

LESSON 3



Joseph and Potiphar's Wife, by Del Parson, © 1988 IRI

JOSEPH PUT INTO PRISON

Scripture Text: *Genesis 39:1-23*

So far only evil seems to have come to Joseph. We must wait to see how God turns it for good. God's promises are always perfectly fulfilled.

Joseph's life was a type of the life of Christ. Joseph was hated by his brothers for telling of their sins. Jesus was hated for telling people of their sins (Luke 20:19). Joseph's brothers planned to kill him. Jesus' own people planned and did kill Him (Matthew 27:1-35). Joseph's coat was taken from him. Jesus' coat was taken from Him (John 19:23-24).

Joseph was sold by his brothers for twenty pieces of silver. Jesus was sold by one of His disciples for thirty pieces of silver (Matthew 26:14-15).

MEMORY VERSE: *"Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face."*

Psalm 69:7

Firmness of Character

Genesis 39:1-6 Joseph was now in Egypt, a slave of Potiphar, Pharaoh's captain of the guard. But **the Lord was with Joseph**. Joseph was blessed by the Lord. God gave success in all he did. Potiphar recognized this fact and trusted him with all of his business. Joseph's prosperity extended to Potiphar. **The Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake**. Joseph was good-looking and intelligent.

Genesis 39:7-10 Joseph's pleasing qualities drew the notice of Potiphar's wife. She, not being a good person, enticed him to sin with her. **But he refused**. For two reasons such an act was detestable to him:

- (1) it would be a betrayal of his master's trust.
- (2) it would be sin against God.

We live in an evil world. The powers of darkness surround us and are constantly striving to pull us down into doubt, discouragement, and backsliding. This look at Joseph should encourage us. Everything was dark around him. All seemed to be going wrong. It is apparent that no question entered Joseph's mind as to how he should answer the temptation that came to him. He was decided, and no persuasion could change his stand. No price was too great for him to pay to remain on the side of right. Property, comfort, reputation, position—all could go—he still would obey God.

Fleeing Temptation

Genesis 39:11-16 The devil is persistent. This woman was not easily turned from her evil desires. One day, finding Joseph alone, **she caught him by his garment** and repeated her sinful urging. Quickly, Joseph slipped out of his coat **and fled, and got him out**. In frustration, the wicked woman turned to revenge. She called others and gave a false account, accusing Joseph of the crime of which she herself was guilty. As proof, she showed the

garment she held and claimed Joseph left it when startled by her cry for help.

Genesis 39:17-20 Potiphar came home and his wife reported this news to him. His trusted servant was untrue, and the proof before his eyes in the form of the abandoned garment! A little truth mixed into a lie makes it more deadly. Potiphar never thought to question it. Very angry, he cast Joseph into the prison..

Genesis 39:21-23 Things seemed to be going from bad to worse for Joseph—sold from his home, made a slave and then a prisoner, but Joseph held steady. He was determined not to sin, whatever happened. He kept his trust in God.

Decisions like Joseph's are seldom made at the sudden moment of crisis. We cannot think deep and straight then. The decision must be made before. Only the manner of following it can be chosen at the time of temptation. Outward circumstances looked bad. Inside, where it mattered most, all was well with Joseph, for the **Lord was with Joseph**.

Refusing to Sin

How can we make the right decision, or choose the right side, when so many differing voices advise us? Joseph looked Heavenward. He did not consider changing times, the customs of society, what was expedient, or what would "put him in right" with his owner. All he considered was what was right in God's sight. When we determine to choose right, shun sin, and look for the right way, the Bible and the Holy Spirit will lead us there.

People, young and old, who wish to avoid falling into sin, take a lesson from Joseph. He not only refused to do the sin the woman suggested, he also **refused to be with her**. If you are not to steal, lie, tell filthy stories, commit fornication, drink or smoke, you must not go with people who do. If you do not wish to read low literature, keep it out of your house. Companions who must be "kept in line" are not fit companions. Go with good people, talk of good things, and surround yourself with influences that lead toward God and right (Philippians 4:8-9). Pursue holy living and flee from all suggestion of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22). Keep away from any place that may put you into temptation to do evil.

The question is often asked, "What is the use of doing right, when it brings no worldly advantages?" What did it get Joseph? Prison. Yes, but also it gave him a clear conscience, the smile of God, and the confidence of the prison keeper. These priceless possessions were immediate. To come later were more blessings which would have been lost had Joseph yielded to sin.

He kept his trust in God. And **the Lord was with him**. The victory came later, but it was won during those dark hours. Yes, in those dark hours that grew into years, while he formed a strong sense of values.

JUST A THOUGHT

One thing you can give and still keep is your word.

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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