

# THE LIFE OF JOSEPH

## Lesson 2 – Genesis 39-40

We left Joseph, in Genesis 37, having been sold as a slave. Although Joseph's brothers had forsaken him, the rest of his journey in Egypt reminds us that the Lord did not forsake him. We will skip Genesis 38 for this study, since the events of that chapter occurred while Joseph was in Egypt, and so it is not directly related to our study of Joseph. We will pick up our study in Genesis 39 where we will follow Joseph on a roller coaster of circumstances and positions in Egypt. Diverse conditions but the same Lord was with Joseph, the same Lord was prospering him and, in all these conditions, we see Joseph trusting the Lord. May we learn much from Joseph's example of trusting the Lord, no matter the condition.

Begin your study with prayer...

**Memory Verse** – This week's memory verse is 1 Peter 3:17.

*“For it is better, if it is the will of God,  
to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.”*

### Read Genesis 39:1-6.

1. Genesis 39 begins, “*Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt.*”
  - a. Who bought Joseph from the Ishmaelites?
  - b. What was his title?
  
2. We are not told how much time has passed, but it seems that as soon as he was in Egypt he was sold and Joseph was taken to his master's house.
  - a. What did his master see about Joseph in Genesis 39:2-3?
  - b. What position and responsibilities did Potiphar give Joseph, from verses 4-6?
  
3. From Genesis 39:5 we see that while Joseph was the overseer of Potiphar's house it prospered.
  - a. How is the prosperity of Potiphar's house and properties described in this verse?
  - b. Why does it say this was the case?

4. It seems that Potiphar's prosperity was financial, but that is not the only kind of prosperity.

a. What type of prosperity do we see in Joseph?

b. List other types of prosperity the Lord offers below.

5. Read the following scriptures and share your thoughts on what you see about how believers prosper.

a. Joshua 1:7-8

b. Psalm 1:1-3

c. What do you see from these verses that might describe Joseph and the reason the Lord was blessing him?

**Read Genesis 39:7-12.**

1. The situation in Potiphar's house was about to change, through no fault of Joseph.

a. Write out the physical description of Joseph from the last sentence in Genesis 39:6.

b. What is the reaction of Potiphar's wife to Joseph in Genesis 39:7?

c. Write the first three words from the beginning of verse 8 describing Joseph's response.

d. From Genesis 39:10, how persistent was Potiphar's wife in her approaches to Joseph and what was his response?

2. Write a definition for *temptation* below as you consider how Joseph may have been tempted in this situation.

a. What reasons did Joseph give in Genesis 39:8-9 for why he would not give in to this temptation?

b. Who did Joseph say he would be sinning against?

c. What do these reasons tell you about Joseph?

3. What do the following verses teach us about resisting temptation?

a. Psalm 119:165

b. Proverbs 2:10-12

4. We are taught in scripture how to prepare to resist temptation. What instruction do you find in the following scriptures?

a. Matthew 26:41

b. 1 Peter 5:8-9

5. We do not know how long Potiphar's wife tempted Joseph, but it did finally come to a critical point.

a. Describe what Potiphar's wife did in Genesis 39:11-12.

b. What was Joseph's reaction?

**Read Genesis 39:13-23.**

Although Joseph chose to honor God and his master, and flee temptation, the outcome did not seem to go in Joseph's favor.

1. Summarize the story told by Potiphar's wife to the *men of her house* and then to Potiphar himself in Genesis 39:13-18.

2. According to Genesis 39:19-20, when he heard this story from his wife, what did Potiphar do?

3. The situation has drastically changed for Joseph, from a place of honor to a place in prison! But there is more happening than meets the eye. Complete the statements below from Genesis 39:21 that reveal more about the true situation.

a. But \_\_\_\_\_

b. ...and showed \_\_\_\_\_

c. ...and He gave \_\_\_\_\_

4. Joseph had not been judged fairly, but the Lord was still with him.

a. What example do you find in 1 Peter 2:21-23?

a. What does 1 Peter 3:17 say about this kind of situation?

5. From Genesis 39:22, what evidence do you see of the Lord's hand on Joseph in the prison?

6. Complete the last phrases in Genesis 39:23 which tell us why Joseph found favor in the prison.

a. ...*because the* \_\_\_\_\_

b. ...*and* \_\_\_\_\_

### **Read Genesis 40:1-8.**

1. What happened to the butler and the baker in Genesis 40:1-3?

2. In verse 4 we read that Joseph was given charge of these men in the prison.

a. Complete the phrase below that describes what Joseph did.

... *and he* \_\_\_\_\_

- b. What does this tell you about Joseph?
- c. What did Jesus say about this in Mark 10:42-45?
- d. Give an example you remember when Jesus lived out this principle.

3. Joseph seemed to care about these prisoners in Genesis 40:6-8.

- a. What did he notice about them?
- b. What was their reason?
- c. What was Joseph's solution?
- d. Who did he say had the answer?

**Read Genesis 40:9-19.**

In this section we hear both of the dreams and the Lord's interpretations through Joseph.

1. From Genesis 40:9-11, what was the chief butler's dream?

2. Now write about the interpretation from verses 12-13.

3. We know Joseph believed this interpretation to be true because he followed it up with a personal request. Joseph said:

“Remember me when \_\_\_\_\_ when \_\_\_\_\_...”

4. Now list the three specific things Joseph asked of the chief butler in Genesis 40:14.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

5. Genesis 40:15 is the first time we read of Joseph pleading his own case.
  - a. How did he describe his situation?
  
  - b. What details do you notice that Joseph did not include, especially in placing blame?
  
  - c. What does this reveal to you?
  
6. The chief baker was encouraged by the interpretation of the butler's dream, so he shared his own dream with Joseph.
  - a. What was his dream from Genesis 40:16-17?
  
  - b. What interpretation did Joseph give in verses 18-19?

**Read Genesis 40:20-23.**

1. Both dreams were to be fulfilled in 3 days. From Genesis 40:20, what happened on the third day?
  
2. How were each of the dreams fulfilled in the following scriptures?
  - a. the chief butler's dream (see Genesis 40:21)
  
  - b. the chief baker's dream (see Genesis 40:22)
  
3. In verse 23, what did the chief butler *not remember*?
  
4. We are not told how Joseph felt, but what does Proverbs 13:12 say that might apply?
  
5. We can all feel forgotten at times, so what encouragement can we find in Isaiah 49:15-16?
  
6. The chief butler may have forgotten Joseph, but who did not?

**In closing...**

1. Both Potiphar and the keeper of the prison saw that the Lord was with Joseph. Describe what someone might see in the life of a person whom *God is with*?

2. Joseph helped the chief butler and was kind to him, yet the butler forgot him. Take a moment to ask the Lord if there is someone who has shown a kindness to you that you may have forgotten. What can you do about this, or what have you done to remember someone who was kind?

3. When we consider all that Joseph went through and his responses, what are some things you want to take away from this lesson and apply to your own life?

***Memory Verse***

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