

## LESSON 8. POTIPHAR'S WIFE

Genesis 39:6-23

**MEMORY VERSES:** “Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor” (Exodus 20:14-16).

We have all had times when we felt like we were “on top of the world.” Then, something happens that brings us back to earth with a “thud!” To this point in our studies, Joseph’s life had been kind of a “roller coaster.” Loved dearly by his father, he was hated by his brothers who sold him into slavery. He became a slave in a foreign country. His conduct as a slave prompted his master to make him overseer of all he owned. Now, Joseph’s life is about to take another turn.

As overseer of Potiphar’s house and fields, it was necessary for Joseph to be in the house to conduct his master’s business. As an officer of Pharaoh, Potiphar was often not home. Potiphar’s wife was there and she liked this young Hebrew slave. Alone in the house with Joseph, she began to entice him saying “Lie with me” (Genesis 39:7). She wanted Joseph to commit adultery (have sexual intercourse) with her. Joseph refused. He told her Potiphar had put him in charge of everything he owned. Joseph said, “how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God” (Genesis 39:9). Joseph knew any such relationship with Potiphar’s wife would be a sin against Potiphar and against God.

Potiphar’s wife would not stop. Day after day, she tried to seduce Joseph, but he would not go to bed with her or even be with her. One day when no one else was around, Joseph was in the house on his master’s business. Potiphar’s wife grabbed his garment and again asked Joseph to lie (have sex) with her. Joseph ran out of the house, leaving his garment in her hands. This evidently made Potiphar’s wife very angry. She called other servants to the house and told them Joseph had tried to force himself upon her. When Potiphar got home, she repeated the same lie and showed Potiphar Joseph’s garment which he left behind as he fled. He ran away, she said, when she screamed for help. Potiphar was enraged. He immediately had Joseph put into prison.

Once again, Joseph was being punished for something he had not done. He was innocent of the charges against him, but no one would believe the word of a slave against an Egyptian officer’s wife. Now he was not only a slave, he was in prison in a strange land. He had no family, no friends, and seemingly, little hope of ever getting out. Nevertheless, Joseph still trusted God. He conducted himself just as he had all his life; kind, obedient, honest and trustworthy. This is how God wants us to be even when faced with troubles that seem hopeless.

God helped Joseph find favor in the eyes of the prison keeper. The prison keeper liked Joseph and placed all the other prisoners under his control. He had total faith in Joseph because Joseph was honest and wise. The Lord was with Joseph and blessed everything he did in the prison. Once more, Joseph had climbed back up from a valley in his life. He was able to do so because he remembered and trusted God.

Potiphar's wife was not a good woman. She was a liar and unfaithful to her husband. Joseph was a handsome young man. Potiphar's wife was attracted to him by the lust of the eyes and lust of the flesh (1 John 2:16). It is not always easy to resist temptation, but Joseph knew adultery was wrong. Perhaps Joseph could have been immoral with Potiphar's wife and no one would have ever known. However, God would know and Joseph was faithful to God. Potiphar's wife was guilty of both adultery (Matthew 5:28) and bearing false witness (Exodus 20:16). Joseph was innocent, but he still suffered punishment because of her sins. There are times when we suffer for doing what is right. There are times when life seems very unfair, yet we know God will not forget us, as long as we have faith and trust in Him (1 Corinthians 10:13).

You are growing up in a time when our world is filled with evil temptations. Movies can be decent and entertaining, but most are now filled with adultery, sexual content, alcohol, and violence. Computers can be of great assistance, but there is much on the Internet that is unfit for anyone's eyes or mind. Magazines and newspapers are filled with suggestive ads. Many of these we can shun, however there is much evil we cannot avoid. At those times we must put on the whole armor of God and trust in Him (Ephesians 6:13). Listen to the words of the apostle John, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world" (1 John 2:15).

This is also a time when adultery and divorce are common. The world no longer frowns on men or women being unfaithful to their mates. God does not want man to live that way. A husband and wife are to become "one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). Jesus said divorce is sin unless it is because of adultery (Matthew 19:9). Right now you are at the stage of life when you need to be thinking about what kind of person you want to marry. Be sure that person is a Christian. Your chance for a happy and successful marriage will be much greater if you do. Divorce is not only against God's will, it greatly complicates the lives of all that are involved.

Many young people are risking their lives and their souls by having sex before they are married. The long term consequences of such sins can be tragic. Loss of self respect, abuse, disease, unwanted babies, psychological problems, broken homes, and most of all, sinning against God are just some of the fruit of this kind of sin. Remember, the devil will tempt you to do something by making you think "all the other kids are doing it." Satan knows if he can get you to sin once he can get you again. Before you realize it, he will have you hooked!! Paul wrote, "Flee fornication [sexual intercourse outside marriage] (1 Corinthians 6:18). That's what Joseph did! Keep your body and life pure.

Joseph's life provides a great example for all youth to follow. He learned early in life to trust the Lord. He knew adultery was wickedness and sin against God. It hasn't changed. It still is. With God's help you can resist all the evil temptations of today's world. The decision is yours. You can be like Joseph. Put your trust in the Lord as Joseph did. You will be glad you did later in this life and in the life to come.

## WRITE IT DOWN

1. **1 Corinthians 10:13:** “ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_”

2. **1 Corinthians 6:18:** “ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_”

## TRUE AND FALSE

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Potiphar’s wife was a liar and adulteress.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Potiphar knew his wife was lying.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Joseph bribed the keeper of the prison to get a good job.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Joseph still trusted in God, even after being put in prison.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The keeper of the prison put Joseph in isolation from the other prisoners.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Life is always fair and people get what they deserve.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Joseph spent a lot of time with Potiphar’s wife.

## DRAW A LINE CONNECTING THE CORRECT ANSWER

- |                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. Potiphar’s wife was        | a. how can I do this wickedness and sin against God.  |
| 2. The keeper of the prison   | b. where the king’s prisoners were bound.             |
| 3. Jesus said                 | c. gave Joseph oversight of all the prisoners.        |
| 4. God will provide           | d. unfaithful to her husband.                         |
| 5. Joseph said                | e. a way of escape when we are tempted.               |
| 6. Joseph was put into prison | f. we commit adultery by just lusting (Matthew 5:28). |

## THINK ABOUT IT!

1. Why does God allow His people to sometimes suffer hardships and heartache?
2. Why do you think Joseph kept his faith in God after being sold by his brothers, unjustly accused by Potiphar’s wife, and being put into prison for a crime he did not do?
3. Why was Joseph given so much authority in prison? (Genesis 39:21-23).
4. What are some of the temptations youth face daily?
5. What are some things we can do that will help us resist temptations?
6. Why did God bless Joseph when he was put in prison?