

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

*Genesis*

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## JOSEPH AND POTIPHAR

Genesis 39

Elementary Lesson

Year One, Quarter Two, Lesson Five

[0170]

AIM: to use the story of Joseph and Potiphar to teach my students to keep doing right even when they think life has been unfair to them.

OBJECTS TO HAVE:    Three identical paper cups  
                              A pen or marker  
                              The words “God’s blessing” written on a piece of paper  
                              A picture of Joseph  
                              A pit  
                              A large house  
                              A prison  
                              Your Bible

POINT OF CONTACT: Let’s play a game for a minute. These three paper cups look exactly alike. I have a piece of paper with the word “God’s blessing” written on it. I am going to put this paper under one of these three cups. Then I am going to mix these cups up. Now, can anybody tell me that they know for SURE where “God’s blessing” is?

Let’s try it again. Only this time I am going to write some words on each of these cups. On this cup I am going to write the word, “Quitting.” On this cup I am going to write the word “Rebellion”. And on this cup, the cup that has God’s blessing under it, I am going to write the word, “Obedience.”

Now I am going to mix the cups up again. Okay...where is “God’s blessing?” Let’s see...yes, look, it IS under the “Obedience” cup! Wow! How come it was so easy to find “God’s blessing” that time? Because the cups were marked. So we know that, no matter how many times I mix up these cups, we will always find “God’s blessing” in “Obedience.”

You know what? That is true in your life. Life has a way of mixing things up. Sometimes life mixes things up so much that we say, “Hey! That’s not fair!” Sometimes life mixes things up so much that we say, “I’m confused!” Sometimes life mixes things up so much that we say, “I don’t know what to do anymore!” But you can always count on this: God’s blessing is always going to be found in **obedience**. If you want God’s blessing, don’t turn to quitting. If you want God’s blessing, don’t turn to rebellion. If you want God’s blessing, you will always find it in **obedience**. Today we are going to talk about Joseph again. Things really got mixed up in Joseph’s life. But Joseph didn’t quit; Joseph didn’t rebel; Joseph just kept on obeying. And Joseph kept finding God’s blessing in obedience.

STORY: I told you last Sunday how Joseph had a dream that God was going to do big things in his life. Joseph was very excited about his future, and about seeing how God was going to use him.

But Joseph’s dream made his 10 older brothers very jealous. Joseph’s brothers wanted to find a way to make some trouble for Joseph.

One day Joseph’s father, Jacob, sent Joseph out into the fields to see how his 10 older brothers were doing. They were supposed to be working, and Jacob went to find out how their work was coming along. As Joseph made his way across the field toward his brothers, Joseph’s brothers saw him coming. His coat of many colors made him easy for them to see from far away. Joseph’s brothers began to talk among themselves. “What can we do to get Joseph in trouble?” They all offered different ideas. Finally, they decided to take Joseph and throw him in a pit and leave him there. When Joseph got to where his brothers were, they took him, dragged him across the field, and dropped him down into a deep, deep hole.

But as Joseph was stuck way down in that pit, his brothers wondered, “Now what do we do with him?”

Just then a group of travelers came down the road. Joseph’s brothers saw the travelers, and they came up with a plan. When the travelers drew near, Joseph’s brothers said, “Hey, men! Would you like to buy a slave? We don’t need this slave anymore.” The travelers thought that sounded like a good idea. They gave Joseph’s brothers some money,

and Joseph's brothers pulled Joseph up out of the pit and gave him to these strange men. Joseph's own brothers had sold him as a slave! Can you imagine how hurt Joseph must have been?

This was a big mix-up in Joseph's life, wasn't it? What would you have done? Would you quit? Would you rebel? Joseph decided to keep on **obeying God**. And do you know what Joseph found in obedience? He found **God's blessing**. Listen to what happened to Joseph.

When Joseph got to Egypt, the traveling men sold Joseph to a very powerful man named *Potiphar*. Potiphar was a very important man in Egypt, and he lived in a nice, big house. So Joseph would be working for Potiphar.

But wait a minute...I don't care how nice the house was...I wouldn't want to be a slave, would you? Of course not! I think I would want to quit! I think I would want to rebel. But Joseph didn't. Joseph decided that no matter how hard it was, he would just keep **obeying**. And when Joseph **obeyed**, he found God's blessing. The Bible says:

*And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmaelites, which had brought him down thither. And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.*

Potiphar noticed what a good worker Joseph was, and he noticed what a good attitude Joseph had. Potiphar noticed that Joseph always told the truth. Potiphar noticed that even when he thought nobody was looking, Joseph always did what he was supposed to do. Potiphar noticed that even though Joseph was surrounded by money and nice things, Joseph never stole anything, not even a penny. Potiphar realized that he could trust Joseph. So Potiphar put Joseph in charge of his whole house! All day long while Potiphar was away at work, Joseph stayed at Potiphar's house and took care of his things. Joseph found **God's blessing in obedience**.

But one day Potiphar's wife got upset with Joseph. She got upset with Joseph because she wanted to do wrong, and Joseph wouldn't let her. Potiphar's wife thought that Joseph was too clean and good and honest. She decided to try to get Joseph into trouble. Potiphar's wife told Potiphar that Joseph had attacked her and tried to hurt her. It wasn't true, but Potiphar's wife had lied to try to get Joseph in trouble.

Potiphar believed his wife's lie. He was very angry at Joseph. He took Joseph, and without any proof and without hearing Joseph's side of the story, Potiphar threw Joseph into prison.

If I had been Joseph, I think I would have said, "That's going too far! That's not fair, God! I quit! I'm not going to do right anymore!"

But Joseph did not say that. Joseph said, "I still know where to find **God's blessing**. I will find **God's blessing by obeying!**" But Joseph is in prison! How can you find God's blessing in prison? What good can possibly come from being in prison? Listen to what the Bible says about Joseph when his life got mixed up:

*But the Lord was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the Lord was with him, and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper.*

You see, even though things got mixed up for Joseph, Joseph still found God's blessing in obedience.

When life gets mixed up and you don't know what to do, don't quit, and don't rebel. Just **obey God**, and you will find **God's blessing** in obedience.

Sometimes it seems like life is unfair, doesn't it? Sometimes it seems like the more you do right, the more things go wrong. Sometimes it seems like things go good for all the people who are doing wrong, while they go bad for you, and you are trying to do right. That's the way it must have felt to Joseph. You must work to keep the right spirit, like Joseph did. Keep trusting God, like Joseph did. Keep obeying God, like Joseph did. If you do, you will find **God's blessing** right where **God's blessing** is always found—in **obedience**.

Joseph's story didn't end in prison. Next week we will find out exactly what happened to Joseph while he was in prison.

Let's learn our memory verse. **Psalm 119:9** – *Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word.*

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

*Genesis*

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## **JOSEPH AND POTIPHAR**

**Genesis 39**

**Teen and Adult Lesson**

**Year One, Quarter Two, Lesson Five**

**[0170]**

*Teacher, choose one of the following truths to expand upon in teaching this portion of Scripture to your teen/adult class. Teach and apply the truth that you choose using statements and illustrations that are most helpful and applicable to your students.*

- I. **AS WE PURSUE THE DREAMS THAT GOD PUTS IN OUR HEARTS, WE WILL ALWAYS ENCOUNTER HARDSHIPS.** Joseph dreamed great dreams, dreams that God had given to him. Many would assume this to mean that Joseph's life was going to be easy. But the pursuit of a dream is never easy, especially a God-given dream. There is a great deal of training, preparing and proving that a person must endure on his way to accomplishing his dreams. When God puts a dream in your heart, and you go after it, be prepared for the hardships that lie ahead. They are unavoidable, but they are a necessary part of achieving your dreams.
  
- II. **AS LONG AS YOU HAVE GOD'S PRESENCE, YOU WILL PROSPER, NO MATTER WHAT THE CIRCUMSTANCES.** The defining characteristic of Joseph's life is, "The Lord was with him." It is repeated throughout the story of Joseph's life, and again in the New Testament. Acts 7:9. Every Christian ought to strive and desire for the Lord to be with him. God's presence will not happen by chance. It will happen as a result of seeking God, trusting Him, and obeying Him. But the result is that the presence of God will cause you to overcome every obstacle, every attack, and every negative circumstance that you face.
  
- III. **YOU CAN KEEP A GOOD SPIRIT, EVEN IN THE DARKEST DAYS OF LIFE.** Imagine Joseph's daily routine at Potiphar's house. Imagine him getting up and facing the realization that he had been betrayed by his brothers, that he did not have the chance to tell his father goodbye, and that now it seemed like his dreams were completely off course. In addition, he is living with strangers, and serving them is his life every day. How can a person in such circumstances find a reason to go on, let alone give his best? But Joseph did give his best every day. Joseph found the strength to maintain a good spirit, even in these dark days. The Bible says, "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity." Proverbs 18:14. A godly spirit will get you through.
  
- IV. **GODLY CHARACTER WILL ALWAYS CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOU.** Joseph's life followed a pattern, a pattern of starting at the bottom and rising to the top. This was not because Joseph was lucky. Success is very often attributed to luck by those who do not give their best. But Joseph's repeated success was the result of where his character took him. Good character will always get the attention of the right people.
  
- V. **WHEN YOU DO RIGHT, AND THINGS GO WRONG AS A RESULT, GOD IS IN CONTROL.** We know that right actions are supposed to bring right results; but for Joseph that rule did not seem to be working. Joseph persisted, trusting his God. When it seems like your obedience, your faithfulness and your right spirit are not bringing God's blessing, first make sure that you sincerely are being obedient to God; then trust that your life is in His hands.

# Joseph and Potiphar

## Genesis 39

[0170]

### *Things Go From Bad to Worse for Joseph*

#### I. GENESIS 39:1-6 Joseph Works for Potiphar

1-2 God blesses Joseph as he works for Potiphar

3-4 Potiphar puts Joseph in charge of his house

5-6 Potiphar trusts Joseph with all that he owns

#### II. GENESIS 39:7-18 Joseph is Accused by Potiphar's Wife

7-9 Joseph refuses Potiphar's wife's proposals

10-12 Joseph leaves his coat as he runs away from Potiphar's wife

13-18 Potiphar's wife accuses Joseph of attacking her

#### III. GENESIS 39:19-23 Joseph is Thrown in Prison by Potiphar

19-20 Potiphar puts Joseph in prison

21 God's presence is with Joseph in prison

22-23 The prison keeper puts Joseph in charge

#### **Psalm 119:9**

*Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?*

*By taking heed thereto according to thy word.*

# JOSEPH AND POTIPHAR

## Genesis 39

[0170]

Circle the letter next to the correct answer to each question from the Scripture passage and from today's Bible story.

1. Who sent Joseph to check on his brothers?  
a. his father, Jacob      b. his mother, Rachel      c. his baby brother, Benjamin
2. Where did Joseph's brothers put him at first?  
a. in a tree      b. on a rock      c. in a pit
3. What did Joseph's brothers do with him when they took him out of the pit?  
a. took him back home      b. sold him as a slave      c. beat him up
4. Where did the men who bought Joseph take him?  
a. Egypt      b. Babylon      c. Delaware
5. What was the name of the man who bought Joseph in Egypt?  
a. Peter      b. Paul      c. Potiphar
6. Potiphar saw that Joseph was a good worker, and put him in charge of what?  
a. his whole house      b. taking the garbage out      c. feeding the animals
7. Who decided to try to get Joseph into trouble?  
a. one of Potiphar's servants      b. Potiphar's daughter      c. Potiphar's wife
8. What did Potiphar's wife do to get Joseph into trouble?  
a. she lied about him      b. she started a fight with him      c. she messed up the house
9. Where did Potiphar send Joseph?  
a. to South Carolina      b. to prison      c. back home to his dad
10. How did Joseph respond when all these bad things happened to him?  
a. he got angry at God      b. he quit trying      c. he obeyed God

*Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?*

*By taking heed thereto according to thy word.*

PSALM 119:9

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[0170]

*The answers to today's puzzle*

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