

1. To what extent does the concept of being “*in* the world but not *of* the world” apply to the Old Testament? What are some reasons why it does not apply? See Deut. 7:1-6; Josh. 23:7; Judges 2:1-3. Can you think of any reasons why it does apply? See Jer. 29:4-7.
2. Read Gen. 37:1-4, 12-13, 17-36. What was Joseph’s first experience with non-Hebrews (as recorded in the Bible)? What was his social status as compared with these foreign people? From his first two encounters with non-Hebrews (v. 28, 36), what would you expect Joseph’s attitude toward people of other tribes or cultures to be?
3. Read Gen. 39:2-6a, 19-23. From a human standpoint, what personal qualities would a young slave, who presumably could not speak or read the Egyptian language, need to become the manager of an Egyptian official’s household and then be put in charge of other prisoners? What natural feelings would he have to overcome?
4. To what does the Bible attribute Joseph’s success? Gen. 39:2-3, 21, 23. Does that mean that Joseph’s own attitude and actions toward the Egyptians were irrelevant? In other words, what is the relationship between God’s blessing and human effort? See 1 Pet. 2:11-12.
5. Skim the story of Joseph’s rise from prisoner to the second-highest position in the Egyptian government, Gen. 40:1 – 43:14; then read 43:15-32. Why didn’t the steward tell Joseph’s brothers who Joseph was and that he was going to eat with them? What kind of a relationship do you think the steward had with his master? What is symbolized by the fact that Joseph ate by himself and not with his brothers or the Egyptians? (v. 32)
6. Read Gen. 50:1-25. Toward the end of his life, what facts show that Joseph, despite his great success while he was *in* the world of the Egyptians, was never really *of* that world? Did Joseph ever doubt that he would ever see his family again? See Gen. 41:50-51.