

The Ministry of Prayer XIV

“This then is how you should pray...lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.”

Matthew 6:9&13

The Bible tells us over and over again that our fight is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities in this dark world. In Ephesians six, Paul talks a lot about this. He does not do this to scare us. We are not to be fearful of the evil one. We are to overcome him. His greatest weapon is temptation. We all have to deal with attitudes, desires and even dreams that are not what the Lord has for us. It is easy to please our own passions and not the Lord. One person in the Old Testament is my hero when it comes to temptation.

Joseph withstood such odds. He was a young man with a vision from the Lord but whose life would take a radical turn because of that vision. His own brothers sold him into slavery. How he must have hurt and been confused! What temptations come with these emotions? But the Lord was with him and he became the head of Potiphar's house and all his possessions. Soon Potiphar's wife became attracted to him and tried to seduce him. Even though Joseph withstood the temptation he was still accused by the lustful wife of Potiphar and gets thrown in prison. What kind of emotional baggage would you have had by now? In prison the Lord was with Joseph and he was recognized for his work and good attitude, and he was made responsible for all that was done there. Then Joseph interprets two of his inmate's dreams accurately. One dies and one lives as Joseph has predicted from the dreams. The Cupbearer has an agreement with Joseph to speak up for him when he is with Pharaoh, but he forgets. How discouraged would you feel...strike one, two, three you're out! Two years later, yes two years later, Pharaoh has a dream that greatly disturbs him and his diviners and wise men cannot figure it out. This finally triggers the Cupbearer's memory and he goes to the Pharaoh to tell him about Joseph. This begins a beautiful and immediate rise to success as Pharaoh's commander, the one who would be entirely in charge of Egypt. When I think over the lonely life, the rise and fall of Joseph, I can only awe at his ability to withstand temptation. Temptation's prey is the despondent soul. How do you handle discouragement? What can you learn from Joseph?

In the end of Genesis Joseph's heart is revealed and you just gotta love this guy. He says to his brothers who sold him into slavery, “You intended to harm me but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives,” Genesis 50:19

Jesus is always involved in a trial. In the New Testament the words trial and temptation are interchangeable. Interesting isn't it? Jesus taught us to pray for deliverance. Do you pray that way every day? How do you look at trials? Are they just a nuisance or are they doorways to breakthroughs in your life and others? The Lord is with you too, just like he was with Joseph. He will grant you certain victory if you will wait for him and continue in faith with a good attitude and serve, whether those around you recognize you or not.