

In the Beginning

Genesis 39:1-23

- Sometimes things happen in our lives that at the time we can't understand why or see how can God use it for His good and our benefit, for Joseph this is one of those times. He is presumed dead by his father having been sold into slavery by his brothers and taken into Egypt, where he is going to be brought by Potiphar an officer of Pharaoh the King. Right now things look bleak for the young man who once wore a coat of colors signifying the love his father had for him but now is wearing slave clothes signifying that he is nothing more than someone's property and unloved

V1-23

- **V1-2** Joseph is in a bad situation, he is in a foreign land, living in a stranger's house, expected to obey and follow his pagan rules whether he agrees with them or not. Potiphar means "**devoted to the sun**" its connected with the Egyptian god "**Ra**" so not only is Joseph a slave but he's now under the authority of an ungodly, pagan, idolater, who worships a false sun god.
- How do you serve someone who does not serve the Lord? I can tell you this, it has nothing to do with whether the person deserves your service or not, as we'll see its all about Joseph's personal relationship to the Lord and not his current circumstance or situation. This story is an outline of how a believer should act and what we should do when place in impossible circumstances.
- **V2** notice he is called prosperous or successful not because of his bank account or social position, but because "the Lord is with him" so although he is in a foreign land, living as a slave, with unbelievers, in a pagan culture, this folks is the definition of a bad situation, and yet scripture calls him "**prosperous**", but from a worldly perspective he is a failure but from a Godly perspective he is a success as God is with him and he is where the Lord wants him to be.
- **V3-6 Prov 16:7-** now where do we read that Potiphar was Joseph's friend or that he bought him because he worshipped the Lord and wanted to save Joseph from a worse situation, scripture is clear Potiphar bought Joseph to serve him, he was his slave, and he was treated like one, until he something different in Joseph and that was the Lord. When a believer is putting the Lord before anything else even unbelievers can tell there is a difference between them and others.
- Joseph caught Potiphar's attention by doing his work to please the Lord and not to impress his boss > **Col 3:22-24-** don't work only when you think the boss is looking, as ultimately it's the Lord Who will be rewarding us and not man. Because of God's blessing Joseph is rewarded for his faithfulness and is given a promotion to overseer of Potiphar's household.
- So trustworthy was Joseph that Potiphar left everything that he had in Joseph's hands, meaning he had power of attorney of the house to make deals with merchants, sign Potiphar's name when it came to selling and buying crops, as Potiphar knew Joseph would never cheat him because of his devotion to the Lord. If people observe you long enough they should see that the reason why you are so fair, generous, quick to serve, is not because your so good, but because the Lord has been so good to you, and therefore you are simply imitating Him.

- V7 with success comes challenges, as Potiphar wasn't the only person to take note of what a good job Joseph was doing, Potiphar's wife also started to watch him and liked what he was doing, so much so she asked Joseph to commit adultery with her. Just when things seemed to be looking up for Joseph temptation comes in the form of Potiphar's wife, sadly some would say Joseph deserves to enjoy a little sin as he's been a good boy that's bringing Potiphar wealth and being a slave he's not being paid so why not, that's the mentality of people even in the church.
- **V8-9** Joseph mentions **3** reasons why he couldn't do such a thing > **1st** its dishonoring and disrespecting his master, **2nd** he'd be abusing his God given authority, **3rd** he would be throwing away his purity, so Joseph refuses her advances. **V10-12** the enemy is relentless, day by day she was after him, sometimes we have to **resist temptation**, other times we have to **reject temptation**, and still maybe we have to **run from temptation**, Joseph does all three of these.
- **V13-18** initially she presented herself as an opportunity for Joseph and her to enjoy some pleasure now she has become vengeful and spiteful, willing to lie and manipulate in order to see Potiphar punish Joseph for something that he hadn't done. Again we see that you can be doing what is right and still get accused of doing something wrong, what should you do, go on a defend yourself tour, call the ACLJ or Christian coalition, how do we respond?
- **V19-20** Joseph was supposed to die for this crime, their were no rights for slaves when their master accused them of wrongdoing, they could meet out the punishment without a trial. Potiphar is mad but notice it doesn't say at Joseph, because he knew what kind of woman woman his wife was and what kind of man Joseph was, and he hated to lose such a good worker. Instead of taking Joseph life he has him put into prison, and Joseph never said a word **Prov 23:27** says a woman who doesn't care about her purity won't care about anything else.
- **V21-23** if God blessed Joseph when he went into the pit and his brothers spoke of killing him, then blessed him as a slave in Potiphar's house, why would we be surprised that he blesses him in prison as well. Despite these terrible circumstances Joseph found himself in notice none of them changed or defeated God's plan for Joseph's life. It takes a lot of self control not to lash out or begin to change your perspective from Godly to worldly when experiencing one terrible situation after another but Joseph kept his mind on the Lord and not his surroundings.
- **Prov 25:28**- tell us **"a person who has no rule over their spirit is like a city without any defenses around it"** in all these things Joseph learned to endure injustices and to wait for God's redemption. You see he goes into Egypt a **17yr** old boy, but he is going to grow up to be a mature God honoring, man who will rise up not give out vengeance but to provide deliverance.