

A WORD ON WORSHIP

Review of Message from May 28, 2017

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Genesis 39:7-9

It came about after these events that his master's wife looked with desire at Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me." But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, with me here, my master does not concern himself with anything in the house, and he has put all that he owns in my charge. There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?"



This chapter has much to teach us about facing temptation. We often look for temptation to come in some dramatic fashion and in one momentous event. When we think of Joseph and Potiphar's wife, we think only of the one incident, the one described in verses 11 and 12. The significance of this incident is that it was the final attempt to seduce Joseph. By his refusal and running off without his garment, Potiphar's wife brought about the false accusation of Joseph which led to his imprisonment. The temptation of Joseph took place "day after day" and in a variety of forms. Joseph did not deal with temptation victoriously in one momentous occasion, but in the day-to-day events of life. More than this, the victory which Joseph won over sin on that last occasion was directly related to his previous decisions.

A mistake that we often make is to look for our tests to come in some dramatic confrontation where the issues are crystal clear. By thinking this way we tend to overlook the necessity for standing apart from sin in the mundane and seemingly insignificant matters of daily living. Joseph had settled the issue at hand long before this final confrontation. That decision had to do with the use or misuse of his master's possessions. As a slave he faced the temptation of taking things which belonged to Potiphar and using them for his own benefit. Practicing honesty in the smaller matters made it much easier for him to resist the temptation to take advantage of his master's wife. How we handle the day-to-day temptations of life often determines how we will face the major issues that arise only occasionally.

The temptation which Joseph successfully resisted was not one that pictures the ideal situation for the Christian. I said to someone the other day, "Most Christians want to resist temptation, but they want to be propositioned first." For Joseph, just the pursuit by Potiphar's wife could have been ego inflating. Think of the fact that a woman finds you attractive and desires to be with you. In most of our situations we cannot say that the temptations we face are beyond our control, for we are not a slave like Joseph was. Many of the temptations we face are those which we have allowed, and perhaps even encouraged.

Joseph's experience gives us valuable insight into the words of our Lord when He taught us to pray, "And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Matthew 6:13). Our Lord was not suggesting that God needs to be begged not to tempt us, but he was telling us that the desire of our hearts should be that we not only resist sin, but also shun situations which will solicit us to sin. In this sense, we should never desire to reproduce or repeat Joseph's victory over this particular temptation. His circumstances do not provide us with an ideal, but his attitude not to encounter the temptation of this woman by so much as having any contact with her whatsoever gives us an example to follow.

Sunrise Community Church
Come acknowledge the Lord in our midst
EVERY SUNDAY BEGINNING AT 8:45 A.M.

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