

**A FAST Biblical Portrait: Joseph**  
***Purity, Integrity, and Perseverance***  
John Kain, 2010

*As a young man with a healthy body, Joseph surely experienced the same sort of sexual appetite that every other young man—then and now—has. See how the Lord protected him and enabled him to maintain both his purity and his godly boundaries. Notice, too, the ways that this godly man maintained his integrity through difficult times.*

When he was sixteen or seventeen, Joseph was sent by his father to check on his brothers, who were pasturing the flocks and who had, through the years, come to hate their younger brother, their father's obvious favorite. When his brothers saw him approaching, they planned to kill him. Reuben, however, advised them to instead throw Joseph into a pit (Genesis 37:13-24). Reuben intended to rescue Joseph, but Joseph ended up being sold to some merchants who were traveling to Egypt.

**Making the Most of Adversity** (Genesis 39:2-4)

Once in Egypt, the merchants sold Joseph to Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh's guard. While serving as a slave in Potiphar's house, Joseph found his efforts blessed by God. In fact, seeing that all Joseph did prospered, Potiphar appointed him superintendent of the household.

**Integrity Rewarded** (Genesis 39:5-6)

Joseph administered the business affairs of Potiphar with such dependability and honesty that he was soon entrusted with overseeing the entire estate.

**Unjust Punishment for Wanting to Remain Pure** (Genesis 39:7-20)

Potiphar's wife was quite attracted to this strong and handsome Hebrew slave, and she repeatedly approached him with the invitation to sleep with her. Frustrated by his rejection and then foiled in her efforts to force him to have sex with her, Potiphar's wife falsely accused Joseph of trying to rape her. Potiphar had Joseph thrown into prison.

**Divine Favor Accompanied by Hardship** (Genesis 39:21-23)

Continuing to be with Joseph even when he was in prison, God gave this young man favor in the eyes of the prison warden. Realizing that he could trust Joseph, the warden committed the other prisoners to his charge.

### **Perseverance despite Betrayal** (Genesis 40:5-23)

Joseph was joined in prison by two of Pharaoh's officers, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker, who had offended the king. One morning both officers awoke and told Joseph their dreams, which they themselves were unable to interpret. Joseph interpreted their dreams and then asked the cupbearer, once he was freed, to mention him to Pharaoh and secure his release. When he was reinstated in office, however, the cupbearer forgot Joseph. Joseph remained two more years in prison... until Pharaoh himself had an unsettling dream.

### **Honoring God** (Genesis 41:16)

In ancient Egypt, dreams and their meaning were very important, and Pharaoh was quite troubled when his magicians were unable to interpret one of his dreams. That was when the chief cupbearer remembered Joseph and spoke to Pharaoh about the Hebrew's skill. When brought before Pharaoh, Joseph honored the source of his ability: "I can't interpret your dream, but God will give the answers you desire."

### **Divine Revelation and Personal Emancipation** (Genesis 41:25-36)

With help from the Lord, Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dream as the foretelling of seven years of abundance followed by seven years of famine. He advised the king to appoint an able man to store the surplus grain that would be acquired during the period of abundance. Pleased with this interpretation and suggestion, Pharaoh made Joseph viceroy over Egypt.

### **Forgiving His Brothers**

Joseph amassed for the king a great supply of grain that he later sold to starving foreigners as well as hungry Egyptians (Genesis 41:48-49, 54-57). The famine extended to neighboring countries, prompting Joseph's brothers to make two journeys to Egypt to acquire wheat.

Joseph recognized his brothers during their first visit but did not reveal himself to them. He became convinced of his brothers' repentance during their second visit and finally revealed who he was. He offered complete forgiveness and love to his brothers who had attempted to kill him.

But Joseph said to them,  
"Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God?  
**You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good**  
to accomplish what is now being done,  
the saving of many lives.  
— Genesis 50:19-20

In Joseph's story, we see God's providence, power, and guidance... Joseph's integrity, leadership ability, strength in the face of temptation, and willingness to forgive his brothers... as well as the big-picture perspective that what human beings may intend for evil can be overcome and used by God for good. These truths are the keys to effective and godly character today, just as they were in Joseph's time.