

Week#: 25 Text: Genesis 39:1 – 40:23 Title: Joseph's Imprisonment
Songs: Thy Loving Kindness Is Better Than Life
Trust In You
God Will Make a Way

“TRUSTING GOD” BIBLE STUDY
Lesson Three JOSEPH'S IMPRISONMENT

GOD GIVES US BEAUTY FOR ASHES

As we continue the story of Joseph, he is now relocated in a foreign land, and having to learn the Egyptian language. Joseph chose to rise to the occasion or trial set before him and even to bloom in the desert.

Isaiah 61:3 “To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.” (KJV) The phrase, “beauty for ashes...” tells us that God wants to replace all of burned out the areas of our life that have left nothing but ashes. Examples of these ashes are things like an abortion, the loss of a child, a divorce, or the loss of even a previous ministry. Only God can turn ashes into beauty. Giving those ashes to God will allow you to see what God can do. Romans 11:29 says, “For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.” (ESV) King James Version says they are “without repentance.” This simply means God is never sorry He gave you gifts or that He has called you.

The same Hebrew word translated as “beauty” here is translated “*a beautiful headdress*” just a few verses later in Isaiah 61:10 “I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom **decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress**, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.” This is not only a headdress denoting royalty, but is also tied to the priesthood. 1 Peter 2:9 says, “But ye are a chosen generation, a **royal priesthood**, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”

PRAISING THE LORD

Genesis 39:1-2 “*Yosef (Joseph) was brought down to Egypt, and Potifar, an officer of Pharaoh's and captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Yishma'elim who had brought him there.*
² ***ADONAI was with Yosef (Joseph)***, and he became wealthy while he was in the household of his master the Egyptian.

“God was with Joseph...” The psalmist, David says in Psalms 22:2-3, “O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest. ³ Yet **You are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.**” God **dwells in** (or is enthroned on) the praises of His people. The King James Version puts it this way, “O my God, I cry in the day time, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. But thou art holy, **O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.**” The psalmist gives you a very basic truth about God here. He is enthroned or inhabits (live in) our praises to Him. **Joseph must have been a “praiser” for God to have been with him.** Verse 21 of this same chapter says, “But the **LORD was with** Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.”

PRAISE IS OUR GIFT TO GOD THAT ACTUALLY HELPS US

“This is how we live spiritually – we breathe in the air by prayer, and we breathe it out by praise! This is the holy respiration of a Christian’s life! Prayer and praise must be mingled in a divinely wise proportion and then they make a sweet incense, acceptable to God. I hope we can say that we have never finished praying but that we feel we must begin singing, and that we have never finished singing but that we must begin praying! What a blessed interchange this makes for the whole of life!” C.H. Spurgeon, 1895 (Sermon #2396)

Praise unto God is a Biblical truth that should be used to help you when you are going through a trial. **Praise is also a weapon that is used to surround yourself with God’s presence.** As God’s name is lifted up on high, He draws you up unto Him. John 12:32 says, “And I (God), when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” When you praise the Lord, He lifts you up to be with Him in the Heavenly places, where God resides. Your countenance cannot stay down if you are lifting Him up on high.

YOU ARE A BLESSING

Joseph knew that God was the one who blessed him, and that God would bless anyone who blessed him. This, too, is one of God’s principles. Genesis 12:3 tells us that God says, “I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” This was God’s promise to Abram (Abraham) and his descendants, the Jewish people. This blessing also includes Christian Gentiles since we were grafted in. Romans 11:17-21 says, “But if some of the branches were broken off, and **you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in** among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree, ¹⁸ do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you. ¹⁹ Then you will say, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.” ²⁰ That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but **you stand fast through faith.** So do not become proud, but fear. ²¹ For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you.” Every promise given to the Children of Israel can also be claimed by Christians.

BUILD GOD’S KINGDOM

Genesis 39:3-6 “His master saw how ADONAI was with him, that ADONAI prospered everything he did. ⁴ Yosef (Joseph) pleased him as he served him, and his master appointed him manager of his household; he entrusted all his possessions to Yosef (Joseph). ⁵ From the time he appointed him manager of his household and all his possessions, ADONAI blessed the Egyptian’s household for Yosef’s (Joseph’s) sake; ADONAI’s blessing was on all he owned, whether in the house or in the field. ⁶ So he left all his possessions in Yosef’s (Joseph’s) care; and because he had him, he paid no attention to his affairs, except for the food he ate. Now Yosef (Joseph) was well-built and handsome as well.”

The more unproductive, idle time you have on your hands to contemplate the problems around you, the deeper you can sink into discouragement or depression. Joseph honored God through his hard work. You need to be busy building God’s kingdom. This is another weapon you can use to defeat discouragement or depression. Galatians 6:7 says, “Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one **sows**, that will he also reap.” Sow good things so you will reap good things. Joseph was productive sowing good seed wherever he went. To overcome depression or discouragement, get busy helping others. Helping others when you are going through a trial will help three ways: 1) It helps you gain a positive perspective on the size of your problems when you are helping others going through worse; 2) serving others is like serving the Lord with all

of the blessings God bestows on His servants; and 3) any building of God's Kingdom of love will help tear down Satan's kingdom of hate and make him regret the day he fooled with you.

TEMPTATION IS AN ATTACK; NOT A TRIAL

The Trials, Tests, and Fires are what God uses or allows to be put upon you so that you can gain strength. But temptations are a normal consequence of living in a world where the enemy wants to trip you up or defeat you. What tempts you may hold no power over me and visa-versa. Everyone is tempted. No one escapes it. In this chapter we will look at what happened when Joseph was tempted. Even Jesus was tempted, and you can learn a great deal from how He and Joseph handled it.

1 Corinthians 10:13 "There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man; but God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able: but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." Attacks or temptations can come from three sources: the World; the Flesh; and the Devil. Jesus defeated all three of these and you can defeat them, too, with His help. Matthew 4:1-11 tells us the story of Jesus being tempted in all three of these areas. "Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³ And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." *[THE FLESH]* ⁴ But he answered, "It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." (ESV) Jesus defeated His flesh with the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God (Bible). He quoted the Word of God and took authority over this temptation by speaking the Word of God to it.

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple ⁶ and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you," and "On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone." *[THE DEVIL]* ⁷ Jesus said unto him, Again it is written, Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God." (ESV) Again, Jesus defeated this foe with the Sword of the Spirit (the Word of God). You will also notice that the enemy knew and quoted scripture, but his quote was out of context. Just because it is a verse in the Bible, doesn't mean it is a verse applicable to the situation you are in.

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹ And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." *[THE WORLD]* ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve." ¹¹ Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him. (ESV) James 4:7 says, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." Jesus resisted the devil (or temptation) and also used the Sword of the Spirit again by quoting the Word of God to defeat the enemy here.

ALL AUTHORITY HAS BEEN GIVEN UNTO YOU

You also, have the authority to "stand against the schemes of the devil" especially in your own home. Matthew 28:18 says, "And Jesus came and said to them, "All **authority** in heaven and on earth has been given to me." Matthew 10:1 says, "And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them **authority** over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction." Luke 10:19 says, "Behold, I have given you **authority** to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and

nothing shall hurt you.” In all three of these verses the Greek word “*exousia*” is translated “**authority**” actually means “power of authority” or in modern day terms, “power of attorney.”

A few years ago, my husband and I were in the process of selling a house that was in his name. He was scheduled to be out of town when the final closing was to take place, so, he signed a Power of Attorney allowing me to sign the paperwork for him. When the day came to sign the final paperwork, my husband was present after all. When the paperwork was being handed to me, my husband took it and started to sign it. The realtor stopped him and explained that I had to sign it because the authority had been given to me. Even with him present, I was the only one who could sign.

Jesus said that all authority in heaven and earth had been given to Him by Father God, so Jesus signed a Power of Attorney over to us giving us all authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction and to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy. Because Jesus has signed that Power of Attorney with His blood, He no longer keeps the authority; **you have it**. In Mark 11:23 Jesus says, “Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him.”

1ST LINE OF DEFENSE AGAINST TEMPTATION – OBEDIENCE AGAINST TEMPTATION

Genesis 39:7-9 *“In time, the day came when his master’s wife took a look at Yosef (Joseph) and said, “Sleep with me!”⁸ But he refused, saying to his master’s wife, “Look, because my master has me, he doesn’t know what’s going on in this house. He has put all his possessions in my charge.⁹ In this house I am his equal; he hasn’t withheld anything from me except yourself, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?”*”

2 Peter 2:4 & 9 “For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell...⁹ then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment.” This verse tells us that God will deliver the godly out of temptation. Your part is to obey God’s Word, to pray for God’s protection from the evil one, and to answer back with what the Word of God says about it. This is how you overcome temptation.

I have heard it said, “Life is 10% of what happens to you and 90% how you react.” If you set goals for things you cannot control, you are setting yourself up for great disappointment. The only thing you can control 100% of the time is your actions and reactions in the middle of circumstances. Sometimes you set a goal and then you tell God how He can accomplish it and tell Him when He needs to do it. But, in Isaiah 55:8-9 God says, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD.⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.” God’s job is to fix the problem (however He sees fit) and your job is to turn it over to Him and trust Him.

2ND LINE OF DEFENSE AGAINST TEMPTATION – RUN FROM TEMPTATION

Genesis 39:10-13 *“But she kept pressing him, day after day. Nevertheless, he didn’t listen to her; he refused to sleep with her or even be with her.*

¹¹ However, one day, when he went into the house to do his work, and none of the men living in the house was there indoors, ¹² she grabbed him by his robe and said, “Sleep with me!” But he fled, leaving his robe in her hand, and got himself outside. ¹³ When she saw that he had left his robe in her hand and had escaped,”

The enemy, in the form of Potiphar's wife, went after Joseph every day. He wanted to wear him down. Joseph wanted to keep himself pure. **IT IS UP TO YOU** to keep yourself pure. Joseph knew that **HE** had to flee from temptation.

3RD LINE OF DEFENSE AGAINST TEMPTATION – INTEGRITY AND PURITY OF SPIRIT

When you choose to keep your heart pure, it may not be popular and most certainly will not be easy. But, Jesus promised that He would "bless" us for doing so. Matthew 5:8 says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." The only way you get and keep a pure heart is to make the decision to do so and run as fast as you can from temptation. In Job 31:1 Job said, "I made a **covenant** with mine **eyes**; why then should I think upon a maid?"

Pornography has become a sin of rampant proportions in the world today. The bride of Jesus Christ (the church) has also fallen victim to this bondage. I don't wish to minimize the solution to this massive offense, but it has to start with repentance and making a covenant with your eyes. Resisting temptation will be a daily battle and involve a great deal of warfare.

Worship is a very powerful weapon in your arsenal. I always try to start my day with praise and worship to God. There have even been times when I was under great stress and had to excuse myself to go to the restroom or outside so I could get alone with God to worship Him for a few minutes finding this effort to be a great stress reducer. Joseph worshiped God with his whole being.

Geneses 39:14-18 "she called the men of her house and said to them, "Look at this! My husband brought in a Hebrew to make fools of us. He came in and wanted to sleep with me, but I yelled out loudly. ¹⁵ When he heard me yelling like that, he left his robe with me and ran out." ¹⁶ She put the robe aside until his master came home. ¹⁷ Then she said to him, "This Hebrew slave you brought us came in to make a fool of me. ¹⁸ But when I yelled out, he left his robe with me and fled outside."

Integrity is a disappearing virtue. I can remember the times when, if someone was between a rock and a hard place, the choice would be "the hard place." Joseph definitely chose the hard place here. Integrity is a virtue that you lose a little at a time. The proverbial "frog in hot water" comes to mind. How do you cook a frog without him jumping out of the water? – Simple, you put him in a pot of cold water and turn up the heat a little at a time. The frog will never realize that there is a problem until it is too late. You, too, can be fooled. The solution is to never let down your guard.

Genesis 39:19-20 "When his master heard what his wife said as she showed him, "Here's what your slave did to me," he became furious. ²⁰ Yosef's (Joseph's) master took him and put him in prison, in the place where the king's prisoners were kept; and there he was in the prison."

The prison in Egypt was not too different than the pit Joseph's brothers put him in. In fact the same Hebrew word was used for both. This Hebrew word was translated pit forty-two times, cistern four times, dungeon eleven times, well nine times, and fountain one time. The conditions of the prisons you may be familiar with are a far cry from the one Joseph was put in. The words "dark", "dingy", "horrible" come to mind. Think of the worse possible place you can imagine and that may come close to what Joseph encountered. Joseph was going back in a pit, but this time you do not hear a word out of him. He had peace in the middle of all this.

“Then Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison”. It seems that Joseph was given a sentence of life imprisonment. This was a hard penalty, but the normal punishment for such a crime (attempted rape) by a slave upon a high official's wife would likely be death. Joseph was given a merciful sentence.

STEADFAST LOVE

Genesis 39:21 *“But ADONAI was with Yosef (Joseph), showing him grace and giving him favor in the sight of the prison warden.”*

The words steadfast love comes from the Hebrew word “cheqed, kheh'-sed”; kindness; merciful (kindness), **mercy**. “There is no fear in **love**, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in **love**.” This is a promise given by God in 1 John 4:18. The only perfect love is “agape” love. Both of the words translated “love” here is *agape*. Strong's Concordance definition: **Agape** - love, i.e. **affection or benevolence; specially (plural) a love-feast:—(feast of) charity(-ably), dear, love.**

Let's look again at Genesis 39. Verse 21 says, “But the **LORD was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love** and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.” God gave FAVOR to Joseph. The other prisoners in the prison probably wondered what made Joseph so special. Just because you see God's favor on someone else does not mean God has forgotten you. Favor is not fair. You do not and cannot earn favor, but you can ask for it. God is no respecter of persons. What He does for others, He will do for you. Acts 10:34-35 says, “So Peter opened his mouth and said: “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.”

WALKING THE WAY OF THE CROSS

Genesis 39:22-23 *“The prison warden made Yosef (Joseph) supervisor of all the prisoners in the prison; so that whatever they did there, he was in charge of it. ²³The prison warden paid no attention to anything Yosef (Joseph) did, because ADONAI was with him; and whatever he did, ADONAI prospered.”*

Sometimes when you are chastised for something you did not do, you tend to fight back. As I said before, your initial response to a difficult situation is like a thermometer reading in your relationship with God. In this instance, Joseph appears to have improved in his relationship with God. He did not put up a fight here as he had when his brothers sold him.

GETTING GOD'S PERSPECTIVE

God has a much better view of your problem than you do. Always ask for His perspective. Isaiah 55:6-9 tells us, “Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; ⁷let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. ⁸**For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord.** ⁹**For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.**” A few years ago, I was praying over a difficult situation I was going through and God spoke to my heart to, “**Stop looking at the trees and see the forest**”. In other words, I needed to look at the bigger picture instead of the distorted view I was seeing.

KEEPING A FLICKER OF HOPE IN A DARK WORLD

We pick up the story of Joseph after he has been in prison for many years. I am sure the mundane daily chores would have taken their toll on Joseph if he did not have such a close relationship with God. We are told in the last verse of the 39th chapter of Genesis that, “The keeper of the prison paid no attention to anything that was in Joseph's charge, **because the LORD was with him. And whatever he did, the LORD made it succeed.**” We are told in Genesis 40:1, “Some time after this...” so we can only guess how long Joseph's trial continued. Hope was a very intricate part of what helped Joseph in his desert experience.

In Zechariah 9:11-12 God says that sometimes you can be waiting so long for something that you become a prisoner of hope, “**As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. ¹² Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope; today I declare that I will restore to you double.**” This “prison of waiting” is like a waterless pit. Not only is it a pit that you can't get out of on your own, but it is waterless. Water brings life. Without water, there is no life. God promises to deliver you out of the prison of loneliness. God is a covenant keeper. He will always keep His Word to you. God then tells you to return to your stronghold (safe place) and **God will restore to you double.** If you are a “Prisoner of Hope”, remember that **the Word of God is often referred to as water, so drink of it often (read it frequently) when in that waterless pit** and it will help you to return to your safe place. Then climb up in your Savior's arms and let Him hold you for a while, and start claiming His promise to restore to you double of what the enemy may have taken away.

Jeremiah 29:11 “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” (ESV) If you find yourself with very little or no hope left, be assured that God knows how you feel. Proverbs 13:12 says, “Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.” God knows that it makes your heart sick, but He has the remedy. We live in such an “*instantaneous*” world now days that we have lost the ability to just wait on or for something. **Waiting on God for your answer is NEVER easy.** Every part of your being wants things done yesterday. This verse tells you that God knows how your heart is affected when your hope is delayed. **But God is NEVER late. He is the one who invented time, He is still in control, and He still has a plan for you.**

Make up your mind that **you are not going to give up on God.** Isaiah 50:7 says, “But the Lord GOD helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore **I have set my face like a flint,** and I know that I shall not be put to shame.” Job was a man that lost everything and yet in Job 13:15 he said, “**Though he slay me, I will hope in him;**” Sometimes just a talk with yourself is needed to boost your hope. In Psalms 42:5-6 David said, “Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? **Hope in God;** for I shall again praise him, my salvation ⁶ and my God.” David had a conversation with his soul here. David knew that the way to encourage himself was to praise God. In Psalms 62:5-8 David told his soul to wait quietly while he praised God, “**For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him. ⁶ He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken. ⁷ On God rests my salvation and my glory; my mighty rock, my refuge is God. ⁸ Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. Selah.**” (Selah = this is a technical musical term that means, “Pause. Stop and think about this for a minute.”)

You are not supposed to see hope because if you can see it, it is not hope. In fact Romans 8:24-25 says, “For in this hope we were saved. **Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.**” This verse reveals that if you have hope

for something, you will wait for it with patience. However, if you do not have patience, that is an indication that you do not have hope.

Genesis 40:1-3 “Some time later it came about that the Egyptian king’s cupbearer and baker gave offense to their lord the king of Egypt. ² Pharaoh became angry with his two officers the chief cupbearer and the chief baker. ³ So he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison, in the same place where Yosef (Joseph) was kept.”

The cupbearer was a very important and trusted officer in the Pharaoh’s court. It was his job to protect the Pharaoh from any kind of poison reaching the Pharaoh’s lips. The time had finally come that God was going to use the cupbearer to play a part in the plan God had for Joseph.

The baker was the one who baked all baked goods for the Pharaoh’s court. This, too, was a very important office in the Pharaoh’s court. The baker and the cupbearer had managed to offend the Pharaoh. Now they were both put in the same prison as Joseph.

Genesis 40:4 “The captain of the guard charged Yosef (Joseph) to be with them, and he became their attendant while they remained in prison.”

In prison, Joseph ministered to all the prisoners. The captain of the guard placed these new prisoners in Joseph’s charge. Joseph wasn’t ministering to them because of their former positions in Pharaoh’s court but because they needed him. We are not told how long these prisoners were in prison before they each had a dream, but it must have been a while. Joseph used that time wisely building relationships. Joseph must have built quite a relationship with the former baker and cupbearer because you see in the next passage that they both confided in Joseph about the dreams they had.

Genesis 40:5-7 “One night the two of them, the king of Egypt’s cupbearer and his baker, there in prison, both had dreams, each dream with its own meaning. ⁶ Yosef (Joseph) came in to them in the morning and saw that they looked sad. ⁷ He asked Pharaoh’s officers there with him in the prison of his master’s house, “Why are you looking so sad today?”

Joseph had compassion on these two prisoners. Joseph had become so familiar with these two prisoners that he knew when something was bothering them. Joseph remained sensitive to the Lord and was willing to be used. No matter what circumstances you encounter, keep yourself open to be used by the Holy Spirit. How many other prisoners did Joseph minister to? We are not told, but no matter how many God’s gifting of dream interpretation had not stopped flowing through Joseph.

Genesis 40:8 “They said to him, “We each had a dream, and there’s no one around who can interpret it.” Yosef (Joseph) said to them, “Don’t interpretations belong to God? Tell it to me, please.”

Joseph may have thought back to the unfulfilled dreams he had many years before, and this disappointment could have easily discouraged him. Apparently, Joseph chose to not look back and mourn for the lack of fulfillment in the dreams. Whatever disappointments or “deferred hope” is encountered, you can be assured that God is still at work to complete what He has started. Philippians 1:6 says, “And I am sure of this, that **he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion** at the day of Jesus Christ.”

Trusting in the Lord is a decision you have to make every day (sometimes even hour by hour or minute by minute during times of struggle). God has already made His plan for your life. God is a gentleman; He will not force those plans on you. You have to make the decision to get into God's plan.

Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. ⁶In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." Joseph had learned to trust God through the pit, through being a slave, and now in prison.

Genesis 40:9-15 "Then the chief cupbearer told Yosef (Joseph) his dream: "In my dream, there in front of me was a vine, ¹⁰ and the vine had three branches. The branches budded, then it suddenly began to blossom, and finally clusters of ripe grapes appeared. ¹¹ Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, so I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and gave the cup to Pharaoh." ¹² Yosef (Joseph) said to him, "Here is its interpretation: the three branches are three days. ¹³ Within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your office: you will be giving Pharaoh his cup as you used to when you were his cupbearer." But remember me when it goes well with you; and show me kindness, please; and mention me to Pharaoh, so that he will release me from this prison. ¹⁵ For the truth is that I was kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews, and here too I have done nothing wrong that would justify putting me in this dungeon."

Joseph asked the cupbearer to please remember him when he was released. But it was not God's timing yet so the cupbearer failed to mention Joseph to the Pharaoh. Joseph was trying to hurry God's plan. When hope is deferred, you can lose sight of your destiny. This is the reason you need to keep your eyes on God, not your circumstances.

Timing is everything. God has a way of getting everything to line up perfectly, **but you have to wait on Him**. This is where Ephesians 6:13 comes into play, "Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able **to** withstand in the evil day, and **having done all, to stand firm**."

Here you are told to "take up the whole armor of God" which means to get ready for battle. Then the next thing to do is to **stand firm** after you have "done all". "Stand firm" is your only command. Wait on your marching orders from the Almighty God, your General.

GRACE AND TRUTH

Genesis 40:16-19 "When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was favorable, he said to Yosef (Joseph), "I too saw in my dream: there were three baskets of white bread on my head. ¹⁷ In the uppermost basket there were all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, but the birds ate them out of the basket on my head." ¹⁸ Yosef (Joseph) answered, "Here is its interpretation: the three baskets are three days. ¹⁹ Within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head from off of you — he will hang you on a tree, and the birds will eat your flesh off you."

"Grace" and "Truth" always go together. John 1:14-17 says, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.") ¹⁶ For from his fullness **we have all received, grace upon grace**. ¹⁷ **For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ**." Some "Truth" is really hard to hear and accept. When truth is given by God, He sends Grace to open your heart to receive it.

Genesis 40:20-23 *“On the third day, which was Pharaoh’s birthday, he gave a party for all his officials, and he lifted up the head of the chief cupbearer and the head of the chief baker among his officials. ²¹ He restored the chief cupbearer back to his position, so that he again gave Pharaoh his cup. ²² But he hanged the chief baker, as Yosef (Joseph) had interpreted to them. ²³ Nevertheless, the chief cupbearer didn’t remember Yosef, but forgot him.”*

Do you ever think God has forgotten you? Joseph has been seemingly forgotten again. Scripture doesn’t seem to reveal that Joseph gave up trusting God at this point. **Not giving up on God seems to be the most crucial part a trial; especially, right before the trial ends.** Galatians 6:8-10 says, “Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. ⁸ For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. ⁹ And **let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.**” Joseph has sowed only good seed, and now he is at the point of waiting on the good harvest.

If you are in a trial and you can’t see the end, ask yourself, “Have I sowed good seed? Am I sowing good seed now?” If you answered “yes” to both of these, then you have the authority to claim the promises from God: “...in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”

Romans 15:13 says, “Now the **Lord of hope** fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.” God is called the Lord of Hope here. Jesus wants you to abound (thrive, flourish, prosper, overflow) in hope. This is accomplished through the power of the Holy Ghost.