

# FINDING PURPOSE UNCERTAINTY

## LESSON 2 | Success and Seduction | Genesis 39

### From power to imprisonment, Joseph experiences a quick reversal in his life's direction.

Have you ever experienced a drastic change in your life? How should we respond to life's ups and downs?

***Potiphar noticed this and realized that the Lord was with Joseph, giving him success in everything he did. This pleased Potiphar, so he soon made Joseph his personal attendant. He put him in charge of his entire household and everything he owned ... and Potiphar's wife soon began to look at him lustfully. "Come and sleep with me," she demanded. GENESIS 39:3-4, 7 (NLT)***

Joseph now finds his home in the Egyptian Empire. This is about 300 miles from Dothan, where Joseph's brothers originally sold him. In this chapter we see something unique about Joseph which sustains him not only in his rise to power, but also in face of adversity.

Even Potiphar (whose name means "given by Ra," the Egyptian sun god), Joseph's master, "saw that the Lord was with him" (Genesis 39:3). He allowed Joseph to take charge of everything he owned, with the exception of the food he ate. That could be interpreted as he was only concerned with his belly, or some scholars think it may have been related to rituals before eating that Joseph as a Hebrew could not participate in.

Potiphar's wife's (identified in the Quran and Jewish literature as "Zuleika," meaning "brilliant beauty") attempt—and failure—to seduce Joseph launches the next part of his story. When Potiphar hears the story, he is enraged and throws Joseph in prison. Many scholars believe this crime would have been punishable by death, yet Potiphar chose prison instead. As the captain of the guards, Potiphar likely had the responsibility of executing criminals. Some scholars suggest Potiphar doubted his wife's story.



- 7 | What different schemes does Potiphar's wife's engage in to tempt Joseph?
- 8 | Joseph was strong in the face of temptation even though his family had forsaken him. How does Joseph react to Potiphar's wife's tactics? Why do you think he is so strong in his resistance?
- 9 | What practical suggestions about temptation do we receive in the following verses?
- Corinthians 10:13
  - Timothy 2:22
  - Titus 2:11-13
- 10 | What is an area of temptation in your life? How do these verses help you respond to this temptation?
- 11 | What consequence did Joseph face for his godly response to temptation?
- 12 | **Reread Genesis 39:12.** Referring back to question six, what symbolism do you see here?

- 13 | How does Joseph respond to his unfair treatment?
- 14 | If you were graphing the progression of Joseph's life, you would see a huge dip at the end of chapter 37. Have you ever experienced a quick reversal, as Joseph did? Explain.
- 15 | Besides Joseph, can you think of any other Biblical figures who may have felt that God abandoned them? List them here.
- 16 | Has there been a time in your life when you have done your best to honor God, yet it seemed He let you down? Explain.
- 17 | How do you feel when it seems God has let you down?
- 18 | Is there a scripture(s) which has encouraged you during these times?
- 19 | Who needs to hear about what God has taught you this week?

