

A Study in Genesis: Integrity and Grace

Scripture Focus: Genesis 39

Even though it must have been a terrible experience to be sold away to strangers by his brothers, God allowed Joseph the opportunity to live in the house of Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh. He earned Potiphar's trust, assuming more and more responsibility in this man's affairs, and "the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake." (39:5b) God's grace abounds!

Then what seemed to be a very good situation for all involved, ended because Joseph chose to obey God and what he knew to be right rather than give into the persistent temptations presented by Potiphar's wife. Joseph demonstrated faithfulness to God and true integrity when he stated plainly, "How then could I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (v. 9b)

- Poor Joseph is wrongly accused of sleeping with the wife of his boss and gets thrown into prison. Seems unfair given all he's endured. Where is God's grace now?
- What does scripture say about suffering for doing what is right? What particularly did Jesus say about it? "*Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*" (Mt. 5: 10) Also see 1 Peter 3:13.
- Why is it so hard for many people, especially those who claim to be followers of Christ, to do what is right, to do what is "righteous" as we have been directed by God to do? Does it relate to what is most highly valued, to what is most dearly loved? What competes for our loyalty?

Once Joseph is in jail, he again is given a position of responsibility when the chief jailer, "committed to Joseph's care all the prisoners who were in the prison..." (v. 22) This was evidence of Yahweh never forsaking Joseph. *But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love...* (v. 21a) Notice, *...because the LORD was with him; and whatever he [Joseph] did, the LORD made it prosper.* (v. 22b) Grace!! Also see Deut. 8:17-18. God must receive all the glory/credit, because nothing good results apart from the love, grace, mercy and faithfulness of God.