INTRODUCTION:

Lesson 1: YOU MUST HAVE A DREAM.

- Joseph was shown two dreams at age 17 which showed him God’s purpose in his life.
- No matter what happened to Joseph, he remained faithful to God and to his dream.
- God has a purpose for every person’s life.
  - You can’t just float down the stream of life and automatically be on your God given course.
  - You must first see God’s purpose, set your course and stay on course.
  - You must take control of the direction you travel. You have to pursue it.

Lesson 2: JOSEPH AS A SLAVE

Joseph was prosperous.

- Joseph had nothing yet was prosperous because God was with him.
- If Joseph was, so are you even more!
- Begin to see yourself as God sees you, a prosperous person, regardless of your physical circumstances.
- Eliminate murmuring and complaining, and replace them with praise and thankfulness, knowing God will complete what He has begun in your life.

Lesson 3: JOSEPH AS A PRISONER

Joseph’s Tempter

This section begins with a statement that sets the stage for what follows.

Genesis 39:6b *Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance.*
• The Bible rarely gives physical descriptions. Joseph really stood out! He’s a combination of Brad Pitt and Arnold Schwarzenegger. He’s got six-pack abs, a chiseled chest, and muscles of granite. He’s a stud! Many men would love to look like Joseph. However, this is one blessing too many. In fact, this is an outright curse.

Vs. 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.”*

*After these things, what things?* God’s prospering of Joseph as he worked in Potiphar’s household!

• **After Joseph prospered** he was tempted.
  
  o If we are never tested when things are going well, we tend to get arrogant and bigheaded. Temptation can effectively bring us back down to earth.

• Satan tempts us in order to destroy our testimony. Serious believers threaten him.

• In the moment of our greatest success temptation often blindsides us, **WHY?** Because that is when we least expect it.

• When temptation is successfully resisted it prepares us to do greater things for God

• Mrs. Potiphar’s method to tempt Joseph was that she *cast longing eyes on Joseph* and her pickup line was, “*Lie with me.*”

**Joseph’s Response**

Vs. 8-9 *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. 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?”*

• Joseph used three lines of argumentation:

  1. The abuse of trust- *he has committed all that he has to my hand*
  2. An offense against her husband- *nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife.*
  3. A sin against God- *How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?*

• This is what it means to be “**above reproach**”. Joseph is concerned about:

  1. his integrity,
  2. the institution of marriage,
  3. and his fellowship with God.

  o An important theological point is being made here:
    ▪ Our sin is never private.
Every time we sin, we sin against God.

And in a certain sense our sin is always against Him alone. Psalm 51:4a

Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight—

Joseph’s Resolve

Now our man Joe showed some amazing resolve in 39:8-9, but he’s not out of the woods yet.

Vs. 10 “She spoke to Joseph day after day, he did not listen to her to lie beside her or be with her.”

I’m sure she dressed seductively and touched Joseph as often as possible in her effort to break down his resistance to an adulterous affair.

She likely had all kinds of one-liners in her repertoire: “Potiphar is gone for the day.” “No one will ever know.” “Just this once!” “Potiphar hasn’t been a very good husband…I deserve some happiness too, don’t I?” “Just come close and hold me…it won’t go any further.” “We won’t be hurting anyone.”

Joseph could have been flattered. He could have justified going to bed with her, reasoning that “If I turn her down, she will turn Potiphar against me.” But he stayed away from trouble, didn’t flirt with it, and didn’t even consider it.

Joseph not only would not have sex with her, he separated himself from her. He wouldn’t even think about it.

ο NLT he kept out of her way as much as possible.

ο 1 Thess. 5:22 Stay away from every form of evil. HCSB

Many of us flirt with stuff we shouldn’t be flirting with.

ο No one wakes up in the morning and says,

  ▪ “Today I am going to commit adultery”.

  ▪ Yet, we regularly see adultery and porn on TVs and computers as well as in magazines.

  ▪ Before long it is so easy to start to imagine what it would be like.

ο You will not do in your physical body what you have not done in your mind.

One of my favorite stories is of an affluent, aristocratic woman who reviews resumes from potential chauffeurs to drive her Rolls Royce. She narrows the applicants to three men and invites them to her palatial home. She escorts each one individually to her driveway and the brick wall beside it. Then she asks, “If you were driving my Rolls, how close do you think you could come to that brick wall without scratching my car?” The first applicant says, “I can drive within a foot of that wall and not damage your Rolls.” She brings out the second man and asks, “If you were driving my Rolls, how close do you think you could come to
that brick wall without scratching my car?” He scratches his head and says, “I can drive within six inches of that wall and not damage your car.” She invites the third applicant and asks, “If you were driving my Rolls, how close do you think you could come to that brick wall without scratching my car?” He does not hesitate: “Ma’am, I do not know how close I could come to the wall without damaging your car, but if I was driving your car, I would stay as far away as possible from the wall so as not to damage your car.” Guess who got the job? When addressing sexual temptation, the point is not how close one can get to the temptation without getting “scratched,” but staying as far away as possible.

- I have some bad news. Temptation will always be present. It never takes a day off. It can haunt you. In fact, temptation is like a telemarketer:
  - It comes to us when it is least convenient.
  - It comes back again and again.
  - It keeps pushing even after you say, “No.”
  - It makes what it is selling sound great…but there is always a catch.

**Joseph’s Escape**

Verse 11 begins with these suspenseful words, “*Now it happened one day…that he went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the household was there inside. She caught him by his garment, saying, ‘Lie with me!’ And he left his garment in her hand and fled, and went outside.*”

- After resisting countless advances, and trying to keep his distance, Joseph may have been unprepared for what happen here.
- This woman was like static cling—all over Joseph. She tried to grab Joseph and take him to bed.
- She was a woman who was unaccustomed to hearing the word, “NO!”
- ”I don’t think Joseph paused to consider his alternatives even for a split second.
  - He could submit to her this time and say, “Well, she made me do it.”
  - He could go along because no one else would ever find out.
  - He could say, “Why don’t we sit down and talk about this like mature adults?”
- Instead, Joseph acted like the Road Runner, except he didn’t say “beep, beep”, he just ran!
  - Joseph opts for better naked than naughty and he streaks away!
- It is possible to be pure in the 21st century. But it requires a pure mind, caution, quick feet, and help from God.
  - 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 *Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own
Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.

- 2 Timothy 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

I want to remind you again of the temptation that this must have been to Joseph. Consider the full picture:

- Joseph came from a dysfunctional family (37:3).
- He was hated and betrayed by his brothers (37:4-5, 8, 27-28).
- He was sold into slavery (37:36; 39:1).
- Joseph’s brothers Reuben and Judah were immoral (35:22; 38:18).
- Joseph’s family would never know.
- The Egyptian culture was filled with sexual immorality.
- Joseph and Mrs. P were alone in the house.
- Mrs. P would never tell.
- Joseph was a young man with hormones in full force (37:2). (he was 17!)
- He was still a virgin—never experienced sex.
- If he struggled with her, he might hurt her.

These factors would have led many men into sin…but not Joseph.

Mrs. Potiphar’s Response:

Vs. 13-15 When she saw that she was holding his cloak and he had fled, she called out to her servants. Soon all the men came running. “Look!” she said. “My husband has brought this Hebrew slave here to make fools of us! He came into my room to rape me, but I screamed. When he heard me scream, he ran outside and got away, but he left his cloak behind with me.” NLT

Victor Hugo, the great French writer, once said, “Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned.”

- The original, correct quotation is "Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turned/ Nor hell a fury like a woman scorned." by William Congreve in The Mourning Bride of 1697.

All of a sudden, Mrs. P is left holding the bag…or better yet, a hand full of dirty laundry. What is she to do?

- She can’t admit that she has an insatiable sex drive and has been coming on to Joseph for many days and that he continually resisted her.
• She calls the men in from outside and gives them her pathetic sob story, which is only hearsay—they were not present.

• So she pulls the race card and puts the blame on her husband for bringing in a “Hebrew” to rape her.

Vs. 16 After this pathetic sob story, Mrs. Potiphar kept the cloak with her until her husband came home. NLT

In vs. 17-18, Then she told him her story. “That Hebrew slave you’ve brought into our house tried to come in and fool around with me,” she said. “But when I screamed, he ran outside, leaving his cloak with me!” NLT

Again, Mrs. P blamed her husband for what took place. Always easier to blame someone else.

Verse 19 “Now when his (Joseph’s) master heard the words of his wife, which she spoke to him, saying, ‘This is what your slave did to me,’ his anger burned.” (he was furious HCSB)

• The record only says, ambiguously, that “his anger burned.” Or “he was furious” not indicating whether his anger was directed at Joseph or his wife.

  o I think his anger probably was directed at his wife, not Joseph because:

  ▪ his wife’s accusation that it was Potiphar’s fault for bringing the “Hebrew” in,
  ▪ the proven trustworthiness of Joseph,
  ▪ the fact that Mr. P. is going to lose a competent slave,
  ▪ and his knowledge of his wife’s character or lack thereof,

Mr. Potiphar’s Plan

Potiphar is in a difficult position here—he cannot discount his wife’s accusation without publicly humiliating her, even if he was certain she is lying.

In vs. 20, Potiphar “took him and put him into the jail, the place where the king’s prisoners were confined; and he was there in the jail.”

• Remember that Potiphar was “the captain of the guard,” which means he was the chief executioner or chief of police. In other words, he had charge of the palace KGB, with the power of life and death, under the supervision of Pharaoh

• Normally Joseph would have probably been executed on the spot, no questions asked.

• Attempted rape was a capital offense. The milder punishment suggests that Potiphar does not believe his wife. He probably knows her character.
• Furthermore, the king’s prison was a place for political prisoners and would hardly have been expected to accommodate foreign slaves guilty of crimes against their masters.

• Another very interesting observation is that the prison is in a part of Potiphar’s house (see. 40:3, 7).

• Joseph was thus demoted. He went from the penthouse to the prison. He went from the top floor to the basement.

• In reality, Joseph’s imprisonment by Potiphar was an answer to his persistent prayers: “Lord, protect me from this woman.” Where could Joseph be safer than behind bars?

God’s Plan
Unknown to Joseph, the Lord had sent him to Potiphar’s house to prepare him for the important task which lay ahead, that of serving as the second highest official in the land of Egypt.

• But in order for this to happen, Joseph first had to learn the language, culture, business, and politics of Egypt as well as leadership skills.
  o And it wasn’t handed to him on a silver platter! He had to get up early and stay up late to both do his job and to learn Egyptian ways.

• Furthermore, the prison was the setting of a very important future divine appointment between Joseph and the cupbearer of Pharaoh.

Many of our hardships are training for higher responsibilities.

• It’s not easy on us.

• But it was not an easy time for Joseph,
  o Ps 105:17-18 He (God) sent a man before them (the family of Jacob)—Joseph—who was sold as a slave. They hurt his feet with fetters, He was laid in irons.

• This should also remind us of another principle:
  o Those who resist temptation are rarely rewarded by the world.
  o But overcoming your temptations, like Joseph, proves personal integrity, promotes spiritual maturity, and prepares you for fuller opportunity.

God’s Faithfulness
At the beginning of our story Joseph did right and become a slave and, now, again, he does right and ends up spending years in an Egyptian prison. We agree that God was with Joseph
in Potiphar’s penthouse, but many would question how God could be with Joseph in the prison.

It seems that the more Joseph obeyed God, the worse life got. Yet, our story concludes with these fascinating words:

Vs. 21-23 *But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. 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. 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.*

This final paragraph corresponds perfectly with the first of the chapter. Each phrase of the last paragraph matches almost perfectly with a corresponding phrase in the opening section (39:2-6a) BECAUSE, “The LORD was with Joseph” while he was in prison, just as He had been with him in Potiphar’s house (cp. 39:20-21 with 39:2).

- Joseph found favor in the sight of the prison warden, just as he had found favor with Potiphar (cp. 39:21b and 39:4a).
- The prison warden put Joseph in charge of everything that went on there, just as Potiphar had placed Joseph over his entire household (cp. 39:22 and 39:4b).
- What happened in Potiphar’s house also happened in Pharaoh’s prison, Joseph soon became the chief administrator of the entire prison.
  - But God’s training of Joseph had become more advanced. Handling prisoners was a more difficult matter than handling the possessions of Potiphar.
  - It was the same area of training; Joseph was an administrator, but the level of training was now higher.
  - God was preparing Joseph for the day when he would be administering the entire land of Egypt. (41:41).
- The Lord continued to bless Joseph’s work and made everything he did in prison prosper, just as He had done earlier when Joseph was in Potiphar’s house (compare 39:23 and 39:5).

**Joseph’s Faithfulness**

The one great secret of hardship and suffering is to trust in the presence, power, and justice of God and to keep in mind that God has a purpose and plan for us.

Rom 8:28 *And we know that all that happens to us is working for our good if we love God and are fitting into his plans.* TLB

- Clearly, Joseph rose to the top, but how long did all this take?
Lessons From Joseph

- Joseph was 17 years old when he was sold into slavery (37:2).
- He was 30 when Pharaoh promoted him (41:46), and had been in prison for two years before that (41:1).
- So, it took 11 years in Potiphar’s house and two years in prison for God’s plans to be accomplished in Joseph’s life.

- Yet, Joseph persevered. He remained faithful to God. Even when his character and reputation was slandered, he held on, trusting in the Lord.

You can have inner peace as you experience the circumstances of life by keeping in mind God’s sovereignty and love for you.

The peace that Jesus gives is not the absence of trouble, but is rather the confidence that He is always there with you in the midst of trouble.

John 14:27 *Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

Whatever you are going through today, I can assure you that God’s gracious and sovereign hand is with you. He simply wants you to trust in Him as you walk through the fires of life. Will you?