

{ Day 257 }

No one from the east or the west or from the desert can exalt a man. But it is God who judges: He brings one down, he exalts another. **—Psalm 75:6-7**

Joseph experienced early promotion and demotion. He received favor from his father, but that got him in trouble with his ten older brothers. He was sold as a slave to the Egyptians, then found himself over the whole guard in Potiphar's house. He may have thought all the promises were coming to pass and he was on the permanent high road, but there was another dungeon ahead. He was sent to prison for a number of years. Finally he was entrusted with all the wealth of Egypt. Saul of Tarsus, who would become the apostle Paul, had a supernatural encounter with Jesus on the way to Damascus (Acts 9). The whole Christian world was talking about this new convert. But after his immediate international success, he spent at least fourteen years in the desert without anything happening in his ministry. Then, for a while, he had a successful healing and evangelism ministry, but then it was off to prison and beatings and death. These men learned to find their identities in God in the character-testing time of early success. Have you tasted success? Did you realize your character was being tested? God wants you to establish your identity fully in Him and learn to handle the favor of men in the same way you handled the obscurity. If you pass the test, you "graduate" to the next season—though you may wish you hadn't.

{ PRAYER STARTER }

Father, let me learn from Joseph and Paul the lesson of establishing my identity firmly in You alone. Let my heart be pure before You, and let me honor You, for You alone are the lifter of my head.

Promotion comes not from the east, west, or

south but from the north—from the Lord.