

FIELD-TESTED SERMON RESOURCES

SERMON SERIES

TRUSTED | BIBLICAL | FIELD-TESTED

Thank you for downloading this sample PDF from our Sermon Series line of resources.

When you stand up in front of students proclaim the Word of God, you need trusted, creative, Biblically solid content. YM360's Sermon Series is exactly what you're looking for.

Field-tested, from-the-trenches of youth ministry, YM360 Sermon Series are complete sermon outlines and graphic packages designed to help you lead students closer to God through proclaiming His Word.

SERIES OVERVIEW FOR THE CALL

God does not only save us; He also sends us out to rule on His behalf. This is our call. The same God who lives in close relationship to us through covenant also calls us to the responsibility of representing Him by exercising the Kingdom's authority and power He gives us. In this four-part sermon series, The Call, we'll examine the life of Joseph in the Bible and the path God guided him on throughout his entire life.

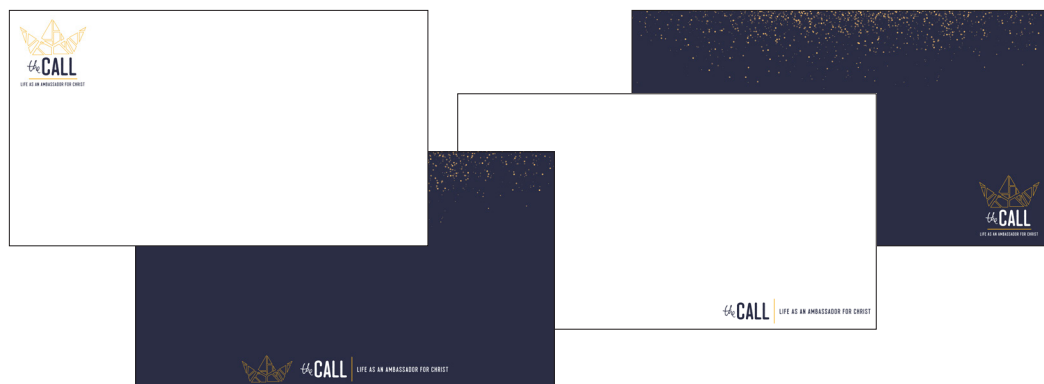
We are called to be ambassadors and emissaries who represent our King in the world. Like Joseph, we too have one call. So let us begin the journey with Joseph to see how his visions of greatness remind us of the visions of responsibility and authority that God has given us as well.

- **SESSION 1:** "Visions of Greatness": You'll help students understand that authority is a responsibility, not a reward.
- **SESSION 2:** "Depths of Despair": To show students that brokenness opens the door to greatness.
- **SESSION 3:** "Glimmers of Hope": You'll show students that you're not ready to rule until you surrender.
- **SESSION 4:** "Seat of Power": Students will learn that power positions us to give, not receive.

BACKGROUND SLIDES, PROMOTIONAL ARTWORK, AND MORE . . .

Each YM360 Sermon Series comes with title and background slides, promotional art (including Instagram images), and logo treatments. Here is what to expect.

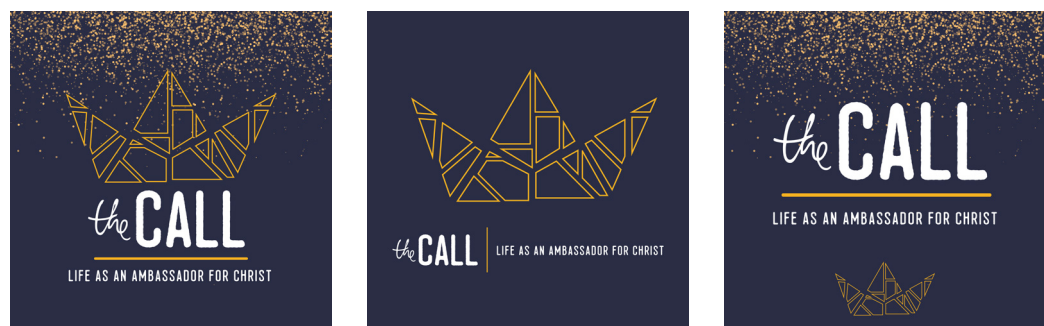
BACKGROUND AND TITLE SLIDES



PROMOTIONAL ARTWORK



INSTAGRAM IMAGES



LOGO TREATMENT



NOTE: Each YM360 Sermon Series also comes with the native files of the logo in case you want to replicate the design for other uses.

The Call Sermon Series Overview

The Sermon Series Overview is a one-page glimpse of the stuff you need to know to begin preparing to preach.

- **Session 1 Purpose:** To understand that authority is a responsibility, not a reward.
- **Scripture Passages:** Genesis 37:1-11
- **Session 1 Snapshot:** God gives us a call to become His representatives on earth as part of His mission to let the kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. This means that the authority and responsibility and power that God gives us is not for us; it's for others. The visions of greatness God gives us should point us outward to bringing God's kingdom in and around us. Instead, as we see that authority is a responsibility, not a reward, we will use the authority God gives us responsibly by using it for God's kingdom purposes instead of our selfish desires.
- **What You Need:**
 - **Optional images or clip for "Spoiled" illustration.**

Details on *The Call* Sermon Series Outlines

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- **Session 1: Visions of Greatness:** You'll help students understand that authority is a responsibility, not a reward.
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How To Use *The Call* Sermon Series

This sermon series outline is designed for use by a communicator in a large group setting. It provides the illustrations, pictures, Scriptures, background information, and application points that you will need to prepare your lesson. It also includes discussion questions that could be used in a small group following the message, a parent page that gets families involved, and artwork for promotion or message support.

These sermons are designed to be useful for all types of groups and churches, and you should feel free to make adjustments that benefit your particular circumstance.

I. Optional Illustration: Answering the Call

Dakota Meyer was a man with a charge. As a Marine, Dakota had pledged to uphold the United States Constitution. As part of this pledge, he was supposed to fight for and with his fellow soldiers, obey his commanding officers, and defend American interests around the world. But when Dakota was serving in Afghanistan, the various charges that he had came into conflict. On his radio, he heard about a unit of American soldiers that were pinned down by a Taliban attack. Dakota asked his commanding officers to help those soldiers, but they refused.

Dakota did not believe those orders matched his most important call: to protect the Constitution by protecting the life and liberty of Americans like his fellow soldiers. So he took a Humvee into the killing zone to save those soldiers. Five trips later, Dakota had saved 13 Americans and 23 of their Afghani allies. Because of how he lived out one call, even when other responsibilities tried to stop him, Dakota was awarded the Presidential Medal of Honor.

Dakota had many calls he was supposed to follow: his Marine oath, his moral code, his commanding officers, and more. But when those came into conflict, he chose one charge to follow – to protect his fellow soldiers. That one charge superseded all the others, and when he lived by this one call, he acted in a way that made all Americans proud.

We all have many calls in our lives as well. We are called to take care of ourselves and others. We are called to work hard and learn well. We are called to protect and help our friends and family. But those of us who are Christians have one call above others – to represent God our King and His kingdom.

The Bible reveals two themes that describe and explain the connection between God and His people – the ideas of covenant and kingdom. Covenant is about our relationship with God, while the kingdom is about the responsibility God gives us. Just as God gives us one life in the covenant, He gives us one call by giving us the authority and power to work to bring His kingdom here on earth.

We are called to be ambassadors and emissaries who represent our King in the world. And as we live out this one call by being in charge thanks to God's authority and power, we will see God's kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.

In *The Call*, we will learn what it means to live out this one call through lessons from the life of Joseph. We will see how his visions of greatness were scuttled by pride so that he landed in the depths of despair, and we will see that through his surrender to God, he found glimmers of hope that pointed to the seat of power he would ultimately hold.

Like Joseph, we too have one call. So let us begin the journey with Joseph to see how his visions of greatness remind us of the visions of responsibility and authority that God has given us as well.

II. Background

The book of Genesis tells the story of how God birthed the nation of Israel from one family. As we read the story of Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, we see how God creates a covenant with

this family and then gives this family one call. Abraham's story is primarily a story of covenant, and Joseph's is mainly a story of kingdom authority and responsibility.

In the life of Joseph, we see for the first time, something of what the 'rule' of God would be like when working through a chosen representative. In the same way that we saw God refashioning a relationship with humankind through Abraham, so in Joseph, we see God relaunching his plan for human representation in the world. Covenant refers to the relationship. Kingdom refers to responsibility. Covenant is about identity and obedience. Kingdom (Kingship) is about authority and power.

But as we go through Joseph's story from Genesis 37 to 50, we will discover that this kingdom authority did not come easily. At the beginning of his story, Joseph was not ready to exercise the responsibility God was going to give him. Instead, as we see in today's passage, he was marked by immaturity and pride. Let's see how these character traits derailed Joseph's God-given visions of greatness.

III. Explanation

[Read Genesis 37:1-11.]

Joseph's visions of greatness were God-given. Being the 'ruler' over Egypt was the unmistakable calling of Joseph's life. He was called to take on a role that God had prepared for him. Joseph's relationship with Pharaoh is symbolic of his (and our) relationship with God. There was, of course, only one King, but he chose to rule 'through' Joseph. He was to become governor of the greatest nation on earth, and he was likewise the empowered emissary of God in the world.

But something happened in this passage to derail that greatness right at the start. At age 17, Joseph wasn't mature enough to handle the visions of greatness God had given him. As a result, a family dynamic that was already strained became irreparably harmed.

Joseph was his father's favorite, and that favoritism led to tension between Joseph and his older brothers. "When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him." (v. 4)

Joseph made this situation worse with the way he talked about his God-given dreams. He bragged about his first dream to his brothers as a way of telling them that he would one day rule over them. As a result, they "hated him all the more." (v. 8)

But Joseph wasn't done. When he had a second dream that indicated he would rule not only over his brothers but also over his father and mother as well, he once again bragged about it. This increased the jealousy among Joseph's brothers and even led Jacob to rebuke his favorite son.

The visions of greatness Joseph had in this passage didn't lead to greatness. This wasn't because they were made up; these dreams were from God, and we'll see as our series continues that they accurately portrayed what would happen in the lives of Joseph and his family.

However, Joseph did not react well to these God-given dreams. He used these dreams not as a way to glorify God but as a way to glorify himself. Joseph was immature, brash, and prideful about these dreams and what they said. He relished the thought of having authority over his brothers, and he used

this idea to make himself feel bigger, and his brothers feel smaller. He treated the greatness in these visions as a reward for himself instead of calling with responsibility. As a result, hatred and jealousy filled a family so deeply that it would take years to overcome.

Let's try to learn from Joseph's mistakes to see how we should react when God gives us visions of greatness.

IV. Optional Illustration: Spoiled

[Tip: If possible, show stock images of spoiled children throwing fits.]

In 2001, a seventeen-year-old girl was profiled in Time magazine as the prototypical spoiled teenager. She spent an afternoon drinking tequila that she paid for with her American Express Gold Card, and after that, she took off in her new Audi. She was talking on her cell phone as she drove drunk, and she hit and killed another teenager who was rollerblading. When Carla went to court and was charged with drunken driving and manslaughter, her parents asked the judge if it was OK for their 17-year-old daughter to spend the summer in Paris as she usually did.

[If possible, share a story here from your childhood about a time you were spoiled. How did it pan out for you? What did you learn?]

When we hear the story of someone like this, we wonder just how spoiled a child can be. That's the feeling that Joseph's brothers had about him. In a culture where the oldest child in a family was supposed to be favored, Joseph became the favored son, even though he was the 11th of 12 sons because he was the firstborn son of his father, Jacob's favorite wife, Rachel. Jacob also made his favoritism impossible to miss by giving Joseph a coat of many colors made with expensive fabrics. As we see how this favoritism played out in the family dynamic, we'll see how it led Joseph to take his visions of greatness in a prideful direction.

V. Application

God does not want us to be mere believers. In His grace, He gives us a call to become His representatives on earth. He provides us with this kingdom call not just to make us feel good, but as part of His mission to let the kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. This means that the authority and responsibility and power that God gives us is not for us; it's for others. In other words, authority is a responsibility, not a reward.

Joseph failed to recognize this at the beginning of his journey. When God sent dreams that gave Joseph visions of greatness, Joseph wanted to lord this greatness over his brothers and even his parents. As a result of Joseph's arrogance, his splintered family fractured even more.

Any vision, however noble, has both human and divine elements within it. For Joseph, he received very clear visions from God – but his humanity betrayed him in his understanding of them. For us, we may not have the same clarity of vision from God, but the visions we pursue in light of God's guidance and our hearts also need to be considered.

God never gives us visions of greatness merely as a prize. It is never something for us to keep ourselves. Instead, authority is a responsibility, not a reward. The visions of greatness God gives us should point us outward to bringing God's kingdom in and around us.

This is where Joseph's humanity failed him. When he got a vision of greatness, he focused on how great it would be to be powerful. He relished the thought of reigning over others and controlling them. He did not give much (if any) thought to how he could use his power to help others. Instead, he let pride and selfishness rule in his life.

We'll see throughout the rest of Joseph's story how God corrected Joseph's thinking. We'll see how God led Joseph through brokenness and submission so that Joseph would use the authority God gave him for God's kingdom purposes instead of his own.

We need to learn the same lesson, but we need not learn this the hard way. Instead, as we see that authority is a responsibility, not a reward, we will use the authority God gives us responsibly by using it for God's kingdom purposes instead of our selfish desires.

VI. Optional Illustration: Uncle Ben

Stories of superheroes have been a staple of comic books, TV, movies, and more since Superman first appeared on the scene. While superheroes all have different powers – flight, invisibility, quick healing, to name just a few – they all face a similar choice. What will they do with their powers? Will they use their abilities to help themselves, or will they use their powers to help others?

There's a moment in the origin story of Peter Parker, who becomes Spiderman. His uncle is speaking to him and says the phrase: "With great power comes great responsibility." Uncle Ben is, of course, referencing Peter's newfound ability to shoot webs, scale buildings, and fight crime, but the point remains. Power is not for us. It's for God to use for others.

Uncle Ben could have been talking to Joseph here. When God gave him visions of greatness, he could have used them for the benefit of others or his interest. As we've seen, Joseph made the wrong choice. He took these visions of greatness and used them to push others down instead of helping others up. Thankfully, we can live in another way if we will acknowledge that authority is a responsibility, not a reward.

VII. Closing

If God had let Joseph's dreams come true immediately, they would have become a nightmare, because Joseph was inclined to use God-given authority as a reward for himself. Instead, God wanted Joseph's visions to become sweet dreams, and so he set about changing Joseph so that he would use authority for others instead of himself. God does the same thing in our lives, making sure that the authority He gives us is sweet not only for us but also for those around us.

God gives us one call to help bring His kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. But if we treat this one call as if it's only about being the boss, then we will fall into the same trap that Joseph did. So, don't treat authority merely as a prize for you to enjoy. Embrace the responsibility to exercise the authority God gives you in the ways that He intends. Look at the ways God has given you power and ask yourself how

you're helping others. How are you protecting? How are you honoring? Are you using your power to intimidate or further your agenda? Or are you using it as God intended?

And as you do, celebrate how God is using you to let His kingdom come and bring sweet dreams in the world.

Small Group Discussion Questions

You can use these discussion questions to facilitate small groups after your sermon, or even create handouts for students to work through the message as you go. These questions are designed to help students think critically about the sermon and what it means to them.

1. What was Joseph's relationship with his father like?
2. What was his relationship with his brothers like?
3. What were Joseph's dreams about? How were they visions of greatness?
4. Did Joseph react well to these dreams? Explain your answer.
5. Describe Joseph's character in this passage. How did these character traits keep him from exercising the authority God was giving him?
6. How does pride keep us from using God-given authority rightly?
7. How does immaturity do this?
8. What responsibilities come with the authority God gives us?