

God's Calling Requirements Part 50

Criteria and Keys for Success

“Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. Potiphar, an Egyptian who was one of Pharaoh’s officials, the captain of the guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him there. ²The LORD was with Joseph and he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. ³When his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD gave him success in everything he did, ⁴Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned. ⁵From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the LORD blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the LORD was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field. ⁶So he left in Joseph’s care everything he had; with Joseph in charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate. Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, ⁷and after a while his master’s wife took notice of Joseph and said, “Come to bed with me!” ⁸But he refused. “With me in charge,” he told her, “my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. ⁹No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?” ¹⁰And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her. ¹¹One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside. ¹²She caught him by his cloak and said, “Come to bed with me!” But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house. ¹³When she saw that he had left his cloak in her hand and had run out of the house, ¹⁴she called her household servants. “Look,” she said to them, “this Hebrew has been brought to us to make sport of us! He came in here to sleep with me, but I screamed. ¹⁵When he heard me scream for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house.” ¹⁶She kept his cloak beside her until his master came home. ¹⁷Then she told him this story: “That Hebrew slave you brought us came to me to make sport of me. ¹⁸But as soon as I screamed for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house.” ¹⁹When his master heard the story his wife told him, saying, “This is how your slave treated me,” he burned with anger. ²⁰Joseph’s master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king’s prisoners were confined. But while Joseph was there in the prison, ²¹the LORD was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. ²²So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there. ²³The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph’s care, because the LORD was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.” (Genesis 39:1-23)

When we read Genesis 39 and proceed to read the following chapters of Genesis 40-45, we can clearly see that God was with Joseph and prospered him, for God had given him success in whatever He did. But also for sure that God would not be with Joseph and give him success unless there are good characters in Joseph who responded to God’s grace and love.

As you know the background and history of Joseph, that he was betrayed by his brothers who have being jealous of him and hated him. They thrown him in a well and they were trying to kill him. But later on they took him out and to make money out of him they sold him to the Ishmaelites who took him and sold him again to Potiphar. From what we read in Genesis 39 we can conclude the good characters and the criteria that helped Joseph to be successful person.

1- Forgiving: Joseph did not carry bitterness and anger and nurse grudges in his heart toward those who harmed him. He did not focus on those who harmed him and he did not put in his heart and mind to revenge and pay back those who did evil against him. His forgiveness to them opened his eyes to see what the good things that God had prepared for him to do. Forgiveness toward those who hurt us will heal our wounds and grant us the progress forward to achieve what God wants from us to achieve. Check yourself if you have that?

2- Humble: Joseph was willing to restart his life as a slave, as a worker and maid in a house. Joseph as he humbled himself in God’s hands the Lord lifted him up, then he became attendant and later on he was put in charge of Potiphar household and over all that he own. Many are unwilling to start from low position or less income job, but in such way they are missing God’s provision and His grace for them. Even after Joseph was well established in Potiphar house he was betrayed by Potiphar wife and that spoiled all what he had build. But even when he was put in prison he still did not give up but he started from the beginning. Be like Joseph willing to start from the scratch.

3- Willingness to be humiliated: Joseph was humiliated by his own brothers when they thrown him in the well. He was also humiliated when his brothers used him to make money. He was also humiliated when the Ishmaelites sold him as slave to Potiphar. He was humiliated when he was accused falsely by Potiphar’s wife and he was humiliated when he was thrown into prison and stayed there long time. Such kind of humiliation we may pass through and the Lord will allow that to happen. God wants us not to focus on the hurt we receive but on His grace that can sustain us and support us in days of troubles and in times of need. Many who pass through humiliating circumstances they don’t accept that and for them such things should not happen. Instead of accepting that as normal they react and go into grief, and they withdraw themselves and become unwilling to adjust and allow God to heal their wounds. People who are unwilling to be humiliated you hear from them such expressions,

‘I don’t think I can forgive!’

‘I cannot forget what had happen!’

‘How they can say that _____ or how they can do that?’

‘I don’t think I can recover!’

If you among such people and react as they react your healing will delay and your progress in life will be far from you. Be like Joseph, forget what had happened and don’t look to your wounds but look to the healer our God and look forward to the new way and the road that the Lord had paved for you, the way of success and look forward to the prosperity that is waiting for you.

4- Loyal and submissive to his master: By virtue and criteria, being the son of Jacob and a believer and worshipper of God Joseph is higher than Potiphar and even higher than the jailer. But as he was put under them he was willing to listen and obey their instructions. **“Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.” (Romans 13:1)** Arguments and quarreling with your boss will not serve you or help you. It will just make life more difficult. If your master is cruel and non-understanding the best thing you do with him is to keep calm and silent and continue to do your work in a proper way and pray for him as Jesus advised us, **“bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.” (Luke 6:28)**

5- Diligent: God would not grant Joseph the success unless he was a diligent worker and active in doing all his duties and responsibilities. God will not bless lazy people with success. You need to be diligent and active in your work, and God shall bless the work of your hands. Joseph would not be successful unless he was punctual and kept time and appointments. Be the same like Joseph as a person who knows well his job and what he needs to do.

The word of God teaches us the way how to live our lives in a successful way. There are commands the word of God declares and dictates we need to heed and follow in our lives so that His grace will have its full effect and impact in our lives. From the real story of Joseph we can learn more important spiritual truths and facts, and in applying them we will find ourselves prosperous and successful.

6- Faithfulness and living in the fear of God: Joseph was faithful to God in keeping the commands of God alive and true in His life. He showed his responsible behavior to keep his identity as a Hebrew person belonging to God by keeping himself pure, refusing to sin against God, **“I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.” (Psalm 119:11)** As well as he showed his faithfulness to God by working hard and in a responsible way in his assignment in the house and in the field. He was a trustworthy person, he knew his responsibilities and he was doing them. He showed he is responsible and dependable, following what God’s word says, **“²² Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. ²³ Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, ²⁴ since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. ²⁵ Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism.” (Colossians 3:22-25)** You do the same in your lives; to fear God and refuse to do wrong, and be faithful in your work by being disciplined, punctual, effective and fruitful in your service.

7- Trusting God: Joseph trusted the Lord and His word. He showed that by his willingness to continue to do right and obey God’s word and commands even when things went wrong or in opposite direction. You also do the same during trials and struggles. Trust God and continue in this life to fully obey Him and walk in His ways. When things go wrong continue to pray and cry to God, trust Him that He will do something good to you to uphold you with His grace.

8- Capability to adapt: Joseph brought from Hebrews family and brought in Egypt to live in an Egyptian house. There are lots of things different that Joseph faced in his new atmosphere like the difference in the language, dress, type of food, and other differences in culture and habits. Joseph was able to adapt to the differences but when it comes to sins Joseph did not adapt himself with people ways in living in sin. Capability to adapt with the new culture and atmosphere that God is bringing you is a key for success. But be aware that adaptation to the new atmosphere does not allow you to sin as the people of the world sin and live away from God.

9- Be a good steward: Joseph was a good manager to what had been entrusted to him. To be a good steward he was a man of wisdom. He knew how to handle people and knew how to speak to each and every person. Joseph, even he spoke well to the woman who kept on tempting him to follow her in bed and sin against God. He told her these wise words, **“With me in charge,” he told her, “my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. ⁹ No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?” (Genesis 39:8-9)** He spoke the truth in love to her; he preached to her the gospel by showing her the sin clearly and directed her to obey God. You need to be wise how to speak and how to present the gospel to each and every person put under your care.

Being a steward, included under Joseph’s care finances, and for sure Joseph managed finances well. One of the important aspects of a person’s life is finances, and to know how to manage finances is a key for success. It does not need you much money for success but rather wisdom how to handle what you have.

10- Skillfulness: Joseph used all his skills to manage the work in the house and in the field. Therefore as he was successful in that, he was put in charge of everything in the house and in the field. The Word of God tells us that his master **“left in Joseph’s care everything he had; with Joseph in charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate..’ (Genesis 39:6)** Skill is needed to overcome difficult situations and will bring success, **“If the ax is dull and its edge unsharpened, more strength is needed but skill will bring success.” (Ecclesiastes 10:10)** The same to you if you want to be successful then be diligent and from this time on start to use all the skills that God had entrusted in your hand. Put in your mind that God had good plans for you **plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.** Therefore obey God’s Word and apply what it says and you will be prosperous and successful.

11- Standing firm against temptations: One of the important points that accompany success is the style of high discipline. Joseph was highly disciplined and knew his responsibilities very well and he kept his commitment toward God, toward his employer and toward the people and the society that God had placed him in.

We need to ask what are the temptations that Joseph had exposed to and was able to exercise self-control and overcome.

A- Sexual immorality: Joseph was exposed to that through the temptation of his master's wife, *"Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, and after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, 'Come to bed with me!'"*⁸ *But he refused.*" (*Genesis 39:6-8*) Joseph was handsome and well-built but he knew well that if God had blessed him with that, he should not use it in a wrong way. Sexual immorality is one of the common and dangerous temptations that man or woman would be exposed to. The question is how to overcome that? You must be a clear minded; God's plan for you that one day you will have a family. God will provide for you the right partner when you are ready and well equipped for marriage. Those who had prepared their minds in such a way will not find that difficult to resist temptations. The fear of God will impart wisdom and understanding in your life that you will be aware that premarital sex is an effective tool to destroy your life. Sex has a responsible aspect that God gave for reproduction. And reproduction will only be possible when the atmosphere ready for that. When the man is ready spiritually and well provided materially, God provide the right partner and he will have a family. The bible tells us the following: *"Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes."* (*Psalms 37:7*) Many they go for dating and many they go for courting because they don't fear God and they don't wait upon His perfect timing. But they will fall in sin and they will carry the consequences of their sins. Don't be envious of those people who do such. As well as there is no enjoyment in such style of living, sure they will pay the costly price of their sins. Wait upon God and be patient, He has a good plan for you; he is preparing you and is going to bless you with a family life.

What Joseph did to overcome that temptation?

First: He refused to go with the woman. You need to prepare your mind for action, to refuse and to say 'No' to such things.

Second: He refused to be with her or near her. It is not enough to say no, but also you need to go away. Because intimacy reduces self-control, in fact intimacy is an indicator of reduction of self-control.

Third: He was diligent to attend his duties. One way to overcome temptation is to be yoked and get involved in doing your responsibilities. Fear God, submit fully to Him and Devil will go away from you. *"Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."* (*James 4:7*)

Forth: Change the atmosphere and be away from the opposite sex. As much as you can walk and live with godly people. Be with your gender, boy with boys, and girl with girls to avoid temptations. Avoid watching movies and the TV programs and U tube that will ignite your feelings and emotion with the opposite sex. Be with your bible and listen to God and obey Him.

B- Money: As Joseph was in charge of the house and the field then sure there was money affair circulating under his care. And it was not reported that he stole money. One important aspect and key for success is your honesty in regard to the money of others that put under your care. Don't be tempted to steal or to use some of it for your personal

benefit, that money is not for you, it was only put under your care to manage it well. You need to fix your eyes on Jesus who will provide you with all your needs and give you your food at the proper time. Don't look to the people or put your eyes on their money that will not help you. Trust God, work hard and be diligent and God will provide for you. As well as a good steward for money you need to tithe your income and give to God your firstfruit and your offerings. And faithfully and keep good record if your work involves money transactions.

C- Abuse of power: As Joseph was in charge then different people would be under his authority. It was not mentioned that Joseph used his authority to abuse and to take advantage of those who are under his care. The Word of God tells us the following, *"And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him."* (*Ephesians 6:9*) You do the same, as the Lord is lifting you up don't be tempted to abuse and exploit those who are under your supervision. *"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings."* (*1 Peter 5:8-9*)

My dear and beloved: Let us now review the criteria that we had expounded today from Genesis 39 and let us check ourselves what we lack from the criteria.

Now let us ask God to deal with us so we can develop what we lack of these criteria:

- 1- *Being Forgiving person.*
- 2- *Being a Humble person:*
- 3- *Willing to be humiliated.*
- 4- *Being loyal and submissive to your master.*
- 5- *Being a Diligent person.*
- 6- *Being Faithful to God and living in the fear of the Lord.*
- 7- *Being a person who trusting God and rely fully on Him.*
- 8- *Being a person capable to adapt.*
- 9- *Be a good steward with time, finances and with people.*
- 10- *Having Skillfulness.*
- 11- *Being highly disciplined and standing firm against temptations of sexual immoralities, money and abuse of power with people.*

Allow God to mold you and work in your life. Humble down before him and accept all the discipline, the trials and the hardships that He is allowing in your life so he can build you up in the way that you will be a successful person.

Repent from your sins. Repent of laziness, unforgiveness, pride, carelessness, arrogance, anger, immoralities, worldliness, unfaithfulness, and repent of being bad in handling your money and wasting money. Repent of being abusing the people and not careful to handle people in the light of God's Word. Repent of being choosy, obstinate and not willing to comply with the plan of God for you.

Now ask God to forgive you the sins that you confessed and ask him to start to mold you in the way that He desire to make you the person, that He wants you to be.

***My prayer:** Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for my sins to give me eternal life. Lord thank you for your word that makes things clear to me and had showed me what are the things that causing me failure. Lord as I repent of my sins, Lord I ask you to help you to recover and to go back to the good plan that you have for me. Lord leads me and help me to live and do your will in my life. Lord give me one more chance and restore me. Oh Lord let the life of Joseph and what you did to him come also in my life as I repented of my sins. I commit myself to serve you and live my life for you. Lord gives me self-control, patience, long suffering, love, gentleness, kindness and perseverance so I can overcome all the temptations and to wait upon you till you fulfill your good plan for me.*

Lord I pray for my brothers and sisters who repented from their sin, that you will work greatly in their lives. Lord restore them and make them fruitfull and successful in their lives. Lord I pray that you will use them to serve you once again and to do what is good and right in your eyes.

Lord I pray for those who are weak among them that you will watch over them and help to overcome and be strong in your grace, and that they will start to obey and apply your Word in their lives.

Lord we pray for the church to grow. We pray for more evangelism and for more souls to be harvested. Lord we pray for more Bible studies to be planted. Lord we pray that our life testimony will be a good testimony to attract others to follow you. Lord bless us and enlarge our territory, let your hand be with us and free us from harm so that we will not feel pain. May the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus name, Amen.

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