

How to Maintain a Confident Faith

International Bible Lesson

Genesis 39:7-21

Sunday, January 1, 2012

“But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison” (Genesis 39:21—KJV).

“But the LORD was with Joseph and blessed him, so that the jailer was pleased with him” (Genesis 39:21—GNB).

“But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love; he gave him favor in the sight of the chief jailer” (Genesis 39:21—NRSV).

At times, perhaps everyone has felt as though life was a series of high and low moments, and the lows never feel good when we think we are trapped in a low point. Through the life of Joseph, the Bible reveals the secret of maintaining a confident faith.

As a young boy, Joseph received special favors from his father, who loved him best. Therefore, his jealous brothers sold Joseph into slavery. Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh’s guard, bought Joseph, and when Potiphar saw his many gifts, he elevated him to service over his entire household. Having reached this pinnacle of success, Joseph remained responsible and maintained his integrity. Unfortunately, Joseph hit another low moment when Potiphar’s wife brought false charges against him, and an enraged Potiphar cast Joseph into Pharaoh’s prison. How did Joseph cope as he languished in prison? The secret lies in what God did for Joseph, and in what God will do for all of His children, if they suffer injustice or cruelties.

No matter what Joseph experienced or how he suffered, Joseph knew that the LORD was with him. Whether Joseph served God with honor in a position of prominence or looked for new ways to serve God when a cloud of unjust accusations threatened to destroy him, Joseph knew that the LORD was with him because He loved him. In addition, Joseph knew that God’s steadfast love would never fail him, and God would always help him. The secret to maintaining a confident faith is believing these truths about God and seeking to serve Him in the high and low points of life.

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Thinking Further

1. What might you have advised Joseph if he had confided in you about his problem with Potiphar’s wife before she trapped him and he was imprisoned?
2. How might the temptations of Potiphar’s wife been a test for Joseph? If her temptations were a test, why would it be crucial for him to pass the test?
3. Why do you think Joseph considered falling into the temptations of Potiphar’s wife “sin against God”? How did his understanding of sin help him refuse to fall for her temptations?
4. How did circumstantial evidence convict Joseph of a crime against Potiphar and his wife? If you are asked to serve on a jury, how will you consider circumstantial evidence differently now that you have studied this incident?
5. How do you think Joseph felt when he was unjustly accused, convicted, and imprisoned? Read ahead in Genesis. What might he have done in prison because of this injustice? What did Joseph do in prison? How did this make a difference?

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