

A LIFE OF INTEGRITY Sunday School- January 1, 2012

Unifying Topic: GOD WATCHES OVER JOSEPH

Lesson Text

I. An Attempted Seduction (Genesis 39:7-10)

II. Joseph Remained Faithful (Genesis 39:11-21)

The Main Thought: There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? (Genesis 39:9, KJV).

Unifying Principle: Faithfulness and loyalty in our relationships determine our behavior in difficult situations. How do faithfulness and loyalty combine to help people make decisions about their life actions? Potiphar's complete faith in Joseph's integrity, Joseph's faith in and loyalty to God, and Joseph's loyalty to Potiphar led Joseph to decline his mistress' sexual demands.

Lesson Aim: To investigate the details of Joseph's resistance to the attempted seduction of Potiphar's wife.

Life aim: To examine the need for faithfulness and loyalty in our personal relationships.

- 39:7 And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me.
- 39:8 But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand;
- 39:9 There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?
- 39:10 And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her.
- 39:11 And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within.
- 39:12 And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out.
- 39:13 And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth,
- 39:14 That she called unto the men of her house, and spake unto them, saying, See, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us; he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice:
- 39:15 And it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out.
- 39:16 And she laid up his garment by her, until his lord came home.
- 39:17 And she spake unto him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant, which thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me:
- 39:18 And it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled out.
- 39:19 And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled.
- 39:20 And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison.
- 39:21 But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

HISTORY:

Joseph was the favorite son of his father Jacob. His father Jacob gives him a coat of many colors which in turned made the rest of his brothers jealous. On top of that, Joseph was a dreamer which didn't set well with the brothers and they came up with the scheme to get rid of him. They sold Joseph to a band of Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver where they took him to Egypt.

¹So often in the Bible and in daily life, we see the results of those who do not endure the temptation to sin. Over and over again, we are warned of the dangers of temptation. However, this story shows us one who was tempted and yet did not sin (1 Corinthians 10:13). Joseph is an example to us all in his resistance to temptation.

Genesis 39: 1-6

Joseph was sold to an Officer of Pharaoh, who was an Egyptian; captain of the guard. He was purchased at the hands of the Ishmaelites and brought down to Egypt. Egypt is a type of the world and in the world we will have to deal with temptation. Joseph was sold as a slave having no power of his own. No one would listen to him and no one would come to his aid. ²In time Potiphar makes Joseph the overseer of everything in his house, and has such trust in Joseph that he doesn't worry about any of the affairs of his household other than getting himself to dinner on time! It seems that everything

¹ <http://www.learnthebible.org/sunday-school-outlines/enduring-temptation.html>

² www.shades.org/files/Ministries/.../Lessons/.../sscurr_12.04.2011.pdf

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

Joseph touches turns to gold, and Potiphar sees that the blessing on his household is a direct result of Joseph's commitment to his God. Joseph has made the decision that God is still good even when things are not good for him, and he does not let his circumstances skew his view of God. He "keeps his head up" and does the right thing, even when all seems lost. Joseph's positive attitude speaks volumes to Potiphar (and probably everyone in his household also). Potiphar trusts Joseph with everything he owns. Potiphar placed everything he owned into Joseph's care. The only possession that Potiphar knew he had was the bread he would sit down to eat at a meal. We learn that Joseph is a very handsome, good-looking man. Joseph became stronger through blessings: he learned leadership and hard work.

LESSON:

Genesis 39:7-10 An Attempted Seduction

39:7 And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me.

God allowed Joseph to be tempted so that he could learn self-denial, discipline, and control. Joseph was tempted by Potiphar's wife to have sex. Her eyes were gaged upon Joseph. We are often tempted by what we see. As she looked and looked, she became more and more attracted to Joseph. She soon saw that she was getting nowhere with suggestive invitations. She was burning with lust and wanted Joseph so badly that she finally got up the courage to be bold. On a day when no one else was within hearing distance, she came right out and asked Joseph to go to bed with her. Joseph has an opportunity to sin, and no one will ever know. His response to Potiphar's wife's ongoing advances, if he submitted, he would know sexual pleasure probably just about any time he wanted her and gain great advantages that could result from her favor. Joseph needed what we need: to learn to control his body, thoughts, and passions.

39:8 But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand; Joseph resisted the temptation and refused to have sex with her. But note; he was not harsh, he deliberately explained his position. He gave her the very reasons why he could not go to bed with her. He rejected her because his master trusted him, and he must not violate his master's trust. Potiphar trusted Joseph to be around his wife, and therefore Joseph could not violate and break that trust. Joseph was right to refuse. Potiphar's wife was doing an evil thing. But God used her evil deed for a good purpose. He used her evil deed in his plan to prepare Joseph for his future work.

39:9 There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? Joseph was the powerful man in the house because Potiphar had placed him in charge of all in his house except him having liberty with his wife. Even though there was none greater in the house, Joseph knew to keep a distance from Potiphar's wife. Joseph called it a great wickedness to go to bed with her and sin against God.

1. She was another man's wife and that man was his master.
2. He was trusted by his master and didn't want to violate that trust.
3. Even if nobody else found out about it, God would know it and be displeased.

All she asked for was a moment of pleasure, but to Joseph, this was a great wickedness against God. Sin is sin and this was illicit sex that would destroy trust. He could not hurt God, could not cut God's heart and cause pain for God. God had saved and blessed him so much that there was no way that Joseph was going to damage the relationship he had with God. And he knew that sin would sever his relationship with God.

39:10 And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her. She most likely had made suggestive remarks and invitations before the bold approach taken here. But Joseph no doubt always turned the conversations to another subject and walked away when he could. He had to fight this battle day after day, but he succeeded. Joseph had to tell her no everyday!

Genesis 39:11-21 Joseph Remained Faithful

39:11 And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within. She planned a scheme whereby she could actually assault Joseph. She somehow got rid of all the male servants in the section of the house where Joseph worked. We know that temptation is not from God. Temptation is always from within. Some people even try to blame God for their sins, but God is not responsible for the things that tempt you! God tests His children, but He always sets the test up so that we can pass. Satan tempts us, but always to make us fail!

39:12 And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him

out. When Joseph entered to go to his office, she surprised him by grabbing him and propositioning him—ready to rape him if possible. What did Joseph do? To deny her probably meant arousing her wrath and vengeance. Joseph ran out of the house. He turned away from her and fled so quickly that she yanked his cloak off. She was still holding it in her hand.

39:13 And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth, Joseph was put in a situation he had not imagined or dreamed. He became a slave in Egypt, placed in a situation in which his Egyptian master's wife appeared to be bored with her life, wanting to add some personal excitement to it. He was handsome and well-built. Evidently Potiphar's wife had everything, was in a position of power and honor, and still she was alone and empty. Isn't this what our society tells us every day in our magazine articles, books, and TV programs? Just because you're breathing doesn't mean you're living! Now, she had his garment. How could he prove he had not slept with her? Few persons ever escape the temptation to have sex outside of marriage. Sex is a strong and normal drive given by God. But God gave it for marriage and for marriage alone. Two things to remember:

1. God strongly prohibits sex outside of marriage (that is, true marriage, marriage between a man and a woman).
2. God always makes a way for us to escape.

39:14 That she called unto the men of her house, and spake unto them, saying, See, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us; he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice: Potiphar's wife was a woman scorned, and a woman scorned often becomes a woman of rage. She turned against Joseph more quickly than she had turned to him. She now rejected him because he had rejected her, and she set out to humiliate and hurt him as much as she could.

1. She cried out for the men household servants to come running. She was telling those around her that her husband brought "*this Hebrew*", in to mock us. She was trying to arouse prejudice against him.
2. Then she literally cried rape with a loud voice!

39:15 And it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out. She is now telling her story by lying to the other men servants, setting up Joseph. She had to tell that she cried out for help, or she would be stoned to death. His friends, fellows workers, and servants were there listening to the charges against Joseph. Think of the utter embarrassment and humiliation of Joseph. He was no doubt taken into custody by some of the servants or guards of her husband until her husband returned home.

39:16 And she laid up his garment by her, until his lord came home. She attempted to prove her charge by presenting the cloak of Joseph as evidence. This is the second time we hear about a garment of Joseph being taken. The first was when his brothers took his coat of many colors from him and now we hear of Potiphar's wife laying hold of his garment. They both tried to hide their sin with the garment. Joseph might have lost his garment but he kept his character.

39:17 And she spake unto him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant, which thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me: She is now lying and falsely accusing Joseph to her husband as he arrived home. Notice how she somehow boxed her husband in by laying the blame at his feet: "*the Hebrew slave which you brought into the house attacked me.*" She had set herself up as the faithful and innocent wife.

39:18 And it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled out. She is claiming that at her screams for help he fled! One thing a man will not stand for is anyone making advances to his wife. Potiphar had no way of knowing that she was lying, so he became furious with Joseph.

39:19 And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled. So, when Potiphar heard this story, his anger burned; never mind getting the other side of the story. Joseph was guilty in the eyes of his master.

39:20 And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison. After being falsely accused and seemingly not even being given the opportunity to defend himself, Joseph is thrown in jail. ³Joseph is thrown into jail with the common criminals. How could such a thing happen? It happened because the world cannot understand a believer with conviction. That's why Joseph was locked up. He knew who he was and he acted on his convictions. His reward was a quick trip to jail with common criminals.

39:21 But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. God honors those who dare to say no. It may not appear that way at first. But he does. Things may not work out exactly like we think they will. But when we have the courage to say No to temptation, God takes care of the details. In the end, we will never be disappointed. Remember, it's always better to do right the first time. The Lord was with

³ <http://www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/1999-05-30-Faithful-to-the-Tempted/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. Although he ends up in jail, even there he prospers because “the Lord was with him.” In between he proves himself worthy of greatness because he knew how to say No.

SUMMARY:

1-6 ⁴Joseph was blessed, wonderfully blessed, even in the house where he was a slave. God's presence with us makes all we do prosperous. Good men are the blessings of the place where they live. Here was a wicked family blessed for the sake of one good servant in it.

7-12 Potiphar's wife showed that her heart was fully set to do evil. But Joseph, by the grace of God, was enabled to resist and overcome this temptation; and his escape was as great an instance of the Divine power, as the deliverance of the three children out of the fiery furnace. The tempter was his mistress, one whose favour would help him forward; and it was at his utmost peril if he slighted her, and made her his enemy. The almighty grace of God enabled Joseph to overcome this assault of the enemy. Three arguments Joseph urges upon himself:

1. He considers who he was that was tempted—One in covenant with God, who professed religion and relation to Him.
2. What the sin was to which he was tempted. Others might look upon it as a small matter; but Joseph did not think so. Call sin by its own name, and never lessen it. Let sins of this nature always be looked upon as great wickedness; as exceedingly sinful.
3. Against whom he was tempted to sin—against God. Sin is against God, against his nature and his dominion, against his love and his design. If we mean not to do iniquity, let us flee as a bird from the snare and as a roe from the hunter.

13-18 It is no new thing for the best of men to be falsely accused of the worst of crimes, by those who themselves are the worst of criminals. It is well there is a day of discovery coming, in which all shall appear in their true characters.

19-21 Joseph's master believed the accusation. Potiphar, it is likely, chose that prison, because it was the worst; but God designed to open the way to Joseph's honour. Joseph was owned and righted by his God. He was away from all his friends and relations; he had none to help or comfort him; but the Lord was with Joseph, and showed him mercy. Those that have a good conscience in a prison, have a good God there. God gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison; he trusted him to manage the affairs of the prison. A good man will do good wherever he is, and will be a blessing even in bonds and banishment. Let us not forget, through Joseph, to look unto Jesus, who suffered being tempted, yet without sin; who was slandered, and persecuted, and imprisoned, but without cause; who by the cross ascended to the throne. May we be enabled to follow the same path in submitting and in suffering, to the same place of glory.

Integrity depicts our honor, which is a great trait to have no matter where we may be. The enemy is always trying to trick us up and lead us down the road of dishonesty. It's always an honor to honor God. He watches everything we do.

APPLICATION:

Being true to yourself shows that being true to God comes easy.

⁴ http://www.smcsundayschool.com/Bible%20Story%20&%20Quiz/Gensis/genesis_39__notes.htm
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>