

Joseph(2)

April 28, 2022

Joseph in Egypt

Joseph was sold by his brothers to Ishmaelites, who then sold him as a slave to Potiphar (the captain of Pharaoh's guard) in Egypt (Genesis 37:25-28; 39:1). The Lord was with Joseph, and he became successful in everything he did for his master. Potiphar knew that the Lord was with Joseph and that the Lord caused all that Joseph did to prosper. Because of this, Potiphar made Joseph his personal servant and put his house and all that he owned in his charge. The Lord blessed Potiphar's house and all that he owned on account of Joseph (Genesis 39:2-6).

Besides being Potiphar's trusted servant and overseer for all he owned, Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. Potiphar's wife desired Joseph and tried to take advantage of him to commit adultery, but Joseph continually refused her advances. He told her that if he consented, he would not only be doing evil to Potiphar, who trusted him fully, but would be sinning against God (Genesis 39:7-10).

Rebuffed and vengeful, she lied saying that Joseph had tried to have sex with her and devised a convincing story to prove his guilt. Potiphar believed his wife's story and had Joseph put in jail with the other prisoners of the king (Pharaoh). The Lord was with Joseph, however, and gave him favor in the eyes of the chief jailer. The chief jailer committed to Joseph's charge all the prisoners. Joseph was responsible for everything in the jail and the chief jailer no longer supervised anything under Joseph's charge. The Lord was with Joseph, and the Lord made everything Joseph did to prosper, just as when he was Potiphar's slave and then his personal servant (Genesis 39:11-23).

Takeaways

In this portion of the account of Joseph, he demonstrated the following traits:

- **Served the Lord:** How could Potiphar have known that the Lord was with Joseph? Scripture doesn't say. As a slave and as a personal servant, Joseph wasn't in a position to initiate a conversation with Potiphar about faith. Perhaps he knew Joseph prayed to God. Perhaps it was because Joseph didn't worship the gods of Egypt. Perhaps, because of his work ethic and faithfulness to Potiphar, Potiphar asked Joseph why he thought he was so successful or who he worshiped and why. Would those we work for or with know that the Lord is with us, or at least wonder and maybe ask what motivates us to do our best (Titus 2:6-10)?
- **Dependable:** Joseph earned the trust of his master. We are to serve our masters (for us today, employers fit the role) as if serving the Lord (Ephesians 6:5-8; Colossians 3:22-25; I Timothy 6:1). If we are giving our best for our Lord, then we are giving our best for those we are working for.
- **Self-control:** Faced with sexual temptations from Potiphar's wife, Joseph exercised self-control to avoid doing evil to Potiphar and sinning against God. Our sinful actions and even our thoughts often hurt us and/or others, but always are sins against God and grieve the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:25-32). We should endeavor to stop living sinful lives. Jesus told the adulterous women to sin no more (John 8:1-11). We are exhorted to flee from sin and exercise self-control (I Corinthians 6:18-20; I Timothy 6:3-11; II Timothy 2:19-22; I Corinthians 9:24-27; Galatians 5:22-23).
- **Integrity:** Despite being falsely accused and sent to prison, Joseph continued to do his best and was rewarded for his efforts. Paul learned to be content regardless of his circumstances, and was used

mightily by God in furthering the gospel of grace during his imprisonment (Philippians 1:12-14; 4:11; II Timothy 2:8-9).

By serving his Lord God, Joseph was blessed by God and also suffered for doing so. Though he couldn't have known it, the consequence for refusing the advances of Potiphar's wife was imprisonment. Furthermore, there is no record of Joseph being given the opportunity to defend himself or that he tried to do so (consider Jesus before the Roman governor Pontius Pilate—Matthew 27:11-14). Suffering for doing the right thing is commendable (I Peter 4:15-16). We are promised that if we live for our Lord we will suffer, and that we should consider our suffering to be a blessing (Philippians 1:27-30; II Timothy 3:10-12; Romans 5:3-5). We should not complain or feel sorry for ourselves (or demand our perceived *Christian rights*) if we suffer for doing the right thing, nor are we to pay someone back for doing something wrong to us (I Peter 4:19; Romans 12:17). Instead, we are exhorted to bless those who persecute us (Romans 12:14; I Corinthians 4:11-13). These are not natural responses to suffering for doing the right thing. How do we respond to persecution?¹

¹ See my study **Christian Suffering** for more on suffering for the Lord (versus self-induced suffering) and how we should respond to it.