

Joseph's Slavery at Potiphar's House

Genesis 39:1-20

Bible Memory Verse

Genesis 39:2 NIV

The Lord was with Joseph and he prospered.

Bible Story

Joseph is stuck in slavery. How would you be feeling? Your brothers hated you so much that they threw you into a pit and sold you off to some traveling merchants heading to Egypt. Would you be upset? Would you be complaining? Perhaps.

Joseph ended up being passed off to the captain of the guard for Pharaoh in Egypt. What was Joseph's attitude like? Well, interestingly enough,

"the Lord was with Joseph and he prospered ... when his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord gave him success in everything he did ... Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned" (Genesis 39:2-4).

With Joseph in charge of the house, Potiphar did not concern himself with anything because he knew that everything would be taken care of. Potiphar trusted Joseph, a slave, with everything.

Meanwhile, trouble was brewing on the horizon. Potiphar's wife fancied Joseph. She thought he was "well-built and handsome" (Genesis 39:6). She said to Joseph one day, "Come to bed with me!" (Genesis 39:7). Joseph, being the man of character that he was, refused.

“My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God? And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her” (Genesis 39:9-10).

This lady was persistent!

One day, Joseph was in the house alone and Potiphar’s wife caught Joseph by his cloak. She asked him to come to bed with her again. He refused and ran out of the house. She was still holding on to his cloak when he ran and it came off. Probably because she just got rejected, Potiphar’s wife was angry, and with Joseph’s cloak in her hand, she ran out of the house and screamed:

“Look... this Hebrew has been brought to us to make sport of us! He came in here to sleep with me, but I screamed. When he heard me scream for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house” (Genesis 39:14-15).

She relayed the same message to her husband when he got home. He was furious! Potiphar took Joseph and threw him in prison.

And Joseph’s slavery continues.

Life Application

This story teaches a great lesson on truthfulness and honesty. Potiphar’s wife totally lied. Because she did not get what she wanted, she lied to hurt Joseph.

When we lie it not only hurts you, but it also hurts other people too. And the more we lie to cover up something the more entangled you get. To top it all off, we usually think that in order to not get in trouble for something we did that was bad, instead of confessing and owning up to it, we lie to hide it.

You are always better off to tell the truth. No matter what anyone tells you, no matter how anyone tries to tempt you... it is always better to tell the truth.

Joseph also showed us that no matter what happens to you, good or bad, have a good attitude about it. I mean, if you got sold into slavery by your brothers and falsely accused of something you certainly did not do, you might be a little upset. But not Joseph. He trusted and believed that God had things in control even when they did not seem at all that way to him.

Review Questions

1. Who was Joseph sold to in Egypt? Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials and captain of the guard.
2. How did God take care of Joseph while in Potiphar's house? The Lord God was with Joseph (presence) and He gave Joseph success in whatever he did.
3. When Potiphar saw how responsible and successful Joseph was, what did he do? Potiphar put Joseph in charge of his whole household.
4. Who thought Joseph was cute and was about to start some trouble? Potiphar's wife.
5. Did Joseph respond to Potiphar's wife's wishes? No.
6. What did Potiphar's wife try to do to Joseph one day when no one else was around? She tried to grab him
7. What did Joseph do when Potiphar's wife grabbed him? He ran away!
8. What did Potiphar's wife accuse Joseph of? Trying to grab her!
9. Who did Potiphar believe? His wife.
10. What happened to Joseph? He was thrown into prison.

Coloring Sheet

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