



... Don't take the first step ...

*1 And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither. 2 And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. (Gen 39:1-2)*

Joseph was brutally betrayed by his brethren in Canaan, cast into a well, and sold for twenty pieces of silver by them to the first passing caravan bound for Egypt. To his credit, Reuben (the eldest brother) attempted to save both the life and the liberty of Joseph.

In his treatment by his brethren, his going down into Egypt, his ill treatment by being imprisoned, his marvelous ascension from the prison cell to a position of power in Egypt all parallel, in a physical sense, the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, Joseph is the strongest Type of Christ in the Holy Scriptures. Like Christ, he was treated roughly by his brethren and sold into the hands of strangers. Christ was betrayed by Judas (one considered to be His brethren) and was sold into the hands of His enemies. Joseph was falsely accused by Potiphar's wife. Christ was falsely accused by the Jewish rulers. Joseph was imprisoned in Egypt; so was Christ placed in Pilate's jail with sinners awaiting His crucifixion. Joseph, too, like Jesus, was favored above all others in His father's affections. Joseph rose to the number two position of power in the kingdom of Egypt. Christ was elevated to the right hand of the Father as the second Person of the Trinity. Joseph became a savior for his people during the great famine and redeemed them from poverty. Christ, as savior, both saved us from our sins and redeemed us from those sins by 'purchasing' us out of Egypt. There are far too many parallels to cover in this devotion, however, let us satisfy the reader to search out those further likenesses. It will feed the soul and refresh the spirit in those discoveries.

Joseph was highly favored by his father, Jacob, for a reason. Other men will also see that reason when they look upon Joseph's and such favors of character and worth will eventually be rewarded. It is important to remember that the same favors of grace with which Joseph was endowed and which gained him ultimate acclaim in Egypt by Potiphar and Pharaoh are the very same that provoked those of less worth to persecute him. It is the same for every living Christian today. Sinners are highly offended by the Gospel of Christ. When they see evidence of Christ in the life of a Christian, it is not the Christian that they hate, but the Lord who works through them. This is not a casual hatred, but a demonic and persistent one. Though the enemy may strip us of outward vestiges of favor, he cannot deprive us of the faith and character that lie at the heart of the faithful.

In considering Potiphar, we may judge him as a man who failed to stand on justice. But I believe that is harsh since Potiphar had the power to put Joseph to death for the accusation made against him. Potiphar was a wise and strong man of military prowess. He was Captain of the Guard for Pharaoh – a position requiring great trust and ability. He was wise in the oversight of his estate, and placed a man (Joseph) in a position to care for matters of matters estate. He, too, recognized character and ethical demeanor in Joseph, and put those attributes into good use for his own benefit. Wisdom is required in a man to recognize that wisdom in others.

Potiphar's wife, whether consciously or not, was a handy piece of the devil's work. She was unfaithful to her husband in the case of Joseph, and she was likely unfaithful on other occasions. This may have been a sinful nature of which Potiphar was aware when accusations were later made against Joseph. Potiphar and all that he had was blessed by the Lord through Joseph's wise administration. The grace of God is shed abroad on all people of a nation when the Church remains faithful to the Lord. As faithful Christians, we are also a blessing to all around us though they may despise that faithfulness. The world wants us to be just as they are, and no different. The world insinuates itself into the Church itself through immoral music, false doctrine, and lack of solemn reliance and reverence for the Word of God.

Potiphar's wife saw goodness in Joseph, too, however she desired to employ that goodness in satisfying her lust. Joseph had done all things for Potiphar; surely, she thought, I can seduce such an innocent one. *7 And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. 8 But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand; 9 There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?* One of the greatest attributes of character is LOYALTY.

Loyalty to the wrong thing is loyalty abandoned, but loyalty to righteousness makes a man impervious to invasions of sin and lust. Joseph possessed this attribute in essence of the loyalty he paid to his Lord. To sin against Potiphar carried a higher level of transgression – to sin against our fellows is, more importantly, to sin against God. Perhaps loyalty, being a complement to wisdom and faithfulness, was another of the reasons that Potiphar placed his possessions in Joseph's care. To a military leader such as Potiphar was, loyalty was an essential mark of his chosen subordinates.

*10 And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her. 11 And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within. 12 And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out.* Observe the strength of character of the youthful Joseph in resisting the strong temptation to lust. The devil tempted Christ to greater degrees in the Wilderness, yet He succumbed not to his temptations. The temptation to in is of a gradual and escalating nature . Day by day, Joseph was tempted. Temptation will escalate to a crucial moment when its object either yields, or forbears. This moment has occurred for Joseph with Potiphar's wife.

It is better to leave all possessions and go out into the world naked than to submit to ungodliness. Joseph did just that! *13 And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth, 14 That she called unto the men of her house, and spake unto them, saying, See, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us; he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice: 15 And it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out. 16 And she laid up his garment by her, until his lord came home. 17 And she spake unto him according to*

these words, saying, *The Hebrew servant, which thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me: 18 And it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled out.*" It often happens that our righteous acts are employed against us as evidence of false accusations. Joseph had conducted himself in admiral righteousness in dealing with the wife of Potiphar, but his actions in fleeing temptation was used against him to accuse him of adulterous desire. The world always seeks to pin the penalties for its sin upon the righteous.

*19 And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled. 20 And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison.* Be not surprised when your good works are made to appear as evil by the world. Today, Christians are accused of intolerance for refusing to conform to the fashionable sins of the world such as homosexuality, abortion, and promiscuity. We are labeled as narrow minded and radical. The world does not mind our calling ourselves Christians as long as we do not uphold the righteous law of our Namesake – Jesus Christ! You will note that, instead of putting Joseph to death, Potiphar, perhaps mindful of his wife's many past indiscretions, placed Joseph in the best part of the prison – where the king's prisoner's were accommodated.

Joseph never uttered a word in his own defense – neither did our Lord. As Christians, we must be resigned to the role of *"pilgrims and strangers upon this earth seeking after that city not built with hands."* Every painful scar the devil inflicts will redound to our good. *21 But the Lord was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. 22 And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it.* It is a marvelous joy observe how well the Lord turns every ill-intended act committed against His faithful people to their ultimate great good. Even prison keepers will recognize the goodness in Joseph and elevate him where he is.

The great joy of the believer resides in his certain knowledge that the Lord *"will neither forsake nor leave him"* whithersoever he goes. (see Heb 13:5) There is no better company in an Egyptian prison than the Lord Himself! *"23 The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the Lord was with him, and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper."* He will remain with you as well if you remain faithful to His Holy Word in LOVE.