Joseph the Servant

Genesis 39

Introduction: God is at work preparing the way for his chosen people; Joseph is doing advance work, he has been sent ahead by God to prepare for Jacob and his children. (Psalm 105:17-22)

> ***Ancient Slavery*** - In the ancient world there were three common causes of slavery: debt, punishment and war. In Egypt slaves were mainly obtained as prisoners of war.
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> Joseph and Potiphar (Genesis 39:1-6) – The Hebrew word that all of this story swivels on is '*salah*' and is translated "prosper, successful". This is no normal success from hard work, this is supernatural success.

Summary: 'Having the Lord with us' is critical to success, the kind of success that we should aspire to. In our story Joseph's success is intertwined with the success of Potiphar.

> Joseph and Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39:7-20)
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> **Lust -** Proverbs 7:6-27
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> **Concept**: Breaking trust with people can take years to restore while forgiveness from God only takes a moment upon confession and repentance. Galatians 6:7-8
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> **Precept**: Resisting the lust of others is a two part effort; it is internal and it is external.

Summary: Joseph proves to be a well mannered, hard working and faithful servant/employee. We should be reminded from Paul that physical battles always have a spiritual aspect to them and the spiritual aspect is most challenging to those who are most committed to doing the right thing. (Ephesians 6:5-8, 10-13)

> Joseph and the Keeper of the Prison (Genesis 39:21-23)

Conclusion: The central comment that laces this narrative is the 'Lord's presence with Joseph'. The presence of God is vital to a discerning environment, to any real discernment by anyone.

How much of our surrounding/environment affects our attitude? Joseph was internally affected by it but it did nothing to alter his work ethic; the people he worked for were not to blame for what happened to him; and he in no way responds negatively towards them.

The three Patriarchs of Genesis are each broken men in their own right and in their stories God's faithfulness to his promises is the point; it pulls them through. In Joseph's story it's the combination of God's favor and Joseph's moral character that brings him through.

Resisting what is wrong is not always rewarded as Joseph came to discover; he resisted the temptations of Potiphar's wife and faced prison time. We don't do what is right for an instant reward; we do what is right because it's right.

True prosperity comes when the Lord is at the center of our lives and the test of that is what tries to move him out of that position. True prosperity is spiritual and the test is often physical.