

# Life with God Present

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Date: 31 July 2022

[ 0 : 00 ] Really cool seeing my friends serve Jesus. That's exciting. If you have your Bibles, turn to Genesis chapter number 39. I guess that slide behind me indicates who we're talking about. But Genesis chapter number 39, God is good.

There's so many exciting things going on in our church, in the community, in the world. There's a lot to be thankful for. God's good. But as you turn there, there's a very comforting and true principle.

Well, comforting for some, not comforting for others. Depends on what side of this thing you're on. So principle, truth, and it's that God is omnipresent. It's a \$10 word for it, but practically saying God's everywhere.

There's never a spot you go where God's already there, where he's already been there, where he's not already at. And as Christians, this truth is, it's great for us. The truth is that we have God with us. How amazing is that?

We have an almighty creator God who's not only just cold and removed, but he's actively involved. He's actively there. Out of all the places or people or locations he could be, he chooses to be right where you are, right where you've been, and right where you're going.

[ 1 : 01 ] That's a very comforting truth. Look at what the Bible says about it. Matthew chapter 28, verse 20 says this. Teach him to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I'm with you always. Really cool principle.

As we obey Christ and as we go out all over the world in different spots, he's with us always, even unto the end of the world. End of the world, everywhere you go. Hebrews 13, verse 5 says this. Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have had.

For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. He's never going to leave you. He's always there. Look at what the psalmist says in Psalm 139, verse 7. Whither shall I go from thy spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

There's no spot you can go where God's not already there. You can't run from him. You can't escape him. You can't get away from him. God is always there. Where the mower filleth his hand, mowereth.

Amen. That'll preach. But that being said, God's presence is everywhere. God's presence will never leave us, and it's a great thing that he will never forsake us. But God's presence should also change our present.

[ 2 : 04 ] Him being there and him being with us should change things for us. Got to hit on this in Sunday school for weeks, so I'm super excited to try to kind of finish a thought here. But God's presence should actively make a difference in our life.

This can be personified, or I see an illustration of it. Stephen Ambrose has this great book, a documentary series as well, called Band of Brothers. But there's this really interesting part in the fourth chapter. You go to Belgium outside of this little town called Foy.

These guys have been living in the woods for weeks, getting ready to go take this. It's the American 101st Airborne Division out of Toccoa, Georgia, of all places. But that's where they're at. They're getting ready to go take it, and there's a change in leadership.

They put in this guy. His name is Lieutenant Norman Dyke. He's not a super good lieutenant. They call him just an empty uniform. He's never really there. Turns out he's actually quite the coward. Well, as the battle happens, they walk out, and when the gunfire happens, the lieutenant's plan goes to pieces.

He finds himself in a hole, hunkered down, hiding. He's actually crying. He's called back all of his men to this open field where they're exposed to nothing but fire. Well, anyway, a major winner sees this, and what he ends up doing is he replaces him on the spot.

[ 3 : 06 ] He calls out another lieutenant, sends him in, relieves the lieutenant there, and he sends this guy in. This lieutenant was nothing special, but the Bible says, or not the Bible, the story says, he was strong in presence.

And as he was strong in presence, he gets out there, and he really doesn't do too much. He actually takes the other guy's plans and executes him, but all he was was a strong presence. A first sergeant writes that because of his presence was calm and collected and cool, they were able to execute the battle.

Well, on a much bigger scale of things, we're in the battle of life. We're going through trials and storms, as Dylan just taught us. Sometimes it may be hard to see how God is good. We can know that God's presence is there.

And his presence ought to change things for us. God's presence should change our present. Does God being with us affect the way we live? And if it doesn't, it really should. Ephesians chapter 6, verse 5 reads this, We should work like God's there.

Galatians 1.10 says this, Do I not persuade men or God? Do I now seek to please men? For if I please men, I should not be the servant of God. Leave to please God. Live like God is watching.

[ 4 : 20 ] Clause 3.22 says this, Servants, obey in all things your masters according to flesh, not with eyes services, men pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God. It's a biblical principle.

God is always there. He's always present. Know where you can go to get away from him. But not just that. We should live like he's present. Look at what Jesus says in Matthew chapter 1, verse 22.

This was done, There might be filled with which was spoken to the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall conceive and be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is God with us.

Christians, there is a biblical principle. God is with us. We have his presence. It's always there. For lost people, he's still present, but his presence isn't with you. There's a big difference there. But as Christians, we have God's presence with us everywhere we go.

Does his presence affect our life? That raises a question. What does that look like? What does it look like for God to be present? Is there a story where that's exemplified? I believe that it's really well shown in the life of Joseph.

[ 5 : 19 ] It's exemplified in the life of this young man named Joseph. The life of Joseph, it's a pretty interesting story. It's pretty crazy. Joseph had a really, up until a certain point, terrible life.

If you remember, we first find Joseph, he's running from his grandfather at like age 7. His dad comes in, picks up all the people, puts them on a camel and ships them out, and he's ripped from the hands of his grandpa.

And then as we find Joseph's story, we see it's just a mixture of sadness and glory or pain and success. And as a result, Joseph's life contains a lot from which we can glean from, a lot from which we can learn.

One of those lessons will be found in the passage we're going to be in today. Let me introduce you to this young man named Joseph. We find him in the story. He is just 17. He's a favorite of 12 sons. I don't know what that's like.

I'm the only child. I was born the favorite. But for those of us in here, favoritism is not a good thing. And Joseph is the favorite of 12 sons. And his father chose him as a favorite.

[ 6 : 13 ] To prove this, his father gives him a coat of many colors. Gives him a nice jacket. I'd like to think it was probably Nike or Gucci or something like that. Gives him a nice jacket. One better than all of his other brothers have. Joseph was on his way to being the most influential and powerful person in his family come to find out.

He begins to have these dreams. He's his dad's favorite. While his brothers were working in the field, Joseph is actually at home with his dad. He had some dreams that God had given him. These dreams confirmed everything that was happening in his life.

And according to the dreams, Joseph was on his way to a place of absolute leadership and ruling. And his brothers hear about this. And they hated him. His older brothers hated Joseph because he was their father's favorite.

Because he had these dreams that God had given him. And he began to tell them about him. And Joseph shared those dreams with them. One day, Joseph's brothers had the opportunity to handle him. His brothers attacked him. So the story goes like this.

Joseph's brother is out here. Joseph's dad gets him. Says, hey, go check on your brothers. Go send them some messages. All that good stuff. Joseph gets packed up. Goes out there. When they see Joseph approaching, you can see the bitterness manifested here.

[ 7 : 15 ] They take the opportunity in Genesis chapter 37. They want to kill this guy. They begin to talk about it. They attack him. They throw him into a pit. They actually, it actually takes the older brother Reuben, talking the other brothers down from killing him.

They take his coat. They kill a goat. It covers coat and blood. Take it back home to their dad. Joseph's in a pit. And then these slavers come by. And what they do is they sell their brother into slavery for the equivalent of \$100.

Which is not even that, but they sell it for \$100, divided by 10 people. They bought a sandwich of what they sold their brother for. And then they ate after. They didn't feel bad. They had no remorse. And then Joseph was sold to some merchants for less than \$100.

They take Joseph to Egypt, and then he's placed into slavery. And that may seem like it might be the end of Joseph's story. But certainly God was not done with Joseph. So here's a 17-year-old young man, stripped of his coat, separated from his beloved father, betrayed by the very people that were supposed to protect him, his brothers, sold into a land where he probably doesn't know the language, carried off into a strange land, to live as a slave.

Can you imagine the fear that must have filled his heart to be placed into a well, to think that they're going to leave you there to dehydrate, not sure if they're going to kill you, and they pull you out, and they put you with these other group of guys you don't know, who carry you off in chains.

[ 8 : 30 ] The hurt that must have gone through his heart, the people he grew up with, who were supposed to take care of him, he'd never see his dad again, he thought. He wouldn't see his little brother again. Could you imagine the lies that Satan must have told him?

I'm worth more than \$100. I'm worth more than that. No, no, they're supposed to take care of me. God, are you done with me? Can you imagine the disillusionment over shattered dreams? No, no, God, but you gave me these dreams.

I'm supposed to rule and be a king, and you said you do all these things for me. You're in Joseph's spot. It's a very bad spot to be. But God's not done with him. Can we look at, despite all that happened to Joseph, let's look at what the Bible says in Genesis chapter 39.

Genesis 39.2 says this, And the Lord was with Joseph. Despite all that happened to Joseph, look who was with them. Genesis 39.2, and the Lord was with Joseph. Genesis 39.3, And his master saw that the Lord was with them.

Genesis 39.21, But the Lord was with Joseph. Genesis 39.23, And the keeper of the prison looked not to anything that was under his hand, because the Lord was with him, and the Lord made it to prosper. Acts chapter 7 verse 9 even says this, The patriarchs moved with envy and sold Joseph into Egypt, but God was with them.

[ 9 : 39 ] There's a principle. God was with Joseph. When they put him in that pit, thought it was all by himself, God's presence was at the bottom of that pit. When they put him with those slavers, God's presence was traveling with him to Egypt. When he got to Egypt, God's presence was already there.

Over and over and over again in this story, God's presence was with him. Well, they take old Joseph, sell him into slavery, he ends up in the land of Egypt, and he's sold to a man named Potiphar. Potiphar was an officer in Pharaoh's house, captain of the guard, the Bible says.

They bring him into Potiphar's house, and there he starts to work for Potiphar. But Genesis 39 says this, And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man, and he was in the house of his master, the Egyptian.

Verse 3, And his master saw that all the Lord was with him, and the Lord made all that he had to prosper. Joseph starts working at Potiphar's house, and his master begins to see, like, Whoa, this guy's different.

Something's different about him. God is with him. The Lord is with him. The Bible says he began to prosper what Joseph did. We'll get to such a point where Potiphar promotes Joseph, and Joseph now has a little bit of authority. He begins to get to tell the other servants, who set things up.

[ 10 : 38 ] He gets to the point where Potiphar doesn't worry about anything, except for the food he has to put to his mouth. That's how good of a worker Joseph was. Well, as Joseph begins to work in there, I believe there's a lot we can learn from his life.

God was with Joseph, despite all that he went through, despite all the places he had been taken, despite all the pain he had gone through. God was with him. And there's a truth. God's presence is with you too. No matter how bad you hurt, no matter how it may seem like the dreams have shifted, no matter how much things have changed, no matter how much pain it is, no matter how you don't see the situation working out very well, no matter what it may be, God's presence is with you.

His presence is there. God will stick with us too, just like he stuck with Joseph. When he was all by himself in that pit, God's presence was there. When it's night outside and it's dark and you think you're by yourself, God's presence is there.

When you're scared, you don't know what's going on, God's presence is there. When you're confused, you're anxious, or you're worried, God's presence is there. You can trust it. And his presence should change our present.

It should work in our life. Let's see how God's presence in Joseph in this terrible situation affected things for him. The first thing is it affected his labor. Honestly, if I was Joseph, you put me in this situation, I would not be the best employee.

[ 11 : 48 ] I would hate it. I wouldn't want to work for Potiphar. I was working for my dad a few weeks ago. I was working for the guy who loved me. Now I'm forced to be here. Look how the Bible says God's presence affected Joseph's labor.

Genesis 39, verse two through four. And the Lord was with Joseph. He was a prosperous man. He was in the house of his master, the Egyptian. The master saw that the Lord was with him. And Joseph, verse four, and Joseph found grace in his sight and he served him and he was made overseer of his house and all that he had, he put into his hand.

That should say a ton about Joseph's character. All that Potiphar had was put into Joseph's hand. Joseph's knowledge of God affected his work, even in a spot where he didn't want to be. For those who were not the nicest people to him, he was still prosperous although he wasn't being paid.

He was prosperous as a slave. God still blessed him. You know God's presence should affect our work ethic. It should affect how we work when people aren't there, when they're not nice to us, when we're not taken very good care of, when they don't treat us very well.

It's just still, we should still work like God's watching. He didn't want to be there but he still worked. You see, when we realize it's ultimately that God that we're working for, it will change, not just how we work, but it changes why we work.

[ 12 : 54 ] We realize that God's presence is there. Colossians 3.24 says this, Knowing that of the Lord you shall receive the inheritance for you serve the Lord Christ. Guys, we go to work and yes, we work jobs but the Bible says we work as unto the Lord.

Whatever a hand have we found to do, do it diligently. We work to serve the Lord and the Bible says we can serve the Lord in how we work but ultimately in how we work it's done in why we work. We work to serve the Lord.

Obedience to God and his word had caused him to prosper. I think it's so great that no matter where he was, no matter his social level or his standing or where he had come from, what he had done, God had caused him to prosper because of his obedience to him.

Deuteronomy 29.9 says this, Keep therefore the words that is covenant and do them that ye may prosper in all that ye do. Joshua 1.7 says this, Be thou strong and very courageous that thou may observe you according to all the law, the law being God's word, at which Moses my servant commanded that he turned out from it to the right and to the left that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

There's a biblical principle. You do God's word, you can prosper. God will take care of you. He'll lead you. He'll provide for you. He'll prosper you. Are we obeying like God is there even when it's hard?

[ 13 : 59 ] For Joseph, it was difficult. I mean, just think about it. This guy was probably not the nicest to him at first. I don't know. He wasn't paid. He wasn't taking very good care of him. But he obeyed like God was there.

But not just that. God's presence not only affected how he labored, but look how God's presence affected him in lust. Joseph was a... The Bible says Joseph was a handsome guy in Genesis 39. Pretty crazy. Only three guys in Scripture get called handsome.

David, Absalom, and Joseph. But the Bible... God writes down in all of Scripture, what an honor, this guy was good looking. That's what the Bible says about Joseph. He was a handsome guy. And as Joseph worked, one day he caught his boss's wife, sighed.

And Joseph worked hard. She begins to notice him. And then one day she wants him to sin. She wants him to fall. She's trying to make him falter. The Bible teaches that she actually tried repeatedly. Look what the Bible says in Genesis 39, verse 6.

Potiphar leaves all that he had in Joseph's hand. He knew not what he had to save the bread he'd eat. The Bible says in Genesis 39, 6, And Joseph was a goodly person and well favored. Glory to God. Verse number 7. It came to pass that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph and she said, Lie with me.

[ 15 : 03 ] Verse number 8. But Joseph refused. He said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wanteth not what is with me in the house. He hath committed all that he hath to my hand. First things first. Joseph was a good friend.

He didn't do that because he was Potiphar's friend. But then he said in verse number 9, There was none great in this house, neither he kept back anything from me because thou art his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness against Potiphar 1?

Look what he says in the end of the verse. And sin against God. God's presence built Joseph's integrity. And the same thing should be true about us. Look at the Bible says in verse number 10, And it came past, He spake unto Joseph day by day.

She came at Joseph time after time after time after time after time. And look what the Bible says, And he hearkened not unto her to lie about her or to be with her. That was the man that Joseph was.

Because God was present there, it affected Joseph's integrity. Notice in this story, I think this is so interesting, you know it was God who narrated the story. Nobody was there but God was watching.

[ 16 : 01 ] He narrated the story. God saw his response to the temptation. He saw it all along. He was there. Look at Joseph's response. He knew that people may not know but he knew that God would know. He said, How can I perform this wickedness against God?

He said, None of the other employees may know, Potiphar may never know but my God will know. He knew that people may not find out but God would know. And there's a biblical principle. Because God's present should affect the way we work, should affect us in our lust.

We can't hide sin from God. Jeremiah 16, 17 actually reads this, For my eyes are upon all their ways. They are not hid from my face. Neither is there iniquity hid from my eyes. You can't hide sin from God. There's nothing we can do to hide sin from God.

And Joseph realized this. Joseph also knew that the sin was no small matter but it was a direct violation against God. Psalm 51, 4 says this, Against thee and thee only have I sinned.

We sin, it's not just against people but ultimately it's against the Lord himself because it's breaking his law in terms of transgressing him. Because Joseph knew and loved God, the thought of sinning against God was unpleasant to him.

[ 16 : 57 ] The same thing should be true for us. As believers, people who believe that God is present, who believe that God is present in our lives, who know that God is everywhere, it should affect the way we work but it also should affect our character, it should affect our lust.

His character persists under the persecution because he knew that God was present. 1 Corinthians 10, 13 reads this, Therefore, there is no temptation taken but as such is common to man but God is faithful.

Notice, God is there, he's faithful, who are not suffering and he attempted that which you are able but will make with the temptation a way of escape that you may be able to bear it. You know, God's also faithful in temptation and God makes a way out.

The Bible says he's faithful, God even helps in temptation but notice his character, how he works, ended up costing him something per se. Verse number 10, it came to pass, he spake to Joseph day by day.

Verse 11, it came to pass at about that time that Joseph went into the house to do his business, there was none of the men there with him. Joseph showed up to work one day. Verse 12, when she caught him by his garments, she made sure there was nobody there.

[ 17 : 52 ] Joseph walks in, she catches him by the coat and this is what the Bible, this is what she says, she says, lie with me and he left his garment in her hand and fled and got him out. You know something incredible about Joseph? He kept his character even when it cost him something.

That's the second time this guy's lost his coat in this chapter but he still maintained his character. I don't know what it is with him but he lost his coat. And it came to pass, verse 13, when she saw that he had fled and left his garment in her hand and was fled forth that she called him the men of the house and spake unto them saying, see, he has brought in a Hebrew unto us to mock us.

He came in and he would lie with me and I cried out with a loud voice. She sees what happens, sees his garment left in her hand, that love or lust she had for him turns into anger. She then calls and the other people says, look what this Hebrew did to me, look what this slave did to me.

Potter hears about it, sells this guy, puts this guy in prison. And what's crazy is Joseph suffered although he did right. He suffered because he did the right thing, which is terrible.

But look at this story. Look at the way he suffered. He even suffered well because in that cell with him was God Almighty. He was never truly alone and that changed the way things went.

[ 18 : 56 ] But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy. If God blessed Joseph in the pit, if he blessed Joseph as a slave, we shouldn't be surprised that he blessed Joseph in prison. None of these terrible circumstances changed or defeated God's plan and purpose for Joseph's life.

That is an incredible, comforting truth. God was with him in the pit. He was with him in the prison, with him in Potter's house. God was there with him. And in the darkest pit, the lowest low, the saddest situation, just know that God is still there.

We can still trust him. Joseph did the right thing. Put him into prison. He still obeyed God. Look what the Bible says in verse number 21. But Joseph, verse is 20. Joseph's master took him, put him into prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound, and there he was in the prison.

Verse 21. But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy. As Joseph was in jail, by himself, so he thought. You know, God was there. In the darkest pit and lowest, the saddest situation, God is still there.

And we can trust that. That should comfort us. Hebrews 13, 5 says this. He has said, he will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. Isaiah 43, 2 says this. When you pass through the waters, I will be with thee. When you pass through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.

[ 20 : 02 ] When you walk through fire, thou shalt not be burned. Neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. There's a truth there. In the trials, in the storms, in the prisons, in the lows, God's presence is there. Because ultimately, it's not God delivering us from the problems that helps us.

It's his presence in the problems that help us. He said all over the scripture. Those Hebrew boys who were put in the fire, God didn't remove the flame. He was just there with them. When the disciples got stuck in the storm, Christ was there with them in the middle of the storm.

God's presence goes with us into the problems. And it's God's presence in the trials that help. Look what he says in Exodus 33, verse number 14 and 15 to his people. He said, My presence shall go with thee and I'll give thee rest.

And he said unto them, If thy presence go not with me, carry us up not hence. Daniel 3.25 says this, Lo, I see four men walking about in the midst of the fire. They have no hurt. And the fourth is as the form of the Son of God.

It's God's presence that was there with them. Nehemiah 9.19 says this, In thy manifold mercies, thou forsookest not in the wilderness, the pillar of cloud, departing not from them by day, to lead them in the way through the pillar of fire by night, to show them light, in the way wherein they should go.

[ 21 : 00 ] God's presence led them in the wilderness. And it's God's presence in our life that brings us joy in the storm and the prison. Psalm 1611 reads this, But thou which show me the path of life, and thy presence is fullness of joy.

And if God's omnipresent, that means there's no spot we can go where we can't find joy in his presence. And that's what helped Joseph. Is God's presence in our life making a difference? Is it affecting our work ethic, our character, our integrity?

Can we suffer well? Are we able to live like he's really there in that trial? If you're in a trial, a storm, you're going through something, maybe you just came out of something, you're going into something, you need to know he's there.

His presence is there. Young person, get ready to go back to school when it's just you and your friends, you think nobody's there watching, God's presence is there. When you're home by yourself and you think nobody's there, God's presence is there.

When you're at work and it's really easy to cut that corner, it's really easy to clock out a few minutes early or whatever, God's presence is there. When you're hurting, you're depressed, you're low, think nobody's there with you, God's presence is there.

[ 22 : 00 ] When you're getting ready to do something big and audacious and bold, low, I'm with you always. His presence is there. His presence is in Nigeria, it's in China, it's in Taiwan, it's in your school, it's in your home, it's in that bad relationship, it's in that, his presence is there.

He'll take care of you. Maybe you don't have assurance of that presence. Let me remind you of what was said about Jesus. Behold, a virgin shall be with a child, shall bring forth a son, they shall call his name Emmanuel, which is being interpreted as God with us.

It's one thing to know that God's omnipresent, but as believers, we have the promise that God's presence will be with us. If you're here and you've trusted Jesus as your Savior, his presence is with you. It's not just there, but it's with you.

John 14, 6 says this, He said, I'm on the way, the truth, and life. No man cometh from the Father but by me. If you have known me, you have known my Father also. From henceforth, you shall know him and have seen him. God's presence, if you want it, you want it, you want it on your side, you want it for you, trust in Christ, and as Christians, we have the promise of God's presence there.

It's an incredible thing.