

## **Joseph – An example of Faithfulness**

### **Objective**

To use the life of Joseph the righteous as an example of how to live a faithful life

### **References**

Holy Scripture

### **Scriptural Verse**

Genesis 39:1-6, and 20-23.

### **Introduction**

Everything Joseph did was blessed. Whenever he was given a task or something to be responsible for, he was successful. Why? Did he have special powers? Did God miraculously bless everything Joseph touched? What was the reason behind Joseph's success?

It was his faithfulness. He was very faithful in the small things that were given to him which pleased God so much that He granted him favor in the sight of his masters who then entrusted him with more. God loves faithfulness and He rewards it abundantly because God is absolutely and infinitely faithful. Our Lord was faithful in His mission and completed it on the cross without shying away or backing down from it.

How can we be faithful in the gifts that God has given us?

### **Lesson Outline**

Faithfulness is a way of life; it's not just about keeping up with tithes or doing some volunteer projects here and there. It is a characteristic that we develop as we deepen our relationship with God. Have you ever known a really faithful servant? Usually they have the following four characteristics:

- 1) They receive the gifts of God with gratitude – accepting everything from God as a gift, not just the good things. Even when their health fails, or their job becomes stressful, they realize that out of the seemingly bad things, God works good in our lives and allows us to go through things to teach us life lessons. They never complain. Nowhere in Scripture does it say that Joseph ever complained or grumbled against God. There were times when he was in anguish and he tried very hard to get out of prison but his complaints never turned into rebellion against God.
- 2) They cultivate their gifts responsibly – they use these gifts and put their utmost effort to make them profitable so the fruit of their labor is very evident. We have to keep an eye on what it is we are good at so that we can develop these gifts and bring forth fruit. Sometimes the problem is that we don't actually know what our gifts are, we sometimes think that it's limited to the ability to teach, lead or sing in a choir but research has shown that the average person has over a 100 talents. Think also of God's gifts in broader terms such as faith, friendships, intelligence, skills and creativity. There are a multitude of gifts given to us in different forms and by asking God to reveal to us these gifts, we can put them to use and serve God, as the Bible teaches us that "as each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Peter 4:10).

Being faithful is not about loving the gift(s) we are given but rather about loving the giver. The stewards with the five and two talents went and made more money knowing that this money was not for them and would not make them wealthy but it was done out of love for their master. The unprofitable servant however had such a poor view of his master and was also fearful of him and therefore did not have his best interest at heart. The least he could have done was deposit the money

in the bank. Rather, he chose to hide the talent and not bother himself with it till his master came back (Matthew 25:14-28). Even in Joseph's example, we see that he was faithful not to further his career, for he only was a Hebrew servant, but his faithfulness resulted from his deep love for God. We need to ensure that our desire to do well in our careers, etc. is out of a faithful love for God and not a desire to be rich or to own certain things. The way to know whether this is the case is to measure it up against our love for God. For example, one could ask if they are skipping out on prayer time to work or even to serve.

- 3) Faithful servants share their gifts with everyone. Faithful people have a deep love for everybody they come across and they have a deep desire to serve them in any way possible. God never meant for us to keep our gifts to ourselves but to put them at the service of others. Joseph diligently served each master he came across from Potiphar to the prison guard to Pharaoh himself. He even interpreted the dreams of his fellow inmates, which was a great way of using his gift through which God then used to bring good. Thus, all those whose lives cross our paths are people that we are supposed to share our gifts with, be it our time, our money, etc. However, faithfulness MUST start at home with those who are under the same roof.
- 4) Faithful servants stand before the Lord in a spirit of accountability (see Luke 12:42-47). We see that the faithful steward is one who has an accurate sense of time. He knows that he has been given a limited amount of time in which to work even though he doesn't know how long it will be. But he works as if his Master was on His way to hold him accountable for his work. The faithful steward also knows that his lack of faithfulness may result in the gift being taken away from him.

## **Conclusion**

Living a faithful life leads to a blessed life. Faithful servants receive God's gifts with gratitude, they cultivate their gifts responsibly, share their gifts with everyone and know they are accountable for their work. We can learn how to live a faithful life by looking at Joseph's life and applying his example to our lives.

## **Activities/discussion point**

1. What are some uncommon talents that could be used to serve God?
2. How can we help others reveal their talents?
3. What are some road blocks to attaining faithfulness?