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## MAKING THE MOST OF WHERE YOU ARE (Genesis 39:1-6)

*When we last looked at Joseph's life, he had suffered from the anger of his eleven brothers who took exception to his status as the favorite of their father, Jacob. He also had made the mistake (maybe with a little pride) of sharing a couple of dreams that had predicted he would have authority over them, which was strange since he was the eleventh in line of these twelve brothers. As a result, he found himself in a pit, completely at the mercy of his annoyed siblings.*

*The text tells us he was then sold by his brothers to some traveling Ishmaelite traders on their way to Egypt. But as we know, he was exactly where God wanted him and his life was about to take a very unexpected turn.*

**Genesis 39:1-6 - Now Joseph had been brought down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, had bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there. The LORD was with Joseph, and he became a successful man, and he was in the house of his Egyptian master. His master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD caused all that he did to succeed in his hands. So Joseph found favor in his sight and attended him, and he made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had. From the time that he made him overseer in his house and over all that he had, the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had, in house and field. So he left all that he had in Joseph's charge, and because of him he had no concern about anything but the food he ate.**

### JOSEPH'S PERSONAL GOD

Joseph was just a teenager when he arrived in Potiphar's household. Away from home for the first time with no family in an unfamiliar culture and no relationships, he had to have been deeply discouraged

by his situation. But even as a young man, Joseph showed great character and faith. Growing up in the home of Jacob, his training in the skills needed in life, including the importance of the spiritual life, gave him the strength to persevere.

The passage says that God was with him. Whatever he had learned at home stayed with him, because he did not forget God. At his lowest point so far in his short life, God was all Joseph had and even though he was in a foreign place with no family or friends, God was there.

We should remember this, too. Our times of despair and loneliness will push our minds to obsess on our problems, but God is present and has a good plan if we trust him.

*Psalm 139:7-10 - Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, **you are there!** If I make my bed in Sheol, **you are there!** If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and **your right hand shall hold me.***

### JOSEPH'S PROSPERITY WAS ESTABLISHED

As a result of God's presence with Joseph, everything he faithfully did in Potiphar's house prospered. We're told here that God "caused all that he did to succeed in his hands." Joseph must have shown a strong work ethic and displayed great integrity. God chose in his case to bless this household because of Joseph, who continued to please God with his life and decisions even though he would never have chosen this path for himself.

We should take care here not to assume that God will give material prosperity to everyone who follows and obeys God. At this time in Joseph's life, God chose to allow what we would consider positive things to happen. But this kind of result is never promised to anyone who stays faithful to God. In fact, life could even get more difficult when a person gives himself to God's way.

The lesson to learn here is that we are called to obey and faithfully trust God with the outcome. This season in Joseph's life was successful, but we have to let God define what "success" means. His definition is not wealth or power or fame or health or anything else we are tempted to equate with prosperity. If we are faithful to him, success is in our future, but we must let him determine what that means.

In the following verses, notice that prosperity from God is conditional on seeking and obeying God, as well as loving righteousness.

*2 Chronicles 26:4, 5 – [Uzziah] did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done. He **set himself to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear of God, and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him prosper.***

*Joshua 1:7, 8 - Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. **Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.***

*Proverbs 28:13 - Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who **confesses and forsakes them** will obtain mercy.*

## **JOSEPH'S PROGRESSION OF RESPONSIBILITY**

As a newcomer to Potiphar's staff, Joseph started at the bottom and had nowhere to go but up. And that's exactly what he did. The text tells us he caught the attention of his owner as a hard worker and honest person. In a world of cheats and liars, integrity will stand out every time.

As we move through the verses here, we see Joseph entrusted with more and more responsibility. We should not despise small beginnings, because the biblical concept of faithfulness requires that a person handle the small things well before more can be assigned to them later.

*Luke 16:10-13 - One who is **faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.***

## **JOSEPH'S PRESENCE BROUGHT BLESSING**

Maybe you have told someone that they are a blessing to you. What does that mean? If we are blessed by someone (actually if God blesses us by coming in contact with them) we mean that they have brightened our day somehow and lightened our load. We feel better after being around some people and glad when we see them coming toward us. Others, we are happier to see leave.

Because of Joseph's presence in Potiphar's house, all around him benefitted. And again, we see an important lesson from Joseph's life: When our circumstances are less than ideal, when we might wish for other surroundings or employment or relationships, we can still be a blessing to others right where we are.

Joseph's story is far from over. Actually, things got much worse for him before they got better, but God was always there, always with a purpose and ultimately, Joseph was used to preserve the entire burgeoning nation of Israel. All because he chose to remain faithful to God right where he was, knowing that the next thing God had for him would be just as purposeful and rewarding. He didn't know it then, but his integrity would lead to God's next step in his life - landing him in prison.