

# SOUL FOOD

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## **GENESIS 39            THE COURAGE OF RUNNING AWAY**

Here in Genesis 39 we find a powerful lesson in how to pursue holiness and purity before God even in the face of a powerful temptation. What do we learn about the dynamics of temptation and not succumbing to it?

At the beginning, Joseph is sold into the service of Potiphar. God is so very much with him that he becomes the head slave of this powerful household. This is not something that took place over night. The passage suggests that eight or ten years have elapsed. During this time Joseph would have had to learn the language and work his way up from the bottom. But all of this was tied to the blessing of God on Joseph's life, and Joseph's integrity. At the end of the chapter, Joseph has been thrown into prison on a false charge, but even here God is with him and grants him favor in the eyes of the warden, and in due course becomes a trustee. We learn the powerful lesson that sometimes God chooses to bless us and make us people of integrity in the midst of horrible circumstances, rather than change our circumstances.

Secondly, we encounter the story of Judah, who is a free and prosperous man, but when he loses his wife he ends up sleeping with his daughter-in-law. He deploys a double standard and shames himself and his family. Joseph is a slave, yet under the blessing of God he retains his sexual purity and his integrity. Which one is happier in the eyes of the world? Which one is happier in the eyes of God?

Thirdly, Genesis 39 depicts for us the march of Joseph's elevation to leadership in Egypt. Through the dastardly means described in Genesis 37, 39–40, Joseph eventually becomes the second most powerful man in Egypt and saves many from starvation, even his own extended family, and therefore the line of the Messiah. But, while Joseph could not have known how all of this was going to work out as he was going through his misery, he knew about the stories passed down from Abraham, and his own dreams. Joseph walks by faith and not by sight.