

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

WHEN DOING RIGHT STILL HURTS

GENESIS 39:13-23

Doing Right Sometimes Leads to Suffering

Genesis 39:20 (NKJV) 20 Then Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were confined. And he was there in the prison.

- Joseph was faithful to God; he still finds himself falsely accused and in prison
- Joseph loses everything not because "he sinned", but because *he obeyed*. **1 Peter 3:17 (NKJV)** *"For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil."*
- What was God developing in Joseph through this temptation and false accusation?
- Here are the primary character traits being developed:
 - **Integrity: Doing what is right when nobody is watching**
 - Genesis 39:9 "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"
 - Joseph's private life *matched* his public life.
 - **Self-Control: Mastering desires instead of being mastered by them**
 - Joseph was a good looking, healthy, and strong young man
 - The Bible never suggests Joseph wasn't tempted.
 - What it shows is that he refused to surrender to temptation. Galatians 5:22–23 **The fruit of the Spirit is... temperance (self-control).**
 - **Reverence for God: Fearing God more than consequences**
 - Joseph's concern was; "How can I sin against God?"
 - Joseph's morality flowed from what he believed
 - **Faithfulness: Remaining loyal despite difficult circumstances**
 - Joseph remained faithful even though life had treated him unfairly
 - **Wisdom: Recognizing danger before disaster**
 - Genesis 39:10 says Joseph refused to *listen* to her, *lie (sleep)* with her, or even *be around* her
 - Wise people don't simply avoid sin; they avoid *the path* that leads to sin.
 - **Courage: Choosing obedience when it is costly**
 - It took courage to say no repeatedly.
 - It took courage to flee.
 - It took courage to accept the consequences.
 - **Trustworthiness: Becoming someone others can trust**
 - Potiphar trusted Joseph completely.
 - Before Joseph could manage a nation, he had to prove faithful in a household. Luke 16:10 "He that is faithful in that which is least..."
 - **Perseverance: Remaining faithful even when obedience becomes painful**
 - Joseph obeyed God and the result was prison
 - Obedience does not always lead to immediate reward, yet Joseph *continued* trusting God.
 - **Humility: Submission to God's ways rather than self-interest**

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- Young Joseph in Genesis 37 appears impulsive, prideful, and eager to share his dreams
- In Genesis 39, the focus is no longer "Look at me", the focus is "How can I honor God?"
- *Moral Purity: Choosing holiness over pleasure*
 - Joseph understood that holiness matters.
 - Joseph chose holiness.
- God used temptation, false accusation, and unjust suffering to develop in Joseph the integrity, self-control, faithfulness, wisdom, courage, and perseverance necessary to carry the weight of his future calling.
- God used all that Joseph went through to develop the character traits he will need when he becomes second in command only to Pharaoh

God's Presence Is Not Limited by Your Circumstances 21 "But the Lord was with Joseph...."

- Verse 21 says, **"But the LORD was with Joseph."**
- Joseph lost his coat, his family, his freedom, and his reputation, but he never lost God
- God's presence did not keep Joseph out of prison
- Remember the LORD is Yahweh, the covenant God, the promise-keeping God
- It's in prison where Joseph is learning to trust God's presence
- Notice Joseph's response
- Joseph does not complain, get angry, or become bitter, he just starts serving again
- God was with Joseph in the pit, in Potiphar's house, and now in prison
- Joseph went from the pit to the palace, then back down to the prison, et **God never left him.**
- You may feel confined emotionally, spiritually, or even physically, but your situation does not determine God's presence.

God Gives Favor Even in Unjust Situations

Vs. 21 (cont'd) "...and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison."

- I'm sure Joseph was feeling devastated, bewildered, and distressed
- He obeyed God and did the right thing; he resisted temptation, he refused to sleep with his master's wife; and still he falsely accused and stuck in prison
- Why doesn't God do something to show Potiphar the truth?
- Look at what happened; God showed Joseph mercy and gave him favor with the warden of the prison
- The circumstance that should have torn Joseph down was actually building him up **1 Peter 5:10 "But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal**

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glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you”

- **God Perfects Us** – equip, adjust, align, restore, to cause to fit together
 - It literally refers to the mending fishing nets or setting broken bones
 - God restores what suffering damaged; God heals your emotional, relational and spiritual wounds
- **God Establishes Us** – to make firm or stable
 - God stabilizes our faith and convictions
 - Trials and suffering strengthen what we truly believe
- **God Strengthens Us** – to make strong, courageous, and resilient
 - God uses suffering to increase our perseverance
 - We learn to rely on God’s power and not our own
 - We develop resilience
- **God Settles Us** – sets us on a firm foundation, making us unmovable
 - We are easily shaken by trials
 - We are anchored in Jesus instead of our circumstances
- Yet God still caused people to see something special in him.
- Even when life feels unfair:
 - God can still open doors
 - God can still move on your behalf
 - Favor doesn’t depend on fairness, it depends on God

Faithfulness in Small or Hidden Places Leads to Greater Trust

22 “And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph’s hand all the prisoners who were in the prison; whatever they did there, it was his doing. 23 The keeper of the prison did not look into anything that was under Joseph’s authority...”

- Joseph immediately begins serving...again
- The prison becomes another classroom for Joseph
- Notice something amazing; Potiphar trusted Joseph, now the prison warden is trusting Joseph
- Joseph is in a *different building, a different situation*, but he has the *same character*
- In prison God is developing Joseph’s character; he’s developing faithfulness, leadership, hope, resilience and perseverance
- How you serve in difficult or unnoticed seasons matters
- God often prepares you in private before promoting you in public.

God Is Working Behind the Scenes for His Purpose

Vs. 23 (cont’d) “...because the Lord was with him; and whatever he did, the Lord made it prosper.”

- Joseph didn’t yet see the full picture, but God was orchestrating his future.
- The prison was not his end, it was part of his process.

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- The prison was going introduce Joseph to Pharoah's cupbearer
 - With prison...no cup bearer
 - No cupbearer...no palace
- What look like a setback may actually be God's setup
- God wants to use the trials of our lives as well as the blessings
- Even when you don't understand your current season:
 - God is still working
 - God is still shaping you
 - God is still preparing something greater
- Your situation may not look like progress, but if God is with you, you are still moving forward