

Genesis 50:19

Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God?"

So, how do you know if you are *"in the place of God"*, or receiving God's favor like Joseph said that he was? A lot of us think it's when things are going really good, and there are no trials or issues and you feel like you are just resting in God's favor. Now that sounds all fine and dandy, because we usually associate those times when we cry out to God, and things turn out great, and we feel that God is with us and hears us. But then there are those times when things don't seem to be going good, we wonder if God is really with us or even hears our prayers.

Let's look at Joseph's life and see if God had ever left him, or if he was truly *"in the place of God"*, like he said he was in today's verse.

We remember Joseph's journey all started when his brothers threw him into a pit, and they were going to kill him, but they sold him into slavery instead.

† **Genesis 37:23-24** *So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the tunic of many colors that was on him. Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit was empty; there was no water in it.*

So here is Joseph, in the bottom of this pit, with no food or water, as he cries out to God to save him. But there is no answer from God, and what happens? He is sold into slavery and ends up in Egypt. So was God not with him or answering his call out for help?

While in Egypt, Joseph was sold to Potiphar, a captain of the guard in Egypt, and things were going good, even though he was not home yet. Then Potiphar's wife tried to get him to sleep with him, and he refused, and because he did, he was falsely accused of rape.

† **Genesis 39:19-20** *So it was, when his master heard the words which his wife spoke to him, saying, "Your servant did to me after this manner," that his anger was aroused. Then Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were confined. And he was there in the prison.*

Joseph cried out to God again to save him, but still no reply from God, and Potiphar had Joseph thrown into prison. Was God with Joseph or was He ignoring Joseph's cries out for help?

While in prison, Joseph found favor with the keeper of the prison and while in prison, two of his fellow inmates had dreams, and God spoke to Joseph and gave him the interpretation of their dreams and Joseph even asks them for help.

† **Genesis 40:14-15** *But remember me when it is well with you, and please show kindness to me; make mention of me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house. For indeed I was stolen away from the land of the Hebrews; and also I have done nothing here that they should put me into the dungeon.*

Three days later, both the men were released, one (the Baker) was hung and the other (the Butler, or cup bearer) was pardoned, yet he forgot about Joseph. Even if you read what Joseph went while in prison through in the Psalms, it says that: ***“He sent a man before them-- Joseph--who was sold as a slave. They hurt his feet with fetters, He was laid in irons.” Psalm 105:17-18*** Regardless what Hollywood would have us think, Joseph did not have it made while he was in prison, no, he still had shackles around his ankles and they rubbed his skin raw and he was in pain. Plus, I’m sure it stank in that place and he was away from his mom and dad who thought that he was dead. We think if only God would had heard and answer Joseph’s cries for help, he and his mom and dad would no longer be in pain, physically or emotionally.

All we can think is, poor Joseph, everyone forgot about him, his brothers who could had repented and went and bought Joseph back from the Egyptians, if not for Joseph’s sake at least for the sake of their father Jacob, who was crushed because he thought his son was dead. Potiphar probably found out his wife slept with other servants (men) and could have had Joseph released from prison. Even the Butler who forgot about Joseph for two years, and as far as we see things, God had forgotten him to.

But that’s how we see things, I mean, be honest, if this was anyone of us, at what point would we have given up and thrown in the towel thinking that this is just not worth it, God has forgotten all about me. But the truth is that God was with Joseph the entire time. Sure, he was in a pit, and Joseph cried out to God, and God did not answer the way Joseph would had wanted Him to. But still, God spared his life, because God was with Joseph, even when his life was the pits.

When Joseph was falsely accused of rape, Potiphar, being a captain of the guard could had easily had him executed, and no one would had given it a second thought. But once again, God spared his life, because God was with Joseph, once again not answering his cries out for help the way he would had wanted God to, but still God was with him and heard his cries, even in the depths of prison.

Finally, when God used Joseph to help someone else, you would think God was with him and would had gotten him out of prison three days later when the butler was released. After all, he did tell the Butler, ***“remember me when it is well with you, and please show kindness to me; make mention of me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house.”***

If it was any one of us, we would think that God cared more about the Butler then us, because God showed favor to the Butler. We would think that God used us, and in our obedience to help someone else, God should had gotten us out of the trouble we were in right away. But once

again, God was with Joseph, and even though God did not get him out of prison right away, as Joseph wanted God to do, God was still with him and heard his cries for help.

Well, if you know the entire story, you know that Joseph was released two years later, and was made second in command under Pharaoh, and God had kept him in prison this long to save the lives of thousands of people, because of a famine that was coming. But, what if God had done it Joseph's way the first time he cried out while he was in the pit? Joseph would have never gone to Egypt and thousands would have died.

Now, you may think that God could have used someone else in Egypt during the famine. Sure, God could have, but if God would have done it Joseph's way, the children of Israel would have never went to Egypt, and be in slavery for 400 years, and delivered by God, and lead by Moses into the Promised Land.

Simply, we do not see the entire story and we don't understand why it seems like God is not hearing us, when in reality, **God hears the cries of all His children**. Silence does not mean that God does not hear or that He does not care about you. Look at Joseph's life as an example, it just means that God has a better plan than you could even imagine, and you must trust in God and what He is doing. After all, if you can't trust God, then you are following the wrong god.

† **Isaiah 57:13 (NLT2)** *Let's see if your idols can save you when you cry to them for help. Why, a puff of wind can knock them down! If you just breathe on them, they fall over! But whoever trusts in me will inherit the land and possess my holy mountain.*

† **Psalm 50:15** *Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.*

† **2 Peter 3:9** *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*