

Joseph's Testings

GENESIS 39–41

FIRST DAY: Introduction

From the time you start school, life is full of testings. Tests prove what you know, what you still need to learn, and your readiness to advance. Life is also filled with spiritual tests. Spiritual tests take many forms, but they all try our faith. In the end, they prove whether or not we trust God, His Word, and His promises.

In Genesis 39, 40, and 41, we witness the testing of Joseph. Before God promoted Joseph to the office of Prime Minister of Egypt, He tested him. Joseph was tested by:

- Slavery
- Responsibility of a great household
- Sexual temptation
- False accusations
- Slander
- Imprisonment
- Disappointment
- Delay

In all these tests, Joseph excelled by continually seeking to please God. God was with Joseph and blessed him through all his testings.

Let Joseph's life be an inspiration to you! God uses testings in our lives to prepare us for all He has in store for us. By faith, trusting in, and walking with God, we will not only survive, but excel in these tests.

*Ask God to deepen your trust in Him, His Word,
and His promises to excel in life's testings.*

SECOND DAY: Read Genesis 39

1. Following the situation between Judah and Tamar in Genesis 38, the story of Joseph resumed in Genesis 39. After he was sold into slavery, Joseph was *taken down to Egypt* and sold to Potiphar, Pharaoh's *captain of the guard* (Genesis 39:1). Use Genesis 39:2–6a to cite phrases that indicate:

a. The Lord's presence and *blessing*

b. Potiphar's *favor*

(1) How does God's presence with Joseph while in captivity minister to you?

2. Genesis 39:6b notes that Joseph was a *handsome* man, which created an issue with *his master's wife*. Use Genesis 39:7–12 to comment on:

a. The advances of Potiphar's wife (verses 7, 10a, 11–12a)

b. The responses of Joseph (verses 8–9, 10b, 12b)

(1) According to Genesis 39:9c, how did Joseph characterize such an act? See also Psalm 51:4.

(a) Link Joseph's response to temptation with the following and share how it speaks to you:

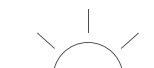
(1) 1 Corinthians 6:18

(2) 2 Timothy 2:22

3. When Joseph rejected the advances of Potiphar's wife, what did she do? Genesis 39:13–18

a. As a result of her *words*, what did Potiphar do? Genesis 39:19–20

4. In spite of this injustice toward Joseph, describe and remark on God's *favor*. Genesis 39:21–23



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

This is the second time Joseph was stripped of his cloak and had his garment used for a false report.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The *captain of the guard* was Potiphar himself (see Genesis 39:1). The fact that Potiphar put Joseph in prison instead of having him executed may suggest he did not believe his wife, and only cast Joseph into prison to save face.

5. Share a way you have experienced God's presence or favor in the midst of a trial.

6. From your study today, what impresses you most about Joseph?

THIRD DAY: Read Genesis 40

1. According to Genesis 40:1–3, what happened while Joseph was *in the prison*?

2. When the *captain of the guard* put the *butler* and *baker* in Joseph's care, Joseph served them (Genesis 40:4). The Hebrew word *served* can also mean *waited upon* or *ministered to*. Considering Joseph's own situation, why is it remarkable that he *served* these men?

3. What happened after the *butler* and *baker* had been *in custody for a while*? Genesis 40:5
 - a. From Genesis 40:6–7, observe Joseph's attentiveness toward them. What does this convey to you about Joseph?

4. The *butler* and *baker* told Joseph that they each had a dream, but there was no *interpreter*. When Joseph offered to interpret their dreams, who did he reveal as the source of *interpretations*? Genesis 40:8
5. The *butler* and *baker* then proceeded to tell Joseph their dreams. Use Genesis 40:9–22 to fill in the chart concerning these dreams:

	DREAM	MEANING	FULFILLMENT
<i>Butler</i>	Verses 9–11	Verses 12–13	Verses 20–21
<i>Baker</i>	Verses 16–17	Verses 18–19	Verse 22

6. Joseph asked the *butler* to *make mention* of him to Pharaoh when he was restored (Genesis 40:14–15). However, what happened when the *butler* was released? Genesis 40:23
- a. Although Joseph trusted and honored God in his imprisonment, this must have been a disheartening and difficult trial. Read Psalm 105:17–19 to further understand and remark on what God was doing in Joseph during this time.

7. From your study today, share a way Joseph is an example to you.

FOURTH DAY: Read Genesis 41:1–32

1. *Two full years* passed after the butler was released from prison. Then one night, *Pharaoh had a dream* (Genesis 41:1a). Use Genesis 41:1b–7 to briefly describe the *dream* Pharaoh had about:
 - a. The *seven cows* (verses 1b–4)

 - b. The *seven heads of grain* (verses 5–7)

2. *In the morning*, Pharaoh was *troubled* by his dreams. What was his dilemma? Genesis 41:8
 - a. It was at this moment that the *butler* remembered his *faults* in forgetting Joseph (Genesis 41:9). What did he tell Pharaoh? Genesis 41:10–13

3. At this news, *Pharaoh sent and called Joseph* from prison. Use Genesis 41:14 to capture the drama of Joseph’s release from prison.

- a. Now after thirteen years of testing, Joseph was brought out *quickly*. What does this convey to you?

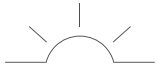
4. Pharaoh told Joseph he *had a dream* and *heard* Joseph could *interpret it* (Genesis 41:15). What stands out to you from Joseph's response in Genesis 41:16?

5. Pharaoh recounted his dreams to Joseph (Genesis 41:17–24). Summarize the interpretation using Genesis 41:25–31.
 - a. Why was it significant that *the dream was repeated*?
Genesis 41:32

6. What is your greatest takeaway from today's study?

FIFTH DAY: Read Genesis 41:33–57

1. God had used Joseph to interpret Pharaoh's dreams and warn of their imminent fulfillment. Use Genesis 41:33–36 to highlight the advice Joseph gave in light of the impending *famine*.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

This is the first mention in the Bible of the Holy Spirit coming upon someone—and it was acknowledged by a pagan ruler!



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A signet ring was used to seal official documents and carried the owner's authority and approval.

- a. Remark on the response of Pharaoh and his *servants* to Joseph's *advice*. Genesis 41:37–38
2. Use Genesis 41:39–45 and Psalm 105:20–22 to note and comment on the following things Pharaoh gave Joseph:
 - a. Promotion (verses 40–41)
 - b. Authority (verses 42–44)
 - c. Name (verse 45a)
 - d. Wife (verse 45b)
 - (1) Notice that Pharaoh gave credit to God for Joseph's wisdom (verse 39). What does this suggest about Joseph's testimony before Pharaoh?
 3. According to Genesis 41:46a, this event took place when Joseph was *thirty years old*, which means he was enslaved and in prison a total of thirteen years before he was released and promoted. Link this with the following Scriptures and note your insights:
 - a. 1 Samuel 2:8a

- b. Ecclesiastes 3:11a
- c. 1 Peter 5:6
4. After his promotion, as a responsible prime minister, Joseph *went throughout all the land of Egypt* (Genesis 41:46b). Use Genesis 41:47–49, 53–57 to record your observations concerning Joseph’s management of:
- a. The *seven plentiful years* (verses 47–49)
- b. The *seven years of famine* (verses 53–57)
5. It is interesting to note that Joseph gave Hebrew names to his *two sons* born before the *famine*, even though his wife was a high-ranking Egyptian (Genesis 41:50). Use Genesis 41:51–52 to consider the significance of their names:

	SIGNIFICANCE	YOUR THOUGHTS
<i>Manasseh</i>	Verse 51	
<i>Ephraim</i>	Verse 52	

a. Share a way God has helped you:

(1) *Forget* the past (see Philippians 3:13–14)

(2) Become *fruitful* in the midst of affliction (See Psalm 66:12b)

6. How does your study today speak to you concerning:

a. God's timing

b. God's sovereignty

c. God's purposes

SIXTH DAY: Review

1. Joseph went through some extenuating hardships before he was given such a powerful position in Pharaoh's court. Use the following circumstances to highlight Joseph's testings and how he triumphed:
 - a. Slavery

 - b. Responsibility over Potiphar's house

 - c. Sexual temptation

 - d. False accusation

 - e. Imprisonment

2. What do you observe about Our Great Creator's activity throughout Joseph's testings?