

## A NEW BEGINNING: GET FOCUSED!

Scripture used: [Genesis 41:51-52 \(NIV\)](#)

### OVERVIEW

Pastor Hurmon continued our series “A New Beginning” with a powerful sermon on the importance of focus during adversity. This is a stressful time for all of us. Last week’s violence at the Capitol and the uncertainty surrounding this week’s inauguration can feed into a sense of anxiety. We should be expecting this kind of adversity, though. It is exactly this kind of situation where God’s servants are called upon. Whether it was Joseph preparing an entire kingdom for a 7-year famine, or Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. protesting the Vietnam War, we must anticipate adversity. God opens doors for us to have a positive impact (fruitfulness) despite the brokenness of the world. Our job is to define a specific goal in 2021, one to which God is calling us. Then we can lean into our unique God-given strengths to maintain focus through all the challenges.

### KEY POINTS

- 1) **God’s work of redemption is a process.** We cannot expect instant results. God works through us, and the process itself is critical. No one can jump to the end result. Over the last two weeks, Pastor Hurmon spoke about the importance of forgetting (letting go of things past that God does not intend for us to hold onto) as the first step of this process. Forgetting is captured in the name of Joseph’s first son, Manasseh. Now we turn to focusing, which Joseph acknowledged in the name of his second son, Ephraim. In his suffering, Joseph was fruitful. This required incredible focus despite being sold into slavery and being wrongly imprisoned. These traumatic events shaped him for the future work God needed him to do.
- 2) **A successful process must anticipate adversity.** Everyone faces trials in life. They are an inescapable part of a broken world. Rather than assuming things are going to go well, we should assume there will be many setbacks. Each challenge is an opportunity to stay focused. Adversity does not need to be a distraction.
- 3) **Stay focused by beginning with God’s end in mind.** When Joseph was put in charge of all of Egypt; he knew what he had to do. He had interpreted Pharaoh’s dream in [Genesis 41:29-30 \(NLT\)](#), which called for 7 years of plentiful harvest followed by 7 years of terrible famine. Joseph knew his success would be measured by his ability to develop a process that drove the nation through 14 challenging years, emerging stronger at the end. This was the goal that God had given him. Anything that didn’t contribute to this goal was a distraction.
- 4) **God opens doors that allow us to activate our gifts.** Throughout his life, Joseph managed to be successful. Whether serving Potiphar in [Genesis 39:4 \(NLT\)](#) or the prison warden in [Genesis 39:21-22 \(NLT\)](#), he leaned into the ways he had been shaped by God. The Lord was with him wherever he was, even though that place itself might be terrible.

### DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - God wants to create a new beginning in our lives. This requires forgetting what should be released to God in the past, and focusing on the future. To do this, we must shift the emphasis on ourselves to an emphasis on God. He is calling us and shaping us in pursuit of His goals. What has been your most “fruitful” season in your life to this point? What made it “fruitful”?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - We must prayerfully assess ourselves. God has given us passions, gifts, experiences, and inspired moments. These will come together this year in powerful ways. This week’s question is “What does fruitfulness look like in my life in 2021?” Also consider the process of working out your goals for this year. What goals are personal goals that you have simply because they are important to you? Who do you want to become this year? And most importantly, how is God calling you to be fruitful in the things of God, and how is He shaping your heart and your character this year?
- 3) **DO** - Pastor Hurmon gave us a powerful affirmation this week: I will ask God to shape my focus for 2021! Spend time in prayer and reflection around the goals that God would have you put into place for this year. Write them down and share them with your Life Group. Join us next Sunday as we continue in this series and tackle the challenge of staying focused!