

Lesson 029
Joseph And Potiphar
Genesis 39:1-23

MEMORY VERSE

MATTHEW 5:10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Un-popped popcorn kernels and warm popped popcorn
- Masking tape and two signs reading "blessed" and "not blessed." Several belts or pieces of cloth (large enough to tie two partners together for a "three-legged" race) and masking tape.

ATTENTION GRABBER! Taking the Heat

Take some un-popped popcorn kernels and pass a few out to each child in your class. Ask them if they would like to have some popcorn. It obviously is not going to taste very good un-popped.

Ask the class what has to be done to popcorn kernels to make it tasty popcorn (It has to be cooked, or heat applied to it). Have your aide with a couple of volunteers pop a bag of microwavable popcorn and bring it into the class.

Let the children each sample some warm popcorn. What is different from the kernels they had seen before? The popcorn had to go through a "terrible trial"...it had to be cooked!

Explain that difficult times are often compared to going through heat. We sometimes refer to a trial as a "fiery" trial. God often uses hard times to make us more usable for His kingdom, like the popcorn becomes more usable (and tastier) after it has "taken the heat."

Explain that in today's lesson, we will see Joseph going through fiery trials. Yet, through all his trials, the Lord was with Joseph, and his difficult circumstances would work together to fulfill God's good purposes. God blesses those who are faithful in difficult times.

LESSON TIME!

As you remember last week, Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery. The Ishmaelites took him into Egypt. There, Potiphar, an Egyptian, purchased him. Things looked pretty scary for Joseph, but God blesses those who are faithful in difficult times.

GENESIS 39: 1- 2

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, once the favorite son of his father, became a common slave. Being a Christian and serving the Lord does not mean we will not experience trouble. Joseph did nothing to deserve the cruel consequences of his brother's jealousy. Being a Christian and serving the Lord does mean God will watch over us and work all things together for good in our lives.

Potiphar was the captain of the guard for Pharaoh, a wealthy, influential man. As Potiphar's slave, Joseph was hard working and honest. He did not allow a bitter and angry attitude to affect his zeal for service. We note, "The Lord was with Joseph." God enabled Joseph to serve zealously in his difficult circumstances and caused his hard work to be prosperous. As one of Potiphar's best workers, Joseph became a witness of God to his master. God blesses those who are faithful in difficult times.

GENESIS 39: 4- 6

4 So 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. 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. 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.

Because the Lord blessed and prospered the work of Joseph hands, his master put him in charge of the house. Joseph was over all of the other servants, the crops, the house and all of Potiphar's possessions. God blessed all of Potiphar's house because of Joseph. The Lord turned Joseph's difficult time into a prosperous time. He became second in command over Potiphar's house. God blesses those who are faithful in difficult times.

We can be encouraged from this story that—in good times and in bad times—the Lord will always be there for us. How important that we, when faced with difficult circumstances, keep our focus on

God—who works all things together for our good. May we, as Joseph, remain obedient and faithful to the Lord. We can trust God to accomplish His purposes.

GENESIS 39: 7- 10

7 And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me." 8 But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. 9 There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" 10 So it was, as she spoke to Joseph Day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her.

Joseph was handsome, and Potiphar's wife was attracted to him. She wanted Joseph to commit adultery with her, but Joseph knew this was a great sin before God. Joseph also knew it was wrong to take advantage of the trust Potiphar had in him. Daily, she tried to tempt him, but he would not even be with her; he avoided all opportunity to sin.

It must have been difficult for the young man to be pressured daily, but Joseph was faithful to the Lord and passed the test. We, too, can say no to the temptations that the enemy puts in front of us. What are some things that Joseph did to resist temptation that we can learn from when we need to resist temptation? James 4:7,8 says, "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you...." God blesses those who are faithful in difficult times.

GENESIS 39: 11- 12

11 But it happened about this time, when Joseph went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house was inside, 12 that she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand and fled and ran outside.

One day when Potiphar's wife found Joseph alone, she tried to tempt him again. He immediately ran away. Joseph did the right thing. He did not fight her or argue with her. He did not assume that he was strong enough to resist temptation. Joseph ran away.

Like Joseph, we must run when we face temptation to sin. When someone tries to get us to sin, we need to leave immediately. It is dangerous to linger and "think" about sin. We are weak within ourselves. II Timothy 2:22 exhorts, "Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

GENESIS 39: 13- 18

13 And so it was, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and fled outside, 14 that she called to the men of her house and spoke to them, saying, “See, he has brought in to us a Hebrew to mock us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice. 15 And it happened, when he heard that I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me, and fled and went outside.”

16 So she kept his garment with her until his master came home. 17 Then she spoke to him with words like these, saying, “The Hebrew servant whom you brought to us came in to me to mock me; 18 so it happened, as I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me and fled outside.”

Joseph ran away so quickly, he even left his robe behind because Potiphar’s wife had grabbed it. Potiphar’s wife—probably, embarrassed and angry—sought to get Joseph in trouble by creating a false story: Joseph, she said, had tried to force her to sin with him. Joseph was blamed for the very sin he tried to run away from!

Have you ever had someone lie to get you into trouble? It is not very much fun, is it? Joseph was going through a very difficult time, and it gets worse. Let’s see what happens.

Blessed or Not?

Here’s yet another version of the giant square’s game, but the kids seem to love to run back and forth to the right square! You need masking tape and two signs: “blessed” and “not blessed.”

Tell your class the memory verse and have them say it together. Tell them you will now read a statement, and they should tell you whether the person is blessed or not by running to the appropriate box. Remind them that we are blessed only when we’re persecuted for doing the right thing.

Read some of these scenarios: “blessed” and “not blessed.”

- ❖ The teacher asked the girl if she had really prayed for her friend at school to be healed of her cold. The girl said “yes” so the teacher told her not to ever do that again at school.
- ❖ A boy took a book that did not belong to him from his neighbor. His mother found out and disciplined him. Then she made him return the book and apologize to the neighbor.
- ❖ A boy was making a delivery for the grocery store to a little old widow. When he was almost there, he discovered that the store clerk had forgotten the milk, so he turned his bike around and went all the way back to the store. When the manager saw him and that he still had the groceries, he said, “Haven’t you delivered those groceries yet? You’re fired!”

- ❖ A girl was babysitting for her neighbor when the phone rang. It was her good friend from school. While she talked on the phone, the baby got into some paint and got it all over the carpet. The girl was not asked to baby-sit anymore in the neighborhood.
- ❖ A little girl could not find her favorite teddy bear. She looked all over the house. The girl finally found it on her brother's bed. The mother punished the little brother for taking the bear, but the little girl later remembered that she had left the bear in his room.

GENESIS 39: 19- 20

19 So it was, when his master heard the words which his wife spoke to him, saying, "Your servant did to me after this manner," that his anger was aroused. 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.

A false accusation caused Potiphar to put Joseph into prison. Joseph chose to do what was right in a difficult situation, and his circumstances got worse. Perhaps Joseph did not understand the things that were going on in his life at that time; God's wonderful plan would be revealed later. Sometimes, when we do what we know is right, it may seem like the outcome is worse; but God will honor our good choices. May we be patient and trust God, He will work all things for our good. God blesses those who are faithful in difficult times.

GENESIS 39: 21- 23

21 But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. 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, because the Lord was with him; and whatever he did, the Lord made it prosper.

Again, we see that the Lord was with Joseph. Even when his circumstances got worse and worse, the Lord never left him. As Christians, we have God's promise in Hebrews 13:5, "...I will never leave you, nor forsake you." Though we may face bad circumstances, God will be with us, just as He was with Joseph.

As Joseph remained faithful and patient, God, once more, prospered him. Soon, he was in charge of all of the other prisoners; and once again, he became a great witness to the Lord. God used Joseph even during this difficult time. We need to keep our focus on the Lord and His plans for us, especially in difficult times. God blesses those who are faithful in difficult times.

"Two-gether" Forever

God was with Joseph in the pit, in Potiphar's house, in prison, everywhere! He never left Joseph, even though sometimes Joseph had hard times that were not even his fault.

For a game time, do a "three-legged race." Have the children pair up. Then make two teams of pairs, splitting the class evenly. Have the children stand next to each other. Using a belt or piece of cloth, tie their legs together.

Then have all the pairs line up. Using masking tape, make a line at the other end of the room. Have two pairs at a time race to the line and back. Then the next pairs will go. Declare a winner and try again if time allows.

Explain that God is always with us like our partners.

What an example of faith and perseverance Joseph was through very difficult times. As a slave and later a prisoner, he remained faithful and devoted to God. When daily Potiphar's wife pressured him to sin, he remained faithful to God, fleeing temptation. In the midst of these difficult circumstances, "God was with Joseph" and prospered him. As the story of Joseph continues to unfold, his perseverance will be rewarded, for God was working a wonderful plan. May we be faithful and patient through difficult circumstances for we, too, have God's promise that all things are working for a good purpose in our lives. **God blesses those who are faithful in difficult times.**

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to trust God even when times are hard. Thank the Lord for His blessings and presence, even in those times. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity to do so.

