

# Three Disciplines Of Joseph

**Introduction.** One of the favorite individuals in the Bible is Joseph. God used Joseph in one of the Bible's most stunning examples of providence. God used three disciplines in Joseph's life, recorded in Genesis 39, to prepare him to be the second ruler of Egypt.

## I. ***The Discipline Of Service (vss. 1-6)***

- A. Joseph exchanged his "tailored coat" for a servant's garb, and God forced him to learn how to work. God knew that Joseph could never be a ruler until first he was a servant. Because Joseph was faithful in small tasks, God promoted him to a far greater area of influence (Proverbs 12:24; 22:29).
- B. We know that the Bible demands work (Ephesians 4:28; 1 Thessalonians 4:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:12; 1 Timothy 5:8), but what benefit does it provide? God gave man work to do after He created him (Genesis 2:15). Because it is of God, work is good for the soul. It is a satisfaction and service to God (Proverbs 12:11; 20:13; Ecclesiastes 5:18; Colossians 3:22-24).
- C. The value of work lay in allowing you to develop your talents and build up your character. Money? Why turn your nose up at it? But collaborating in the process of creation -- that is the soul-satisfying point. In considering a career, ask what talents you possess, not what lifestyle looks the most attractive. You have a talent, so make the most of it. Do your work, and remind yourself that it is good for the soul (Matthew 25:21).

## II. ***The Discipline Of Self-Control (vss. 7-18)***

- A. Joseph's mother was a beautiful woman (29:17), and no doubt the son inherited her features. Egyptian women were known for their unfaithfulness, but Joseph did not yield. God was testing Joseph, for if Joseph could not control himself as a servant, he could never control others as a ruler.
- B. He could have argued, "Nobody will know" or "Everybody else is doing it." Instead, he lived to please God and made it a point to make no provision for the flesh (Romans 13:14), to flee youthful lusts (2 Timothy 2:22), and to keep himself unspotted from the world (James 1:27). Joseph lost his coat, but he kept his character. Too many people have failed in this discipline, and disqualified themselves when it came to glorifying God (Proverbs 16:32; 25:28; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27).

### III. ***The Discipline Of Suffering (vss. 19-23)***

- A. Not only was Joseph able to control his appetites, he was able to control his tongue; for he did not argue with the officers or expose the lie Potiphar's wife was spreading about him (cf. Acts 16:16-25). Control of the tongue is a mark of spiritual maturity (James 3:1-2). Potiphar saw to it that Joseph was put in the king's prison (vs. 20), and Joseph's faithfulness and devotion again brought him favor with the officers. However, the real key to his success was because "the Lord was with Joseph" (39:2, 21).
- B. Joseph had to suffer quite a while as a prisoner, and this suffering put "iron" in his soul (Psalm 105:17-20). It helped make him a man. People who avoid suffering have a hard time developing character (1 Peter 1:6-7). Joseph learned patience from his suffering (Romans 5:1-5; James 1:2-4) as well as a deeper faith in God's word (Hebrews 6:12). This suffering was not enjoyable, but it was necessary, and one day it turned into glory as Joseph was mentioned among the great people of faith in Hebrews 11:22.

**Conclusion.** This was a real man with real temptations and real chances for growth. Joseph is such a great man of faith. Learn from him, and follow his example of service, self-control, and suffering. You will be a stronger child of God, and you will have a stronger hold on the eternal home.