

# The Purity Of Joseph

**Introduction.** The life of Joseph presents many beautiful examples for the people of God to follow, and perhaps our greatest teaching comes from example (Romans 15:4). This is obvious from the fact that the account of his life occupies so much space in the book of Genesis. Joseph was a great man of God who had faith, courage, and determination. With Joseph, young and old alike have a wonderful precedent of purity to look to (1 Peter 1:22). He used his faith, courage, and determination to overcome, and his victory gives me hope that we can overcome too.

## ***I. He Overcame Temptation***

- A. Temptation will come. It did to Joseph. Potiphar's wife looked at Joseph and wanted him to lay with her. He was young, away from home, probably lonely, and rejected from his family. Potiphar's wife may have been the only one to show any feeling toward him. This was not a one-time request, but day after day she begged him (Genesis 39:7, 10). I hope you would have reacted like Joseph, who "refused" and remained pure (Genesis 39:8).
- B. Joseph demonstrated great attitudes during his temptations.
  - 1. He remembered that his master trusted him.
    - a) The convenient opportunity presented itself, for Potiphar's husband was absent a lot (Genesis 39:8). But Joseph had been appointed a steward in Potiphar's house, a respected position with high expectations (Luke 16:1, 3, 8; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2), and he respected his charge.
    - b) Because we are stewards of God's grace (1 Peter 4:10), others are trusting us to behave blamelessly. Stewardship demands spiritual exercise and self-control (1 Timothy 4:7; Hebrews 5:14).
  - 2. He knew adultery was wicked.
    - a) No doubt, had he given in, there would have been short-term pleasure like the kind Moses gave up (Genesis 39:9; cp. Hebrews 11:24-26).
    - b) Far too often it is not until temptation has already overtaken someone that they realize sin is involved. They let the pleasure of the moment overshadow the real facts. Whether there is enjoyment or not, it is still sin (Hebrews 13:4; Revelation 21:8). In our postmodern age, society wants to paint the picture of sin being an acceptable and normal reaction.
  - 3. He refused the temptation.
    - a) He said, "No!" (Genesis 39:8). One of the greatest lessons anyone can learn is how to say a simple but difficult word: "No." Sure, it may cause hardship at work or school. Because Joseph said, "No" Potiphar's wife then lied about what he had done which resulted in his being imprisoned.
    - b) However, it was because he did say, "No" that he continued in fellowship with God, which was far more important than anything he might have gained by yielding to the temptation (Proverbs 1:10; 2:16-19; 5:3-8). Ironically, Joseph was safer in prison than he was in Potiphar's house.
  - 4. He was aware of how bad situations looked.
    - a) As Joseph went into the house, "there was none of the men of the house there within" (Genesis 39:11). Joseph realized that his being in the house

alone with this woman was dangerous and would cause others to wonder what was happening.

- b) Christians have to exercise so much caution when it comes to what they present to the world (Matthew 10:16). It is so easy, in the digital age, to post something or like something that reflects badly on the glory of Christ (Job 11:14; 28:28; Psalm 119:101).
- 5. He fled and got away.
  - a) He literally got out of the house (Genesis 39:12). There was not the slightest hesitation as he made up his mind. It was a resolute “No!”
  - b) There may be a time when in great temptation, you have to literally get out of the house or car and run from the enticement. But you will be glad you did (Romans 1:24; 1 Corinthians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:4).
- C. Joseph overcame his temptation. Though robbed of his coat, he would not be robbed of his character. He could get another coat but not another character. We can overcome temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13). Being tempted is not wrong; it is wrong to give in to temptation (James 1:13-16).

## **II. He Overcame Circumstances**

- A. Joseph was ill-treated by a lot of people. He was hated by his brothers who mostly wanted to kill him (Genesis 37:4, 18-22). His brothers took his coat of many colors and threw him in a pit (Genesis 37:23-28). He was then sold to a band of Ishmaelites. Being brought to Egypt, he was sold to Potiphar (Genesis 37:36). After fleeing from his master’s wife, he was lied about and thrown in prison for something he had not done. After showing kindness to Pharaoh’s chief butler, he was forgotten (Genesis 40:23). How would someone feel after such treatment? Would he be tempted to turn from God? Would there not be a little temptation to give up and feel sorry for one’s self?
- B. Joseph demonstrated great attitudes during his trials.
  - 1. He remained humble and patient.
    - a) The trials he faced would produce even more patience which indicates the approval of God (James 1:2-3).
    - b) We glory in tribulations, knowing that the same works patience, and patience, experience or proven character (Romans 5:3-4).
  - 2. He returned good for evil.
    - a) He did not treat his brothers the same or worse than they had treated him. He spoke kindly and took care of his father and brothers (Genesis 47:12).
    - b) We too have to learn to return good for evil (Romans 12:19-21; 1 Peter 3:9; cp. Proverbs 16:32). When you make a friend out of your enemies, you have destroyed your enemies.
  - 3. He maintained purity of life though he lived in a corrupt nation.
    - a) He refused to let evil influences overtake him. We can be deceived into thinking that association with evil will have no effect on us (Deuteronomy 13:6-8; Proverbs 12:26; 22:24-25).
    - b) Jesus prayed for His disciples as they would be living in a corrupt world (John 17:15; 1 John 5:18). They would be kept from that evil by following the truth of God (John 17:17).

4. He recognized that God was with him during his trials.
    - a) Joseph was confident that God was by his side (Genesis 39:2-3, 21) and he gladly told his brothers (Genesis 45:5). However, God meant it all for Joseph's good (Genesis 50:20).
    - b) This is not to say that Joseph thought that God approved what his brothers did, or the motive which prompted their action; but that God was able to overrule what they did to His glory and the good of Jacob's family. As Joseph remained content with his circumstances, realizing that God was with him, we too should be content (Hebrews 13:5). Through the teaching of the Bible, God can show us how anything in our life, great or small, can be used to our ultimate good (Romans 8:31).
  5. He did not sink into a pool of self-pity.
    - a) Joseph did not fret and worry about how badly life had treated him. He could have easily given up and thought that neither God nor anyone else cared about him.
    - b) Rather than feel sorry for himself, Joseph overlooked the bad events and counted his many blessings. Paul urges that we should not be careful (anxious) about our lives but rather center our minds on what is good, pure, lovely, and of good report (Philippians 4:6-8; Colossians 3:2).
- C. How would you have reacted? Would you have forgotten God and turned to a life of sin? Would you have overcome by faith in God? Christians will face trying and difficult times. We will be ill-treated by our brethren and the world. There will be times when it seems everything is against us. Yet, we like Joseph can overcome. There was nothing he could do about his circumstances, but he could do something about himself.

**Conclusion.** Joseph overcame temptation and his circumstances, and remained faithful in the worst of situations. Since God does not require the impossible, it can be done. With all the help and assurance we have, there is no reason to fall victim to sin. Unfortunately, almost every day we hedge ourselves into situations where we can compromise our spiritual standing before God.

One of the most profound sayings in the New Testament is when Jesus said, "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41). That saying is so simple, but it sums up our entire life. If you hate what you are doing and how you are living because of sin, the only answer is Jesus Christ (Romans 7:25). We want to help you find that life.