

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

FAITHFUL IN THE HIDDEN PLACES

GENESIS 39:1-6

God's Presence Matters More than Your Position

Genesis 39:1-2 NKJV Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there. 2 The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.

- Joseph has been sold by his own brothers into slavery for 20 pieces of silver
- Joseph is brought down to Egypt
- Potiphar buys Joseph from the Ishmaelites and brings him to Egypt
- Joseph is now living in a land that worships idols and multiple "gods"
- Joseph is now "the property" of a man named Potiphar, whose name means "devoted to the sun"
- Potiphar was the captain of the guard for Pharaoh
- Potiphar's job was to maintain the military forces and to protect the life of Pharaoh
- To put it mildly, it appears Joseph is not in the best of situations
- Despite all that happening in Joseph's life, the text shifts from Joseph's condition to God's presence in verse 2; "The LORD was with Joseph"
- With all that was happening to Joseph, God was with him
- Joseph's *dream* looks more like "a nightmare", and the LORD was *with* Joseph
- The word *LORD* here means Yahweh or covenant God
- When we see several times, "The LORD was with Joseph," the text is emphasizing that God *remained faithful* to Joseph even when life looked contradictory to the dream.
- Don't worry that life right now doesn't "match" the promise, just remember that God's *presence* matters more than your position
- The text is telling us that God's presence is not limited by your "location"
 - Sometimes believers assume, if the God is with me, life will become easier
- Joseph is teaching us that God can still be present in unfamiliar places, painful seasons, unwanted transitions and difficult assignments
- We must stop measuring God's presence only by comfortable situations and circumstances
- Your "location" may change, but God's *presence* remains
 - God can bless your life in places you *never planned* to be

Faithfulness in the Hidden Places Leads to Greater Responsibility

2 The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. 3 And his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord made all he did to prosper in his hand. 4 So

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Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority. Potiphar saw that the Lord was with Joseph

- Joseph was in a slave environment, but he did not have a slave mentality
- The Lord was with Joseph
- The Lord made Joseph successful or prosperous
- Have you ever heard of someone prospering while in slavery?
- God wants to push you forward, God wants to help you get further down the road
- The key to your prosperity is the presence of God
- To prosper does not always mean financial or material success
- Prosperity is experiencing God's best in every area of life **3 John 1:2 (KJV) *Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.***
- Even though Joseph was a slave, he worked hard and worked faithfully **Colossians 3:23 *And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men...***
- God was blessing Joseph's life despite the obscurity, unfair treatment, and pain common to life as a slave
- Joseph's faithfulness and hard work caught the eye of Potiphar, he was so impressed with Joseph that he moved him into his own house
- God moved on Potiphar to do three things:
 1. God led Potiphar to take note of Joseph's God
 - Potiphar noticed a difference between Joseph and his work and the work of the other slaves
 2. God led Potiphar to notice Joseph's hard work
 - Potiphar sees Joseph's diligence, consistency, integrity, and excellence
 3. God led Potiphar to promote Joseph to supervisor or overseer of his estate
 - Potiphar put all his property and possessions under Joseph's management
- The presence of the Lord is recognized by people that don't even know God
- Joseph found favor or grace in the sight of Potiphar
- Favor here means that Potiphar:
 - became pleased with Joseph
 - trusted him
 - recognized his value
 - treated him with unusual kindness and confidence
- Favor in Scripture often means God graciously opening opportunities, relationships, and influence for His purpose.

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- Favor does not mean life easy
- Joseph served faithfully in the hidden places, in obscurity
- Joseph teaches us that faithfulness in small assignments prepares us for greater responsibility
- Be faithful where you are *right now*
- Hidden faithfulness prepares you for visible responsibility
- Potiphar promoted Joseph, a common, inexpensive, expendable, disposable slave
- Joseph was promoted because the LORD was with him

Godly Character Becomes a Blessing to Others

5 So it was, from the time that he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was on all that he had in the house and in the field.

- Potiphar made Joseph the overseer/administrator of his house and all that he had
- Potiphar's house was blessed
- Potiphar's house, his land, his crops, his livestock were blessed for Joseph's sake
- Potiphar experienced amazing blessings because Joseph is in his house. ***Matthew 5:16 NIV "... let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."***
- Joseph's relationship with God brought blessings to the environment around him.
- Everything under Joseph's management and leadership prospered
- Godly character has impact beyond the individual.
- God often blesses through faithful people
- Blessings flowed through Joseph's life because he demonstrated integrity, hard work, stewardship, faithfulness, and godly character
- Your faithfulness, integrity, and spiritual maturity should bless those around you
- Our families, our churches, our jobs, and communities should be blessed because we are there
- Some people improve environments because of their integrity, encouragement, diligence, and godliness
- Joseph's life became a blessing wherever he went and whatever he did
- Your circumstances do not determine whether God can use you as a blessing
- Jesus calls believers to be *salt and light*; we should have a positive influence in the world around us

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Character Must Sustain What Favor Opens

6 Thus he left all that he had in Joseph's hand, and he did not know what he had except for the bread which he ate. Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance.

- Joseph is now successful.
- Everything Potiphar owned was under Joseph's control
- The only decision Potiphar made was what we wanted to eat
- That speaks to the level of trust Potiphar had in Joseph
- It also speaks to the how God was preparing Joseph for greater leadership in the future
- Joseph started out as immature, impulsive and prideful, but after **over 11 years** in Potiphar's house Joseph shows responsibility, hard work, integrity, faithfulness, consistency, and leadership
- This verse prepares us for the temptation that's coming to Joseph
- God's favor can open doors, but only character can sustain what favor opens.
- Joseph's next challenge will not be "the pit", it will be *temptation in prosperity*.
- Many people can handle struggle but cannot handle success.
- People often fail because their character was never fully developed **1 Corinthians 10:12 "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."**
 - "The pit tests your faith, but success tests your character."
 - We must ask God to develop our humility, integrity, wisdom, and discipline, so success will not destroy what God has built.
 - Joseph's life looked nothing like the dream, yet God was present, working, developing, and preparing in hidden places.
 - Potiphar's house was not Joseph's final destination
 - But it was part of God's process.
 - And sometimes God develops us in hidden seasons
 - through difficult assignments
 - God is not merely interested in *where we are going*, He is concerned about *who we are becoming* along the way.