

## Going to the Next Level

We often feel that life doesn't offer us opportunities to move up to something better. By studying certain people in the Bible, we can discover principles to live by that will take us to something better – up to the next level. Let's look at Joseph, after his brothers threw him in a pit and he was sold as a slave into Potiphar's house.

### GENESIS 39:7-12

Joseph's immediate reaction was to run away from Potiphar's wife. He never hesitated for a moment!

- Sometimes you have to say to yourself, *“Don't just stand there, do something.”* Joseph did... He ran from the temptation.
- Sometimes, you have to say to yourself, *“Don't just stand there, say something.”* Joseph said, ***“How can I sin against God?”***

**POINT #1: Going to the next level will depend on your refusal to compromise your integrity.** In everything, you must refuse to offend God, who has said, *“Be holy for I am holy.”* (1 Peter 1:16)

**POINT #2: Doing what's right is never wrong.** God sees. God hears. God responds. When you do what's right, God will take you through the temptations and difficulties up to the next level.

### 1 CORINTHIANS 10:13-15

Joseph wouldn't compromise. He was fully committed to do what was right... and God was fully committed to take him to the next level.

- Never undervalue or neglect your integrity. Nothing is more important to God. Be committed to be who God says you are.
- Continue to behave like who God says you are. You are a winner and a Champion. Make it your own confession of faith!

**POINT #3: You must be more concerned about your character than your reputation...** because your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others might think you are.

### GENESIS 39:20-23

God never abandons a person who insists on doing what is right and pleasing to Him. He will be with you and He will recognize your integrity and use it to take you to the next level.

The Bible says, (1) *“The Lord was with Joseph”* and...  
(2) *“whatever he did, the Lord made it prosper.”* **3 JOHN 2**

Two years after Joseph was put into prison, God gave Pharaoh a dream. The LORD was about to take Joseph to the next level. God had a plan! Joseph had a Word from God.

**GENESIS 41:1-14... JEREMIAH 29:11**

Joseph was called before Pharaoh ...and because he had the knowledge of what Pharaoh’s dream was, and also of its interpretation, he was promoted to the next level... and it was a high one! God’s plan for the next level of your life is a high level. Nothing could stop God from promoting Joseph. God is the same today and when He promotes you to the next level, nothing can stop it.

God is a Dream Weaver. He has woven a dream for you. He has made provision for you to get to the next level. So how do you get there? How do you make His dream for you come true?

As we have seen, there is no doubt that Joseph’s journey from the pit to the palace was a difficult one... but because of Joseph’s commitment to do what was right, and to do what pleased God, God was always with Him. (If God is for you, who can be against you? Who can stop you from going to the next level?) **ROMANS 8:31**

**POINT #4: People of integrity will experience the presence and favor of God.** (Joseph was covered in God’s favor!)

Here’s what we can learn from Joseph’s journey to the next level:

A. Joseph applied excellence to every task he was given, regardless the situation in which he found himself. Never judged your effort by how difficult or how nice your situation may be... or what you think you can gain or lose from it. Just do your best. God will do the rest.

**God’s Champions’ focus on what they do. Losers focus on what they are going through.**

B. From the beginning to the end or at any step in between, you must refuse to compromise your integrity. (Joseph was a man who never compromised his integrity.)

Circumstances or outcomes should never be the issue that might tempt you to do what's wrong. Always do your best and trust that God will be there. (Joseph walked in complete trust of God and never wavered because of his circumstances.)

- Daniel's Example -

Daniel is another example of a person in the Bible like Joseph, who refused to do anything that might not please God. In Daniel's example, we find that even the fear of a horrible death in the lion's den did not cause him to reject God. Daniel knew that God was bigger than anything he might fear. He made a decision from within his heart that he would not defile himself.

**DANIEL 1:8**

When the cost seems to be overwhelming, stop counting the cost and start counting it all joy.

**JAMES 1:2-4**

Take yourself beyond counting the cost. Remind yourself that you could never count the number of the thoughts God has toward you, and you could never measure the limits of His grace. God will not waste your disappointment, discouragement or pain. He will invest it for your future success for His glory. He will not abandon you in your decision to serve Him faithfully. He will be there for you and will take you through to your destiny.

The king's question **DANIEL 6:19-20**

Daniel's answer: **DANIEL 6:21-22**

The king's lesson: **DANIEL 6:25-27**

Daniel's future: **DANIEL 6:28**

God will do the same for you!



**POINT #5: God can shut the mouths of lions and he can shut the mouths of whatever or whoever is against your dreams.**

God's Champions' know they don't decide their futures. They decide their habits (patterns of life) and their habits decide their futures.

Be a person of excellent habits. Fill the patterns of your life with uncompromising biblical principles and practices.

When you fill the patterns of your life with uncompromising biblical principles and practices, God will take you to the next level.

*Isaiah 54:17 (NKJV)*

*"No weapon formed against you shall prosper, And every tongue which rises against you in judgment You shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, And their righteousness is from Me," Says the LORD."*

Neither Joseph nor Daniel allowed circumstances to steal their dreams or rob them of their potential. God took both of them to the next level. Here is a principle every one of us can count on. *"If you allow compromise to deny you the opportunity to go to the next level, you will be denied. You must refuse to be denied.* There is something higher waiting for you. It's the next level of blessing! Believe God that you can speak to a mountain or even climb the clouds. You need to be a championship mountain mover and cloud climber!

**POINT # 6: If you are going to get to the next level: never give in, never give up and never give out!** Keep your eyes on the dream that God has called you to. Keep your eyes on Jesus and never give up. Be sure to always give the will of God priority over your own desires. His will is best and it is a door to something far more significant than anything that would fight against His will.

**POINT #7: You may have to compromise (or even kill) your own ambitions so you can serve others.** You may have to count the cost of doing so and accept it as part of the will of God.

Will God speak through a fortune cookie?

Some years ago, my wife, Nancy, and I were having dinner in a Chinese restaurant with our some of our dear friends from Living Streams Chinese Church, in Brooklyn, New York. When dinner was finished, someone opened a fortune cookie that read, *"Compromise*

*may mean sacrificing personal ambition or a principle.*" (Reading this fortune cookie was not done because anyone believed in fortune cookies. It was just good fun.) As the piece of paper in the cookie was read aloud, I thought to myself, "Compromising a biblical principle is never right. However, denying your selfish needs or ambitions can mean sacrificing what you want, or what's easy and comfortable. It can mean refusing to demand what's yours or what you think you deserve. It can mean to crucify your feelings of entitlement!"

Christ refused to compromise the principle of first serving God's will. He gave up what He certainly was entitled to, as the Son of God. He went to the cross to save us from the judgment we all deserved! His actions took Him to the next level – the highest level, *"seated at the right hand of the throne of God."*

HEBREWS 10:12 and HEBREWS 12:2

Denying selfishness or "self" is one of the ways we also get to the next level. God will see our sacrifice, as He did Jesus' sacrifice... and He will honor it... Now, go have a cookie and think about this. I know the cookie will taste good. I also know telling God that you will surrender to His will always tastes better than any cookie or whatever else you want for yourself. It's a sure way to get to the next level.

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"We Don't Have to Come Back."

There was a lighthouse keeper and his son who lived on the rocky shores of an island. They frequently assisted people in small boats who were in trouble. They would take their sturdy powerboat out into the surf and pull people into a safe harbor. One night there was a terrible storm. The waves were crashing violently on the rocks beneath the lighthouse. The winds were treacherous and unpredictable. Suddenly, they received a radio message, asking for help from a boat, which was floating off shore with its engines out. The father gathered his equipment, put on his rain gear and motioned to his son to follow him to their rescue boat. "But father," said the son, "It's too dangerous. The storm is very violent and we might not make it back!" The father put his arm around his son, looked at the storm outside, and said, "Son, we have to go out. We don't have to come back."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There are numerous available sources for this story. It's origin is unknown to me.