

# LENT DEVOTION

Austin Christian Fellowship of India (ACFI)

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“Blessed are those who maintain righteousness, who constantly do what is right” (Psalm 106:3). Righteousness is not just a one-time deal or even a once-in-a-while deal but a life-time one. It is maintaining righteousness which requires ‘constantly’ thinking, behaving, and doing what is right in spite of the circumstances throughout our life time. “Gray hair is a crown of splendor and it is attained by a righteous life” (Proverbs 16:31). The outcome of "aging" and "maturing" takes time and the fruit of aging should be “righteousness.” Some are good starters but bad finishers, others are bad starters but good finishers. But God wants a believer to begin and finish well as he/she runs the race of faith with patience and perseverance (Hebrews 12:1). The season of Lent is a good time for self-analysis with regards to our 'consistency and constancy' on the road of righteousness.

The test for righteousness always comes when one is subjected to the “worries of this world and the deceitfulness of wealth” (Matthew 13:22). It happened to Joseph in the Old Testament. As a person who was disliked and disowned by his own brothers, Joseph ended up in Egypt at the house of Potiphar. He was shown mercy by Potiphar and was given the complete control of his entire household. Joseph was exposed to wealth, power, position, and freedom even though he was a slave. Added to that, as we read from the Scriptures, Potiphar’s wife made herself available to him. But Joseph maintained his righteousness and continued to do what was right - in spite of all these opportunities that were before him to amass everything he needed at a very young age. That was the most salient feature of his life-style. It did not end there. He was put in prison and of course, then the palace of Pharaoh of Egypt. Yet Joseph did not trade his righteousness to unrighteousness. "You man/woman of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness" (1 Timothy 6:11).

Most of the time, people complain that it is the opportunity or the temporal/personal need that caused them to fall back from righteousness! God has imparted His righteousness into those who put their trust in Jesus Christ and expects that a believer may end up being an opportunist or a person of situation. The ancient saying: “Be like a roman when in Rome” does not apply here. Maintaining righteousness is an ongoing process. And it is not an impossible one but a difficult one, of course. But the Lord expects that from every believer and He helps him/her in that venture with His Spirit. “The righteous man leads a blameless life, blessed are his children after him” (Proverbs 20:7). A righteous person not only “continues to sin” but also “continues to do what is right.” “No one born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in him; he/she cannot go on sinning, because he is born of God. Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his/her brother” (1 John 3:9—10).