

Now let's read about what followed in the heels of Joseph's actions. Read Genesis 39:19-23.

How did Potiphar respond to his wife's complaint against Joseph?

In those days and in that setting, the appropriate punishment for Joseph would have been severe beating or worse. Why might Potiphar have decided not to subject Joseph to such punishment?

What does Joseph get for his holy and wholly appropriate action in the face of Potiphar's wife's overtures?

How do you feel about the turn of events in Joseph's life?
How do you think you'd be feeling if you were in his place?

In what ways does God show up and sustain Joseph in spite of the seemingly unfortunate ways things are going for him?

Day Five

It is easy for me to conclude that if I do what is right, life will go better for me. I often think that if I can just figure out what the holy course of action is and give myself to that, the outcome will be to my favor. When have you felt or thought those kinds of things?

Why do we think that?

What would you tell Joseph--if you had the chance--if that was the way you were viewing life? If good behavior *must* usher in favorable circumstances, could you help Joseph make sense of what is going on in his life?

In his first epistle, Peter writes to those who are serving as slaves, answering the demands of another. Although slaves, in particular, are in view, what he says about how we live under hard circumstances does apply to all (and helps us make sense of what Joseph went through!). Read 1 Peter 2:19-23.

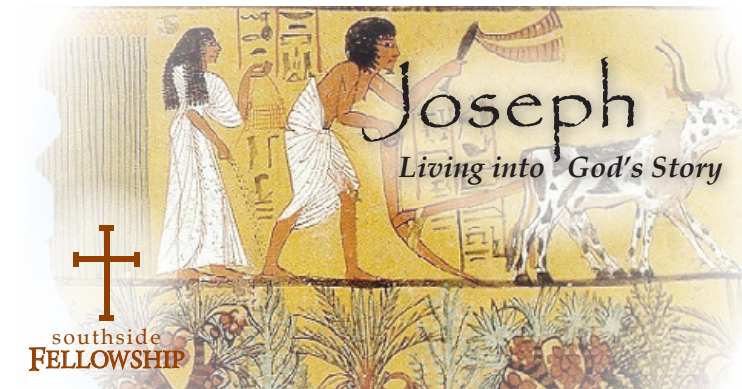
What does Peter tell us about *how* we are to respond when we are treated unjustly, when suffering in spite of doing that which is good?

What does Peter tell us about *why* we are to respond that way?

What does it mean when Peter says that Jesus, Himself, is to be our example in all such situations? How do you see Jesus serving as your example when you are facing unfair or unjust or troubling life circumstances?

Ultimately, Jesus lived the way that He did--in spite of the abusive treatment He endured--because He "continued entrusting Himself to the Him who judges justly." How do you see this same idea reflected in the life of Joseph?

How could embracing this insight shape the way you live in the midst of the challenges you are facing?



Weekly Devotional Guide

February 21, 2010

Genesis 39: Trouble in a Foreign Land

Day One

We pick back up with the story of Joseph with Joseph, who is now in Egypt, having been sold there by his brothers as we read about in Genesis 37. Read 39:1-6.

Remember, Joseph has now been cut off from (and by!) his family. He is living among pagans who do not know the God of Abraham. What kind of setting is that for a young man to grow up in? What pressures do you think Joseph might have been facing?

Think back over our study last week of Judah and his actions after he had "turned aside" from his family and began hanging out with Canaanites. What parallels exist between Judah's situation and Joseph's?

What do you recall about how Judah lived in his situation? What ended up happening in his life?

What questions naturally arise in your mind as you read or hear the story of Judah's trouble, living among pagan people, and what we read here of Joseph settling into life in Egypt?

What impression do you get of Joseph from this section? What kind of man is he?

What explanation is offered for why things are happening the way they do for Joseph there in Egypt?

As we leave the story after just these first six verses of Genesis 39, what might you anticipate about how things will continue to unfold for Joseph? Do these opening verses set you up to anticipate things going “better” for Joseph (in comparison to what he experienced at the hands of his brothers) or “worse” for him? Why?

How does your anticipation of how God ought to be writing the story of your life flavor how you interpret and anticipate what should come next in your day to days?

Day Two

Things continue to unfold in Joseph's life, there in Egypt. Read Genesis 39:1-20.

How did Joseph end up in Potiphar's service?

What did God do to and for Joseph there?

What are the implications of recognizing that when it comes to the difficult situation that Joseph finds himself in with Potiphar's wife?

What things contributed to Potiphar's wife's interest in Joseph?

How does Potiphar's wife respond to Joseph's initial

spurning of her request? What might have motivated her to do what she does? What is she after?

Why might it have been easy for Joseph to give in to what Potiphar's wife was inviting? Given his circumstances, what could he have been telling himself?

Listen closely (or re-read carefully!) how Joseph explained why he was choosing to not respond to Potiphar's wife's overtures. What is Joseph's underlying motivation? What has gripped his heart?

What do those words (39:8-10) tell you about the kind of man Joseph was? When do you find similar words echoing in your own heart?

Day Three

Let's look more closely at what Joseph encountered in Potiphar's house and how he responded to the challenges there. Read Genesis 39:7-20.

What was Potiphar's wife pursuing? Why do you think she was pursuing that?

What were the various ways that Joseph resisted Potiphar's wife's overtures?

How do you see Joseph responding by reasoning with Potiphar's wife?

How do you see Joseph responding through resisting Potiphar's wife?

How do you see Joseph responding by running from the situation?

Which is the most common way you respond to situations that might be drawing you into life choices that are inappropriate?

Ultimately, why does Joseph end up fleeing? What is his core motivation in acting as he does?

All of us will face life choices. Those decision points will either move us farther along God's path for our lives or will draw us away from His intentions for us. How can Joseph's experience help you grow in your discernment about how you will face such choices?

Day Four

When we do what is right and act in holy and wholly appropriate ways, what do we typically anticipate will be the results?

Let's recap how Joseph acted when faced with a challenging situation. Reread Genesis 39:7-20.

How would you “assess” Joseph's actions? Holy and wholly appropriate or . . .? Why?