

My Mam and Dad were both known as hard workers and they tried to instil in us that same quality. We were always encouraged to do our very best, even if it was something that was really too difficult for us to do or if it was something that we did not like doing. The result of this was that I very naively grew up thinking that it



was the norm for everyone to always aim high and do their very best in whatever they tackled. I had quite a shock when I left our little village school and went to the Senior School to discover that it was not actually the norm for everyone to do their best; in fact, worse than that, some seemed to delight in doing their best to achieve their minimal performance!

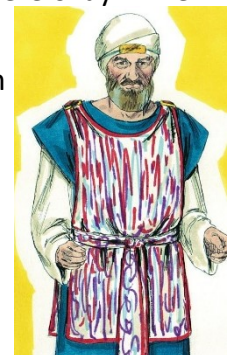
When I started work one of the things that I did was to train as a comptometer operator. Whilst looking for a permanent job I was sent to different offices on supply work. On one occasion, in a very large office, I saw a lady spend about twenty minutes typing a letter, which she then screwed up and tossed into the wastepaper bin. That was the only work she did that day. The remainder of the day was spent chatting to others, looking out of the window or twizzing round on her chair. I found it quite difficult to comprehend how someone could behave like that. Where was the boss? Would she still be paid? What about job satisfaction?



I firmly believe that God always wants us to do the very best we can in all things. We may not be very good at some things, but, that does not prevent us from aiming high and doing the very best of which we are capable.



Joseph was someone who was often in very adverse circumstances, but, he always aimed high. He was his Dad's favourite son so his brothers were jealous because of this and hated him. He had a couple of dreams that showed his parents and brothers bowing down to him. Now that made him really unpopular! One day his father asked him to go and find his brothers and check if they were okay. When they saw him approaching they planned to kill him. They stripped him of the posh coat that his father had made for him and threw him into a pit. They then decided to sell him to some passing Midianite traders. In all of these events there is not one word of reproach or criticism from Joseph.



Joseph was taken to Egypt and sold to Potiphar. This is what we read about him in **Genesis 39: 2 – 4. 'The Lord was with Joseph and he became a successful man. His master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord caused all that he did to prosper in his hands. He made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had.'**

There is no comment that Joseph was resentful because of his situation, in fact, the very opposite. The Lord was with him because he aimed high and Potiphar was blessed because of the attitude and presence of Joseph.

The next thing that happened to Joseph was that Potiphar's wife fancied him and planned a situation where it would seem that she had been with Joseph and that he had caused her to be unfaithful to her husband. Potiphar believed her lies and had Joseph put into prison. Once again there is no record of Joseph complaining about what had happened to him, but only a record of how he continued to aim high and make the best of a bad situation. The keeper of the prison put Joseph in charge of the other prisoners and we read in **Genesis 39:23**, *'The keeper of the prison paid no heed to anything that was in Joseph's care because the Lord was with him and whatever he did, the Lord made it prosper.'*

Whilst Joseph was in prison, two of the prisoners had dreams and Joseph was able to tell them the meaning of the dreams. One, a butler of Pharaoh, was going to be restored to his position, but the other, a baker, was going to be hung. Joseph asked the butler to put in a good word to Pharaoh for him; unfortunately, the butler completely forgot.



When another two years had passed, Pharaoh also had a dream that none of his wise men were able to interpret. Suddenly the butler remembered about Joseph and Pharaoh had him brought out of prison. When asked to interpret the dream Joseph's reply was, **Genesis 41: 10**. *'It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer.'* There was going to be seven years with a plentiful harvest, then seven years of famine. Pharaoh put Joseph in charge over all Egypt to organize the storage of harvest in the seven good years ready for the ensuing famine. What a transition – from prisoner to being in charge of the whole of Egypt! Notice that Joseph did not say a single word against the butler for his forgetfulness.

Joseph was 17 years old when he told his brothers of those initial dreams. He was 30 when put in charge of Egypt. 13 years of aiming high and doing his very best in the situations in which he found himself. No complaints. No pity-parties. No whinging. When Joseph was eventually reconciled with his brothers he said to them, **Genesis 45: 5 & 8**. *'Do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me. God sent me before you to preserve life.....So it was not you who sent me here but God.'*

Do you **ALWAYS** do your very best? We are all different and some attain more than others, but, we can each try to achieve the best that we are capable of doing. God's standard is perfection, but none of us are perfect. God constantly helps us to reach the standard that He has set for us in every aspect of our lives. Be like Joseph and **AIM HIGH**.

**Colossians 3: 23. 'Whatever your task, work heartily as serving the Lord.'**