB. We have to do it. We decide what to think. Bring blessing into the world and not curses and pain. Bring goodness and kindness into the world. The world has enough pain and problems; why not try to be a solution to the pain that comes from those who live a life of shellfish ambition and hurt. Stop it; you stop it. We are responsible for what we think and how we live; live the way God wants us to live.

Anytime we start doing things right, we create blessing. Don't waver Ya'akov says; don't be double minded. Appreciate doing things God's way; it will bring joy. I have come to appreciate how doing things God's way brings good things and joy. I have seen how doing things the wrong way only creates pain and problems for myself and others. Again, what do you want, a life of pain or a life that brings goodness? You can't do that unless you make a commitment to do what is right, so do it. "What the righteous hope for will end in joy; what the wicked expect will come to nothing;" Proverbs 10:28 CJB.

Shaul said in Philemon 1:7 CJB, "For your love has given me much joy and encouragement. Brother, you have refreshed the hearts of God's people." That's what doing things right produces. It brings joy and encouragement and refreshes us. Yosef's brothers brought lots of grief and anxiety to their family by not controlling their thoughts and not doing what is right. Anyone can have joy; make sure to have joy. Let us make a firm commitment to bring blessing and joy to our homes, school, work, or wherever we are at.

What are some of the ways to have joy? Think about how doing what is right and good brings joy.

Think about your blessings.

Being a thankful person.

Bringing goodness and blessings with you.

Seeing the goodness of God's ways bless others, bless you.

Being at peace and living peacefully.