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Joseph: Success on the Job

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Series: God's Living Legends (Part 1)

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His childhood was plagued with favoritism, pride and contention. He was raised by a partial parent who exhibited his favoritism by granting to him, the twelfth-born, the honors that belonged to the first-born. His father further complicated his life by honoring him with a many-colored coat, a symbol of rank and royalty. It is no small wonder that dissension and rejection were on the horizon for this young man.

His name, of course, is Joseph. And he is the Scriptural living legend before us in this study. In our last lesson we were introduced to Joseph's two dreams, dreams in which he saw his father, his father's wives and his brothers bowing down in servitude to him. We saw him relate his visions of greatness to his brothers, and we watched as their hatred and jealousy boiled to a fevered pitch. From the perspective of a model family, this one was a disaster; but a sovereign God was nonetheless weaving these threads of jealousy and favoritism into the tapestry of Joseph's life message. God was using Joseph's very weaknesses, both character and circumstances, to place him strategically in the center of the will of God.

We saw how God did this in last week's lesson. Jacob, Joseph's father, sent him on a rather dangerous errand of mercy to check on his brothers' welfare as they were tending the family sheep some distance away. Joseph caught up with his loving brothers in Dothan. It was there that we saw unfold what might be called the "Dothan Conspiracy". As Joseph pulls up to the ranch and climbs out of his new truck, eleven pairs of sinister eyes focus on the dreamer as he approaches in his coat of living color. The nearly unanimous vote of Jacob's Little Mafia was to do in baby brother, take his rainbow robe, add a little extra red to it, and send it home to Pop with their regrets. I say nearly unanimous because Reuben cast the dissenting vote and suggested rather that they drop brother Joe into a pit with the idea that he would come back after dark and rescue him and take him safely home.

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In order to accelerate the story, Reuben goes for a sandwich and while the other brothers wine and dine by the well, little Joe screams his lungs out for help. A group of Midianite traders with their camel caravan of goodies “just happens” to stop at the same diner and Plan C unfolds. Plan C was to sell brother Joe for the magnanimous sum of \$6.60. They would be rid of him, but they wouldn’t have his death on their nearly non-existent consciences. So they make the deal. They give his coat the goat treatment and go home to pretend to mourn with Poppa Jake, who finds little or no consolation from these make-believe tears.

Meanwhile, Joe is carted off with this traveling flea market, apparently headed for a life of servitude and oblivion. “Poor Joseph,” we moaned, “must the bad guys always win?” At that point the curtain came down on our lesson, chapter one of the Saga of Joseph. It is there that we resume our look at the book for this lesson.

As our last study drew to a close, Joseph was the private property of this Midianite pharmaceutical entourage. We see him probably trudging along beside a smelly, sweaty, camel on his way to Egypt, miles and miles away. We know nothing of his long, bitter trek. The Scripture tells us only one thing in chapter 39:

Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt.

(Genesis 39:1 NAS)

Once again, one of those one-line wonders that leaves you wondering what took place between the capital “N” in now and the capital “E” in Egypt. This was perhaps the most vivid test in Joseph’s life. Here was a seventeen year old, spoiled Daddy’s boy who even had been allowed to stay home while his brothers were out with the sheep. Here was the little kid with the big dreams minus his multi-colored status symbol. He was no longer an heir to his father’s kingdom; he was now a victim of great injustice and takes upon himself the form of a servant. What a vivid portrait of the Shepherd who was to come.

What about that trip to Egypt? Have you ever been carried off captive in humiliation and despair? Probably not. But there are different kinds of humiliation God sends to His children to carve out the pits of preparation for greatness. Joseph, who thought he was somebody, became less than nobody so that God in His perfect timing might re-make this nobody into a somebody who

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would bless everybody. To get to the top floor of God's tower, you take the down escalator. No one without God's Spirit understands that the way to the top of the kingdom is via the basement of abasement. Until you have despaired in the deeper valley, your lungs cannot stand the altitude on God's mountain of magnificence. You show me a man who has ruled in Egypt, and I will show you a man who has been sold from the pit of humiliation and trudged along the side of a camel with no hope of greatness left in his bosom.

You may be in that kind of state of hopelessness today. My friend, your ride to subjection will lead to the reality of God's sovereignty. You will meet a God of greatness you never knew existed. Joe may have tended the camels; we don't know. Maybe he hauled garbage. Maybe he waited on the crude, vulgar traders like a servant boy. We don't know. But one thing we do know, Joseph's dreams were far behind him on that dusty desert. So when our dreams of greatness fade into nothing, then God has a usable commodity. But, oh, the sovereignty of Joseph's God, of our God, for we read in verse one:

And Potiphar, an Egyptian officer of Pharaoh's, the captain of the bodyguard, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there. (Genesis 39:1 NAS cont.)

You don't leave the care of God when you are thrust circumstantially outside the circle of your expectations. The Psalmist asks, *Where can we go to get away from God?* He then answered himself, "It's impossible." Never can you leave God's presence. At no time or no place are you more than an inch from the sovereignty of an omnipresent God. God has pre-planned and pre-arranged life to bring glory to Himself through your calamity and humiliation. God had a place and a plan for Joseph. So it was not quite by accident, (for there are no accidents with God, only incidents), that young Joseph is sold again, this time to Pharaoh's chief executioner, Potiphar. It is sort of like being promoted to the job of dentist in the lion's den at the local zoo. There is a lot of excitement, but one false move and there goes your writing hand. But God, to reassure Joseph, to reveal His power, and to place Joseph in a training zone to prepare him to rule virtually over the then-known world, puts him in the path of Potiphar, the Egyptian version of a hit-man. Zap! He is sold for a tidy profit.

Now James Freeman in his book, Bible Manners and

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Customs, tells us this about the captain of the guard as Potiphar was called:

“He was responsible for the safe keeping of state prisoners and for the execution of sentence upon them. In cases of treason, he sometimes executed the sentence himself. He was the official guardian of the person of the king, the chief body guard. Further insight is achieved when we see that in the ruins of the hall of judgment in a palace in Assyria, there is on the wall, etched a representation of a man, limbs stretched out, arms and ankles fastened to the floor and to a table. A tall, bearded man is in the act of flaying him alive, literally cutting him to pieces. The inscription below indicates that this bearded butcher is called the chief executioner, or the captain of the guard, the office held by Potiphar, Joseph’s new employer.”

I bet if Joseph was reviewing his memory verses about now that he probably was majoring on verses such as:

God hath not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and sound mind. (I Timothy 1:7)

Or maybe,

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. (Philippians 4:6 NAS)

He may have made up one of his own, “Let not thy teeth rattle, thou wilt waken the boss.”

Whatever he was thinking, we must ask ourselves, “He couldn’t be in the will of God, could he? How could it be God’s will for a man to work in a place like this? God wouldn’t send His beloved to toil as a servant for an unbelieving ogre, would He?” You bet your life He would. Why? Don’t you remember? *“That He might make known the riches of His grace.”* Do you think God has all the soft jobs in the world stashed away for Christians? Do you think that job you are in is not God’s will because the work is so hard? Because the people are so tough? Because the hours are so long? Do you measure the desirability of a job by the gentleness of the boss or the pleasantness of the surroundings? Why? Where would God best grow into full bloom the flower of your character, in the shade or in the heat? Where would God best magnify His grace, through your strength or through your weakness? Those who most need a life that is alive with Jesus Christ are often on that job that you would not choose for yourself.

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One thing that continually frightens me when counseling young people today is the concept of how you find God's kind of job. We are so affected by the world's philosophy. We combine the world's philosophy with a little spirituality and say that God's will is the easiest door that opens to us. God's will is the most money for the least hours under the best circumstances. It could be, but I doubt it. The kind of prosperity God wants to give you is much more than money; it is Joseph's kind. It is the prosperity of achieving the evidence of the hand of God so that on your job that unbelieving boss of yours and that unbelieving world about you is amazed at your success under the most difficult of circumstances, and thus they will conclude that the Lord was with you. My friend, the easy jobs in life rob God of this kind of testimony.

So God sent Joseph to be a slave for a tough unbeliever. I doubt if the Cairo Career Center had many volunteers for this job. But it wasn't necessary because Jehovah's Placement Bureau already had the slot filled. So Joseph gave the job back to God and lived the life of excellence before his unbelieving boss. He did the job as only a believer filled with the Spirit of God could do. As you can imagine, the results were impressive. Verse 2:

And the Lord was with Joseph, so he became a successful man. (Genesis 39:2 NAS)

You might want to memorize that verse. There is the mark of excellence. We continue in verse 2:

And he was in the house of his master, the Egyptian. (Genesis 39:2b NAS)

There was the location of his success. He was in the center of an unbelieving household under the authority of the local executioner.

Now his master saw that the Lord was with him and how the Lord caused all that he did to prosper in his hand. (Genesis 39:3 NAS)

There is the second point, it was such an impossible job, that his success *had* to be the result of his relationship to the Living God.

So Joseph found favor in his sight, and became his personal servant; and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he owned he put in his charge. (Genesis 39:4 NAS)

In other words, he went from Fred Flunkie to the number 2 in command because he did it God's way.

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And it came about that from the time he made Joseph the overseer in his house, and over all that he owned, the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house on account of Joseph; thus the LORD's blessing was upon all that he owned, in the house and in the field.

So he left everything he owned in Joseph's charge; and with him there he did not concern himself with anything except the food which he ate. (Genesis 39:5,6 NAS)

Joseph's boss had the big decisions: whether to eat mashed potatoes or Spanish rice. Everything else he left to his "Boy Wonder". So there you have the model of a believer employed by an unbelieving boss who lets God have full sway in his work. Joseph didn't have a lot of experience. He only had a lot of God. We read that the reason Joseph became successful was that "the Lord was with him". That didn't mean Joseph sat in the corner while God did his work for him. Not on your life. Verse 4 in the King James Version says:

Joseph found grace in his sight and he served him. (Genesis 39:4 KJV)

He humbled himself before this unbelieving boss and served him as though he was ministering to God Himself, because he was. God was with him. God is always with the man who is willing to be the man God wants him to be on the job, but too few Christians have a concept of what God expects of them at work. Christians incidentally are not necessarily the best employees. They ought to be, but they are not always so. So often we see Christian businessmen gathering around together and it is not unusual to hear one of them shrug their shoulders in dismay and say, "I thought if I hired Christians, I would get workers." Listen, Christians, there ought to be a difference, a marked difference in the way you do your job. Every aspect of your work ought to set you apart as a Christian.

Have you ever made a checklist of what the Scripture says you ought to be on the job? Guess what, I have been making a list and checking it twice and that is what this lesson is all about. So employees, focus your eyes on God's standards and measure your E.Q., your Employee Quotient. Before I begin, let me make one thing perfectly clear, the marks of success are the same whether you are a man or woman, whether you are a college graduate or a grade school drop-out. The qualities you are to possess to become a Joseph on the job are as applicable for a

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housewife as they are for a bricklayer. The key is not where you are or what you do, the key is, are you a Joseph on the job?

Now nobody is going to get left out in this lesson. We are going to deal with 20 qualities God expects you to have on the job.

1- Are you content with your rank and your salary? You ought to be. In Proverbs 30:7-9 we read these words. But before I read it, let me tell you that these verses from Proverbs and the Psalms are going to be paraphrased from the Living Bible for greater ease of application. All the other verses will come from the King James Version or the New American Standard.

Oh God, I beg two favors from you before I die:

First, help me never to tell a lie. Second, give me neither poverty nor riches! Give me just enough to satisfy my needs!

For if I grow rich, I may become content without God. And if I am too poor, I may steal and thus insult God's Holy name. (Proverbs 30:7-9 TLB)

In Luke we read:

And some soldiers were questioning Him saying, "What about us, what shall we do?" And He said to them, "Don't take money from anyone by force or accuse anyone falsely. And be content with your wages. (Luke 3:14 NAS)

Oh. What if these wages aren't coping with inflation? Maybe Jesus didn't understand that? We might try these verses:

For we have brought nothing into this world, so we cannot take anything out of it either.

And if we have food and covering, with these shall we be content. (I Timothy 6:7,8 NAS)

Hebrews 13:5,6 goes like this:

And let your life be free from covetousness and be content with the things you have, for He Himself said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

So we can confidently say that the Lord is my helper I will not be afraid, what can man do to me? (paraphrase)

In I Corinthians 7:20, Paul urges the new Christian to let each man remain in that condition in which he was called.

Were you called while you were a slave? Do not worry about it; but if you are able also to become free, do that.

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You were bought with a price; do not become the slaves of men. Brethren, let each man remain with God in that condition in which he was called. (I Corinthians 7:21,23)

Now this does not mean that a Christian is never to change jobs. But it does mean that the place you were in when God called you is His will for you at that time. Don't look for a move until He moves you, no matter how hot it gets.

You are not only to be content with your job and its wages, the Christian is not to be in the business of comparing his job or his salary with another brother who may only work 4 days a week. It is all explained in the parable of the vineyard in Matthew 20:1-16. There a landowner hired men at different times of the day. At the end of the day, he paid them all the same. Those who had worked all day screamed, "It isn't fair!" The owner replied that he paid them what he had promised. The men complained that he paid the others just the same and that was more per hour. "Unfair" they cried. The boss replied, "Whose money is it? Not yours. It is mine. I will do with it as I see fit." The application is both spiritual and vocational. The Christian just doesn't grumble over his job or his salary; he is grateful to have a job if he is to be a Joseph. My friend, you need to recognize before God that it is a privilege even in this generation, this "welfare generation" in which we live, to *have* a job, *any* job where you have a right to earn a living and feed your family. When was the last time you just stopped and said, "Lord, thank you that I have a job."

2- The Christian is faithful without petty excuses. Scripture indicates that you can tell the character of a man by the kind of excuses he gives when he doesn't make it to work. Proverbs says:

A lazy man sleeps soundly—and goes hungry.
(Proverbs 19:15 TLB)

A lazy man is full of excuses. "I can't go to work," he says, "If I go outside I might meet a lion in the street and be killed."
(Proverbs 22:13 TLB)

Now don't laugh, but think about the last excuse you called into work with when you couldn't make it. Proverbs 26:13 says much the same, but it goes on:

A lazy man won't go out to work, "There might be a lion in the road." So he sticks to his bed like a door to its hinges. He is too tired to even lift his food from his dish to his mouth, yet in his own opinion, he is smarter than seven wise men.

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Christian, it ought to take a calamity to keep you home from work. You are representing the Faithful One. He is the One who has never missed a day. What if God used our kind of excuses when we called him. You may use the excuse that your boss works you such long hours. But God says: "Six days shall thou labor". All we emphasize is that seventh day of rest. Jesus says, "My Father works, so I must work." We as His children ought to have the same attitude if we are to be Josephs on the job.

3- The Christian is to be faithful in the details of his job. Here is a good memory verse. It says,

A faithful employee is as refreshing as a cool day in the hot summer time.
(Proverbs 25:13 TLB)

This is really true. Luke 16:10 describes the parable of the unrighteous steward. Jesus makes this comment:

He who is faithful in little things is faithful in much. He is who is unfaithful in a little thing will be unfaithful in much.

If you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?

(Luke 16:10,12 paraphrase)

It doesn't matter if you are a college student or a professor, a laborer or a housewife, God measures your faithfulness by how you perform the very little things. The things you can hide under a pile of papers that will never be seen. The things you can put in the closet that will probably never be opened. The thing your professor asks you to do that will probably never be called for. That is what it means to be faithful. We need to be as faithful as Joseph was on the job.

4- The Christian is not only to be faithful, he is to be a workhorse. He is never to be slothful or lazy. He is supposed to set the example.

A lazy fellow is a pain to his employer, like smoke in their eyes or vinegar that sets the teeth on edge.

(Proverbs 10:26 TLB)

Scripture is so colorful. The Christian doesn't goldbrick or waste time or wander around. He doesn't use his boss's time needlessly.

Work hard and become a leader; be lazy and never succeed.

(Proverbs 12:24 TLB)

If you won't plow in the cold, you won't eat in the harvest.

(Proverbs 20:4 TLB)

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I walked by the field of a certain lazy fellow and saw that it was overgrown with thorns and covered with weeds and its walls were broken down. (Proverbs 24:30 TLB)

Here is the Christian's call to fix up his yard. He continues to say:

Then as I looked, I learned this lesson:

“A little extra sleep, a little more slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, means that poverty will break in upon you suddenly like a robber, and violently like a bandit.”

(Proverbs 24:32-34 TLB)

Ladies, your house ought to be clean, not to win a prize from Good Housekeeping, but to win the approval of your God who delights in diligence and bears testimony through hard work.

5- A Christian considers it an honor to do demeaning tasks or manual labor. This age of the elevation of the sainthood of the paper pusher over the broom pusher is not God's idea. God does the most menial things for us and never complains, even the washing of His disciples' feet.

It is better to get your hands dirty—and eat, than to be too proud to work—and starve. (Proverbs 12:9 TLB)

The lazy man longs for many things, but his hands refuse to work. (Proverbs 21:25 TLB)

Let him who steals steal no longer; but rather let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good in order that he may have something to share with him who has need.

(Ephesians 4:28 NAS)

And we toil working with our own hands.

(I Corinthians 4:12a NAS)

Have you ever thought about the fact that the King of Glory was a carpenter? The greatest layman who ever lived made tents for a living. God surrounded Himself with the likes of fishermen, not prima donnas. These were fishermen who mended their own nets. God gives honor for hard physical labor in the Scripture. We as Christians ought to be honored to work with our hands if we are to be the Josephs on the job.

6- A Christian on the job controls his tongue.

Keep your mouth closed and you will stay out of trouble.

(Proverbs 21:23 TLB)

Never falsely accuse a man to his employer lest he curse you for your sin.

(Proverbs 30:10 TLB)

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In other words, don't meddle with the boss's troops. Here is my favorite:

Don't talk so much. You keep putting your foot in your mouth. Be sensible and turn off the flow.

(Proverbs 10:19 TLB)

Oh, the grief employees cause employers when they cannot bridle their tongue. So often when the mouth is working the rest of the body stops, including the mind.

7- The believer is to be neat and orderly. Jeremiah 33 is our reference point with God's example of orderliness. He says:

You can't break His covenant in the day or the night of the seasons. To everything God gives order.

(Jeremiah 33:20 paraphrase)

Even the rapture will take place quietly and in order. Even Jesus as He fed the five thousand did so neatly and in order. Then He sent around and picked up the pieces. We ought to be able to tell a Christian's desk or workbench by the neatness and orderliness of the arrangement. How we keep our outer state portrays the inner state of our lives. We are ambassadors of a God of order.

8- God's man on the job is wise in his witness.

But sanctify (set apart) Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;

(I Peter 3:15 NAS)

God's man does not abuse his boss's time preaching if his boss is not paying him to preach. He uses his boss's time to so live before his fellow workers that they will want what he has and he will tell them on his own time Who it is he has: Jesus Christ. The Scripture says that he will do it with gentleness and respect if he is to be a Joseph on the job.

9- The Christian is to be gracious when corrected. Ouch. IPeter chapters 2 & 4 give our guidelines. There we are told that even if our bosses are unbelieving ogres as Joseph's was, we are to take rebuke graciously. If we were wrong, we deserve it. If we are right and we are punished anyway, I Peter says that God is testing our right responses. If ours is like the Master's, the Father is pleased. You ought to be able to tell the Christian on the job by how he handles rebuke.

10- The believer ought to be loyal to his employer and to his product. This may seem far-fetched to some of you, but it is not. If you take James 1:8 that says a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways, or Matthew 6:24 that no man can serve two masters, you can glean a principle from these two references that if you toil all day and accept wages for producing a product that you cannot endorse, you are a hypocrite. You ought to be a walking billboard for whoever you work for. If you take one man's wages and use it to buy his competitor's products, you are portraying to the world a spirit of disloyalty. It is so unlike the God you represent who is loyal to you through all eternity. Think about it.

11- You ought to be a wise steward of your boss's time.

Ephesians 5:16 says:

Buy back the time because the days are evil.

If you are being paid for 40 hours, whether you are being under-paid or over-paid, you accepted the job for 40 hours. You are not an acceptable employee if you have not worked those 40 hours each week in full gear. Even unbelievers should do that. This time does not include idle gabbing, personal phone calls or solving family problems on company time. Here is where many Christians miss the mark and toss their testimony out the window. Time, man's most valuable commodity, is the one thing we all have the same amount of, and you must use it wisely if you are to be a Joseph on the job.

12- You should be a wise steward of the boss's possessions.

It is nothing personal, but the company's paper clips are the company's paper clips, not yours. His fountain pens are his fountain pens, not yours to put in your pocket to give away unless he gives you permission. His long-distance telephone bill is his to pay, so don't abuse it. His utilities are his to pay and yours to conserve. You don't waste the company's gas or abuse the company car. In essence, God owns the company so it is His car so you are misusing what is His. You read Matthew 25:14-30 and you will see what I mean.

13- God's man on the job humbly gives God the glory for his accomplishments and accepts the blame for his own mistakes.

Go back to 1 Peter 2 again and you will see what we are talking about. Give God the glory for the victories; but if you blow it, 'fess up and take it like a man. It says:

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You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,
(I Peter 5:5,6 NAS)

14- Leave the matter of promotions to God. God's man does not politic for his promotions. They are not always God's will.

Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.

But God is the judge: He putteth down one, and setteth up another.
(Psalm 75:6,7)

God promoted Joseph, you remember, out of the clear blue sky under circumstances the rest of us were amazed at. In the next lesson we will find that in just a few months or maybe even years later, he was demoted all the way down to the bottom of the rung for something he didn't do. But it was still God's will. Leave the promotions and the demotions as well to God the way Joseph did. God will bless you for it.

15- The Christian is wholesome in dress and conversation at work. Ladies, if you work, wear no provocative clothing that calls attention to anything but the beauty of your countenance. We read this in I Peter 3:2-4. Men, don't go to work with sloppy, unpolished shoes and uncombed hair. It is God's temple as we read in I Corinthians 3:17 and I Corinthians 6:19. It is God's temple on display. Should it look like God lives in the slums? Housewives, your career is in your home, so when the doorbell rings, you put God's temple on display when you open the door. Do you look like an oil-field worker or a godly woman?

16- The believer on the job is submissive to all who are placed over him. Romans 13:1-7 says that the powers that be are all put there by God. This means the president of your company, your immediate supervisor, your teacher, your husband, whoever, has been placed over you by God. To resist that authority is to resist God. The Christian on the job shows respect and submission to everyone who is over him, whether they deserve it or not.

17- God's man on the job is concerned about his heart attitudes as well as his performance. Ephesians 6:5-8:

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Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ;

not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.

(Ephesians 6:5,6)

God's standard for His children is a godly outward response to be followed by a genuine change of heart. Going through the motions with a bitter spirit toward your boss, or your husband, or whoever is in authority above you, won't cut it with God and it won't fool them either.

18- The Christian is to be honest beyond reproach.

Better to be poor and honest than rich and a cheater.

(Proverbs 28:6 TLB)

The Lord despises every kind of cheating.

(Proverbs 20:10 TLB)

The Lord loathes all cheating and dishonesty.

(Proverbs 20:23 TLB)

The Christian ought to be the one person in the organization who can be trusted with the key to the door and the combination to the safe. He has the confidence of his superiors. It all goes with the territory when you are behaving like Joseph on the job.

19- God's man doesn't flit from job to job. Back to I Corinthians 7 again, God's man only moves when God moves His man. The higher the heat, the greater the praise. If God is trying to get your attention, don't make Him hit a moving target. He has His ways. You do remember a fellow named Jonah, don't you? Remain in place and be faithful until God says, "Go." When God says, "Go," then go, but not before. So often we misread the handwriting on the wall because it is ours and our handwriting is not good.

20- The Christian is doubly responsible if his employer is a Christian or if he works for a Christian organization.

Let all who are under the yoke as slaves regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and our doctrine be not spoken against.

And let those who have believers as their masters, not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but let them serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved. Teach and preach these principles.

(I Timothy 6:1,2 NAS)

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Christians who want to go to work for other Christians so that they will have a fun family get-together and be spared the pressures of hard work are all wrong. If God plugs you into a job as a Christian's employee, you are supposed to work harder. God said it, I didn't. That is the case if you want to be a Joseph on the job.

One last thing here. If you are employed in full-time Christian service, you triple it. Paul took less and gave more than he needed to. He said the reason was to keep from being a stumbling block to others. The eyes of the world were on Paul and every nickel he received. The people who live by the gospel better live the gospel. Your vocation and your ministry are so intertwined that your testimony is on the line in everything you do. That is part of your calling. Every Christian worker who takes a salary but doesn't work hard, harder than all the rest, is an affront to God. Of all people, if you are on the payroll of a Christian organization, you must be of all men a Joseph on the job.

So much for our trip down Meddling Lane. Now we will have to stop in order to take up Joseph's encounter with Potiphar's wife in the next lesson.

God blessed Joseph's work and Potiphar turned everything he had over to him. Then God blessed Potiphar for Joseph's sake. God will bless your work and cause you to receive greater responsibility if you will let Him. But letting Him means letting His life shine through yours in all twenty of these areas of your life. God may well put His hand of blessing on your boss for your sake, too. If He does, it is not to glorify you; it is to glorify Him. You are simply an available instrument in the right place at the right time. You are in the right place at the right time because a sovereign God may have lifted you from the comforts of your dreams through the pits of testing through the caravan of humiliation to be perhaps the subject of an unbelieving ogre of a boss. Who knows? If so, it is because He needs a Joseph in that place. He has chosen you.

Whether you are a clerk in an office, a salesman in a store, a policemen, a fireman, housewife in a home, a mother, a full-time Christian worker, a part-time baby sitter, a waitress, a lawyer, a truck driver, a bookkeeper, a doctor, a student, or a maid, you are God's Joseph on the job. If you become the Joseph you were meant to be, it might be said of you as it was of him, "*And the Lord*

Success on the Job

was with him, so he became a successful man.” That, you see, is the will of God for you, just as it was the will of God for Joseph, God’s living legend. So you can ask yourself this question:

ARE YOU A JOSEPH ON THE JOB?

Are you a Joseph on the job?
Are you so set apart
That everything you do reveals
That Jesus owns your heart?

Are you so faithful on the job
To every last detail
That men can see a faithful God
Who will not ever fail?

Are you so humble on the job
That men can see in you
A mirror—just reflecting Christ
By everything you do?

Is it an honor just for you
To do the menial things?
To, with a servant heart, perform
Whatever task God brings?

Do you respect your boss’ time
As though it were your own?
And can he dare entrust to you
What others have not known?

Are you a Joseph in your dress,
Does wholesome speak of you?
And can you walk in holiness
When others are not true?

Be a Joseph, Christian,
Let your work the story tell.
For thus did God bless Joseph,
And He’ll bless you as well.

Success on the Job
For Focus and Application

1- Try to imagine what that trip to Egypt must have been like for Joseph. Try to suggest some of the things he might have done. Picture the rejection, the loneliness, the hopelessness. Can you liken this journey to a time in your life when the circumstances seemed so hopeless that your mind was flooded with fear, anxiety and rejection? Be willing to share how God may have used that in your life, and how God may have comforted you in the midst of it.

2- Joseph was sold to the chief executioner. Have you ever gone to work for someone who held in their power the ability to destroy people, and had to trust God each day for a spirit of peace? Describe what qualities God may have worked on in your life through those times. Why do we always see those jobs as undesirable? Can you think of a time when you would *seek* to work for someone who is mean or inconsiderate? Why? Why not?

3- Why do you think God blessed Joseph's unbelieving boss? Can you suggest a modern day scenario like that?

4- Review the list of twenty qualities a godly employee should possess and rate yourself 1-10 (10 being highest) in each. Choose verses to meditate on in the areas you fall below 6. If you are a housewife or are retired, apply those principles to your ministry, your housework, your areas of commitment.

- 1) Are you content with your salary? With your standard of living?
- 2) Are you faithful or do you give petty excuses for not working?
- 3) Do you tend to life's details with faithfulness?
- 4) Are you considered a hard worker? Or slothful?
- 5) Is manual labor beneath you?
- 6) Do you control your tongue on the job?
- 7) Is your work area neat and orderly? Are you?
- 8) Are you wise in the way you witness to those around you?
- 9) Are you gracious when corrected?

Success on the Job

- 10) Are you loyal to those who provide for you?
- 11) Are you a wise steward of time?
- 12) Are you wise in using others' possessions and resources?
- 13) Do you quietly give God the glory for your accomplishments? Do you graciously accept the blame for your own mistakes?
- 14) Are you satisfied to trust God's sovereignty for promotions?
- 15) Are you wholesome in your dress and conversation?
- 16) Are you submissive to those placed over you?
- 17) Are your heart attitudes about work sincere?
- 18) Is your honesty above reproach?
- 19) Do you flit from job to job? ministry to ministry? task to task?
- 20) Are you doubly committed when you are working for a believer?

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