

June 20, 2018

Memory Verses: Romans 5:3-4 NIV

³Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Review: perseverance

Today's word: character

Character Quote:

"Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved. Helen Keller

Joseph (Jacob's son by Rachel) in the Bible, next to Jesus, gives us the greatest example of Biblical character.

Group Discussion: What do we know about Joseph?

You are right! Joseph was sold by his brothers to a band of Midianites. Joseph was taken into their custody and was taken to Egypt where he was placed on a slave block, and as the Lord would have it, sold to the highest bidder, Potiphar.

Read Genesis 37:8, 10-11. Also read Genesis 39:2

Contextually speaking this verse defies all logic. Joseph was not a prosperous man. This time in life he was serving as a slave. Yet and still, God called him a prosperous man.

The Promotion

Read Genesis 39:6-12

Clearly Joseph trusted God completely. However, his master's wife began to try to seduce him. Can you imagine how tempting this had to be? No matter the cost, Joseph maintained his integrity. Joseph also knew he was a slave and the punishment would have been severe. Nevertheless, Joseph's biggest fear was God. Read his response to Potiphar's wife printed below:

⁹No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?"

Amazingly, Joseph's greatest concern is God! God should also be our point of focus. It is God who we should fear and reverence.

Joseph ran! Running is allowed!

What do you think would have happened if Joseph had given in? Think about his workplace and God!

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5

The Lie

Read Genesis 39:13-19.

Joseph's life was about to take a major turn and God was orchestrating every move. His dependence on God and his integrity would open a door that would literally change history and become an even greater display of his character.

What choices do we have in life? Act on it or deny it!

Joseph's punishment

Where do you see the hand and favor of God? Please understand Joseph was supposed to have been put to death for the crime, she said, he committed. Rather than having him put to death, Potiphar had him put in prison.

Everything WE GROW through produces some type of character.

We can let God help us through it and grow in grace or we can handle it on our own and make a mess!

What can we learn from Joseph's story about loyalty to God and his master?

Pressing Questions:

- Have you ever been through a hard time that made your character better?
- Do you think it's possible to persevere through times of suffering without God?
- Would you rather have a character that came from God and produces hope, or a character that you developed on your own that is hopeless?

Consider developing three **"I WILL NOT"** rules for developing your character:

Consider developing three **"I WILL"** rules for growing your character:

"When wealth is lost, nothing is lost; when health is lost, something is lost; when character is lost, all is lost." The Late Rev. Billy Graham