

Lesson # 18

1.

Genesis 39-40

Joseph was just a teenager when he was taken as a slave to a far away land called Egypt. He was put in chains and made to stand in front of a large group of people who would yell, "I'll pay 10 pieces of silver for him," or "I'll pay 12 pieces of silver." Joseph was probably very frightened and hoped he would be sold to a kind master. An important man named Potiphar decided to buy Joseph. As Joseph rode home with Potiphar he looked at the glittering temples to false gods and when he entered the house he saw statues of gold and silver and paintings on the wall of strange looking idols that the Egyptians believed in.

Joseph knew these were only statues



and paintings. He believed in the true God who made heaven and earth and everything on earth. Joseph prayed that God would be with him in this strange land.

Potiphar wondered what kind of slave he was getting. Would Joseph have to be whipped to do his jobs? Would he be lazy or a thief? Even though Joseph received no pay for his jobs, he worked very hard for Potiphar because he believed in doing his very best, no matter what the job. Soon Potiphar could see that Joseph was his very best worker and after awhile Potiphar put Joseph over all his household. Joseph would see to it that there was the proper food in the house, that Potiphar's flocks and herds had the right kind of care and Joseph would see to it that supplies were bought and the bills were paid.

What kind of worker are you? Do you try to get out of jobs around the house or only do them half way and then go outside and play? Sometimes we probably are like this, but if we want to please God we will always try to do our very best, even if we don't like the jobs we are given to do. As you grow older you will have more and more work to do for others and eventually you'll have a job and work for a boss. God tells us in the Bible that even if we don't like our jobs or don't like having to work for others, we should always try to do our very best for them.

In **Colossians 3:23** we are told: **"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men."**

This is the way Joseph worked and it pleased God. This is your memory verse for this lesson. Put a check mark in the box when you know it and try to practice doing your very best when given a job.

Because Joseph pleased God, he was blessed by God and everything he did turned out very well for him. Potiphar was very pleased by Joseph's work and was kind to Joseph as well.

One day Joseph ran into trouble. Potiphar's wife was a woman who liked to cause trouble. She called Joseph to her room and said, "Let's have some fun, I'm tired of being nice to old Potiphar, we'll do something to make him mad!" Joseph didn't want to do something to hurt Potiphar and he kindly told the woman, "No, I can't hurt my master, he's been very good to me." This made Potiphar's wife very angry. "You're just a slave, you better do what I say!" she demanded, but Joseph turned and ran out of the room. Potiphar's wife grabbed at Joseph's cloak and he ran away without it.

"I'll get even with that slave, the woman thought." That evening when Potiphar came home from work his wife told him "That slave you brought home made fun of me and tried hurt me, I want him punished." Potiphar got very angry at Joseph and he called the guards and told them to throw Joseph into prison.



Poor Joseph must have felt very discouraged as he stood chained in the cold, dark, prison cell. He had only tried to do right and here he was in prison because of it. Have you ever tried to do something which was right to do and still it turned out wrong? Sometimes it seems that the wicked people turn out to live better than those who follow God's ways. But God knows when we do right or wrong and he knows what to do about helping us and punishing the wicked when the time is right. Potiphar's wife has been dead a long, long time and has turned to dust. She has no more memory, or thoughts and will never be anything but dust. Joseph has been dead for a long, long time also and he's turned back to dust, but because he obeyed God, Joseph will live again when Jesus comes back to earth. Joseph will be able to walk among the trees, watch the clouds and swim in a cool lake. He will be able to talk to other men and women who have obeyed God. The Bible promises us eternal life when Jesus returns if we follow God's rules and try to do right.

Joseph wasn't left chained up for long. Everything the keeper of the prison told Joseph to do, he did willingly and well. Soon the keeper of the prison had Joseph helping him take care of the other prisoners. Joseph did such a good job he was put in charge of all the prisoners. One day there was a big commotion at the prison. Pharaoh was king of the land of Egypt and he became angry with two of his servants. The chief butler who brought Pharaoh wine and the chief baker who made his food had both made Pharaoh very angry and they were thrown into the prison. Joseph brought them food and saw to their needs while they were in prison.

One morning as Joseph brought food to the butler and the baker he noticed that they had worried looks on their faces. "What's the matter?" Joseph asked, "You look sad today, didn't you sleep well?" The baker just looked grumpy and turned away but the butler answered Joseph. "We both had strange dreams and we don't know what they mean." Joseph said, "Only God can interpret dreams, but if you tell me your dream, perhaps God will reveal the meaning to me." The two men looked at each other, then the butler said, "I'll tell you my dream. In my dream I saw three branches on a grape vine. Suddenly the vine started to make buds and the buds turned into juicy grapes. I reached out my hand and squeezed juice out of the grapes into the Pharaoh's cup." Joseph said a prayer to God that he would help him interpret the dream. God heard his prayer and showed Joseph the meaning of the dream. "This is the meaning," Joseph said. "The three branches are three days. In three days Pharaoh will release you from prison and you will once again serve Pharaoh his wine."



Then Joseph thought of something to ask the butler, "When you are given your job back, please tell Pharaoh about me. I've done nothing wrong to be put in prison, if you tell Pharaoh about me perhaps he will free me and let me go back to my home." The butler said he would indeed tell Pharaoh.

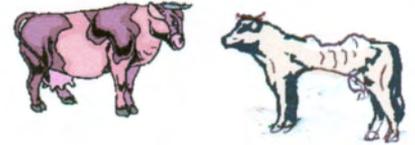
When the baker saw that the butler's dream had a good meaning, he decided to tell Joseph his dream as well. "In my dream I saw three baskets on my head. In the top basket there was all kinds of breads baked for the king. Then along came birds and ate all the bread out of the basket." God also showed Joseph what this dream meant. He looked sad as he told the baker the meaning of the dream. "The three baskets are three days. In three days time the Pharaoh will take you from prison and hang you on a tree and birds will come and peck at your body."



That was a pretty awful dream, wasn't it? The baker must have done something pretty bad and Pharaoh had found out about it.

Everything came to pass just as Joseph had said. In three days time the butler was taken before Pharaoh and given his job back. He once again served the king wine, and the baker was taken from prison and hanged on a tree. However, the butler forgot all about Joseph in prison. He went about his job and poor Joseph waited, and waited, and waited for Pharaoh to free him from prison. It took two long years before the butler finally remembered poor Joseph.

Pharoah, king of Egypt had had a bad dream, he woke up and turned over and had another disturbing dream. When he woke up he was in a very worried mood. He called all his wise men and magicians to the throne room. "I need you to tell me what my dreams mean," he demanded. "First I dreamed I was standing by the river and out of the river came seven fat, healthy cattle. Then out of the river came seven skinny, weak looking cattle. The seven weak looking cattle ate up the seven fat cattle, then I woke up."



"In my second dream," Pharoah went on, "I saw seven good, full heads of grain growing on a stalk. Then I saw seven thin and scorched heads of grain grow. The thin scorched heads of grain ate the fat, healthy heads of grain. Now, who can tell me the meaning of these dreams?"

The wise men looked worried, some guessed one thing and some guessed another, but none of their guesses made sense. Pharoah got angrier and angrier. "Is there no one in my kingdom that can tell me the meanings of these dreams?" he asked.

Then the butler remembered Joseph. He went up to Pharoah and bowed low, "Oh king, I think I can help; in the prison is a Hebrew slave who was able to tell the baker and me the meanings of our dreams. Our dreams came true but I forgot all about Joseph." Pharoah said, "Quickly, send for him."

So Joseph was brought out of prison, quickly given clean clothes and told to shave and wash as he was to go before Pharoah. Joseph didn't know what was happening, perhaps he was finally to be set free, he thought.



When Joseph was brought before Pharoah, the king said, "I have dreamed two dreams and no one can tell me what they mean. I understand you are able to tell the meaning of dreams." Joseph humbly replied, "I can do nothing myself, it is God who will tell Pharoah the answer and give you peace." This surprised everyone, the wise men would have all claimed it was their own skill and wisdom that interpreted dreams. Because Joseph believed in God and gave him the credit, God gave Joseph the interpretation of Pharoah's dream. Joseph bowed before Pharoah and said, "your dream of the seven fat cows being eaten by seven thin cows and the seven fat heads of grain being eaten by the seven thin heads of grain have the same meaning. God is letting you know that this is a sure thing by sending the dream twice."

"The seven fat cows represent seven years of good crops and abundant food for both people and animals. The seven fat, healthy heads of grain represent the same thing, seven extra good years of food for all," Joseph explained. "However, these good years will be followed by seven very bad years when there won't be enough grain and crops for people or animals. The rains will stop, the grain won't grow, the hot sun will dry up everything and men and animals will starve unless something is done to save food in the seven good years. God is warning you what is to come to pass." Pharaoh and all his court looked worried and said, "what can we do? How can we save our animals and the people?"

Joseph was a very wise man and he had an idea, he bowed before the throne and said, "Oh Pharaoh, it would be good to set a wise man over the farm produce in the seven good years. He could appoint men to take in some of the extra grain each of the seven good years and then when the seven years of famine come, the grain could be sold to farmers and families to help keep the animals and people alive." What a good idea, Pharaoh thought, but as he and his officials talked it over, Pharaoh looked at Joseph and said, "Why look all over Egypt for a wise man to take care of this. What man could be better for the job than Joseph?"

Pharaoh turned to Joseph and said, "I will appoint you over all my land. No one will be higher or more important in my land than you, only I will be higher in rank than you." Then Pharaoh gave Joseph his ring to show Joseph had Pharaoh's permission to make any orders he needed to. Pharaoh also gave Joseph a beautiful robe and a chain of gold to wear to show how important he was. Joseph was very surprised! He had gone from a prisoner to the most important man under Pharaoh, in just a few hours.



We might sometimes think God has forgotten us and isn't listening to our prayers. Maybe there were days when Joseph might have thought this. But God has plans for each of us and even if we can't see why bad things happen sometimes, God is still watching over us and guiding us in the way we should go. When Joseph was taken from his home, sold as a slave and then put in prison for something he didn't do, he had no idea that God was training him for a very important job...to save all the land of Egypt, as we'll see in our next lesson. Joseph was also to save his own family from starvation. God knew all the time what he needed Joseph for and now he had worked it all out for Joseph to begin a job of saving lives. We can read the Bible and learn from it. This story shows us that God doesn't let bad things happen to us for long. Bad things can be for a reason, and we are promised that God is watching over us, and won't leave us alone, just as he watched over Joseph all through his life.

LESSON # 18

Question Page

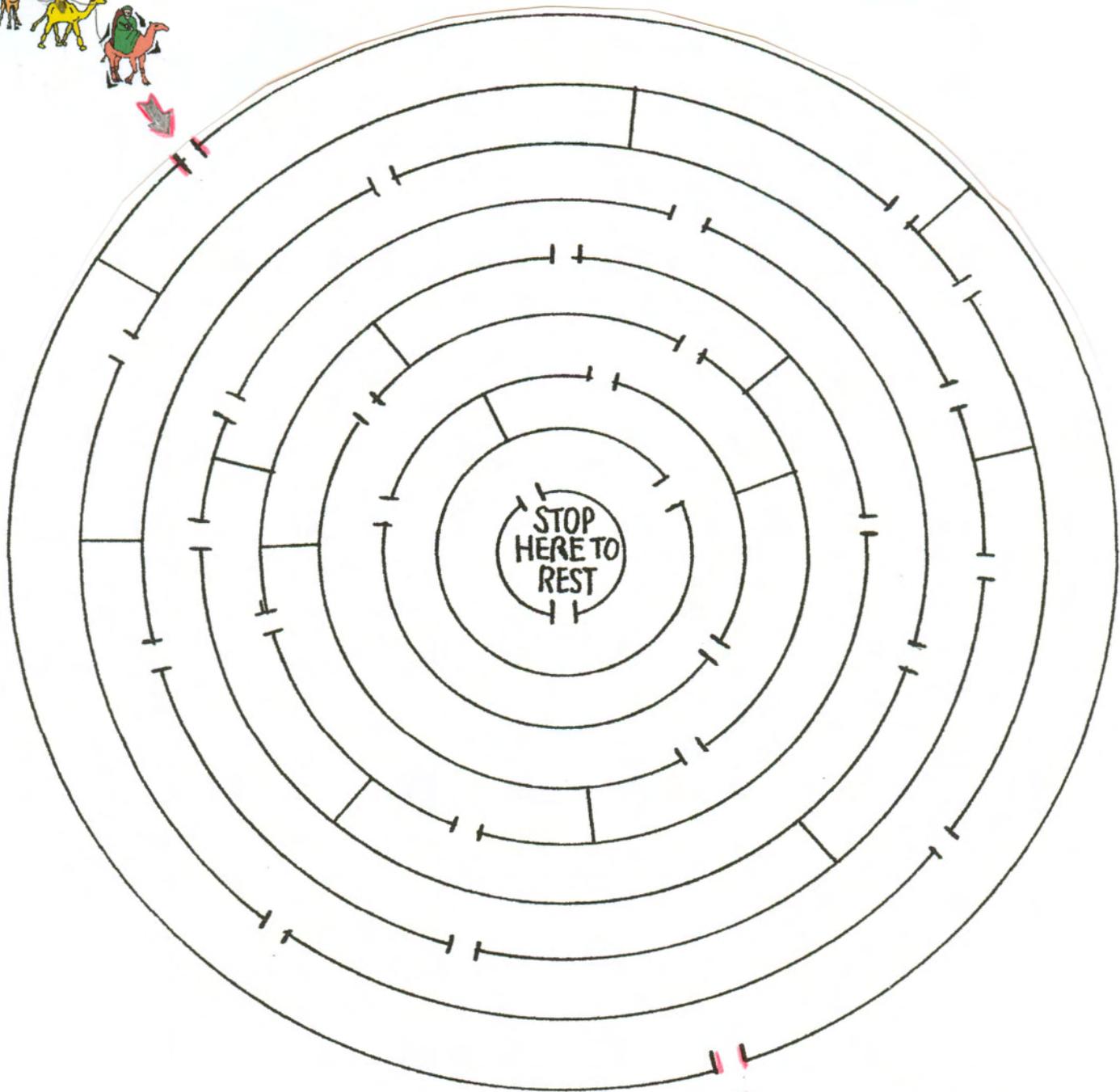
1. Underline the name of the man who bought Joseph as a slave? Pharoah Potiphar Paulus
2. How did Joseph treat his master when asked to do a job?
3. How should we treat our parents or bosses when asked to do a job?
4. Write your memory verse here:
5. Who asked Joseph to do something to hurt his master?
6. What happened to Joseph when he refused?

Fill in the blanks below:

Potiphar's wife and Jospheh are both dead and turned back to _____. One of them will be raised to L_____ again when _____ comes back to earth. Which one? _____

7. What two men were thrown into prison by Pharoah?
8. What did three branches and three baskets mean in their dreams?
9. Was the butler or the baker saved and given back his job?
10. What happened to the one who wasn't given back his job?
11. What were the two things that Pharoah dreamed about?
12. When things seem to go bad for us, does it mean God forsakes us?
13. Even though Joseph was a slave and in prison did he ever forget God?
14. Did God ever forget Joseph?

Help Joseph find his way through the wilderness to Egypt where he is sold as a slave



Color the picture of Joseph being thrown into prison, then figure out the verse by using the code below.

Joseph would have known this and believed it.



CODE: A B C D E F G H I J K L M N
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14
 O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26

VERSE:

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1 18 5 15 14 20 8 5

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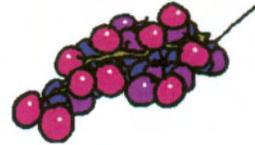
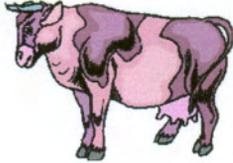
1 Peter 3:12

Draw a line from things the butler dreamed about to the butlers dream cloud then draw a line from things the baker dreamed about to the bakers dream cloud. Circle the things you dream about sometimes.

Three



Seven



Seven



Three



BUTLER



BAKER

