

03 – PORTRAIT OF A WINNER – (Joseph)

Gen. 39:2-10 – “Potiphar’s wife soon began to look at him lustfully. ‘Come and sleep with me’, she demanded. But Joseph refused. ‘Look,’ he told her, ‘My master trusts me with everything in his entire household. No one here has more authority than I do. He has held back nothing from me, except you, because you are his wife. How could I do such a wicked thing? It would be a great sin against God. She kept putting pressure on Joseph, day after day ... and he kept out of her way ...’”

What Did Satan Do?

- ✓ Satan’s big strategy here is *persistence*. The devil doesn’t give up because you resisted him once! He keeps working on you. (That’s part of his nature.) In fact, the concept of persistence is found in the word “devil” itself.
- ✓ The word devil (diabolos) comes from two words. “Dia” which means “to penetrate” or to “go through”. And “ballo”, meaning “to throw”. When you put them together, it means to repeatedly throw thoughts and temptations at the mind – striking *again and again* until it wears the person down and penetrates their defenses. That’s what the devil did with Eve and tried with Joseph. “(Potiphar’s wife) kept putting pressure on Joseph, day after day.”

What Did Joseph Do? (9 Things)

- ✓ Go back to the beginning of the passage: “Potiphar’s wife soon began to look at him lustfully. ‘Come and sleep with me,’ she demanded. But Joseph refused. ‘Look,’ he told her, ‘My master trusts me with everything in his entire household. No one here has more authority than I do. He has held back nothing from me, except you, because you are his wife. How could I do such a wicked thing? **It would be a great sin against God.**’”

1.) He Considered God

- ✓ It’s mentioned last in the passage, but I’m sure it was first in Joseph’s

thinking. “**It would be a great sin AGAINST GOD.**” One of the greatest defenses against temptation, is a love for God. (James 1:2 – Those two thoughts are connected. The ability to resist comes from the love you have for God.)

2.) He Didn’t Soften His View of Sin

- ✓ Joseph saw sin for what it was. He didn’t say, “It would be a mistake”. Or “it would be a lapse of judgment”. Or “it wouldn’t be healthy behavior.” He said, “How could I do such a *wicked* thing?” Sin is easier to resist when you see sin for what it is. It’s not “unhealthy”. It’s “wicked”.

3.) He Considered Her Husband

- ✓ “**My master** has held nothing back from me except you, because you are his wife.” I love what he says next, “**How could I?**” He recognized how selfish it would be! (This was completely missing in David’s situation. He gave *no* thought to Uriah the Hittite, except for how to silence him permanently. But Joseph thought of how it would affect Potiphar.) He put himself into her husband’s shoes (Prov. 6:34). And it helped him to resist.

4.) Joseph Refused to Feel Deprived. (He was thankful for what he had.)

- ✓ “My master trusts me with everything in his entire household. **No one here has more authority than I do.**” He was a slave, but Potiphar had been good to him. Refusing to feel “hard done by” pulls the teeth out of temptation.

5.) He Kept His Eyes on the Word

- ✓ Before Satan can make inroads into your life, he’s got to separate you from the Word.

James 1:14 – “But **every man is tempted, when he is drawn away ...**”

- ✓ (Drawn away from what? The Word.) The Word is what will keep

you on the right path. Satan has to get you to question the Word – (like he did with Eve) – or he’s got to somehow separate you from it. If you have the Word in the forefront of your thinking, it’ll protect you.

Psalm 119:11 – “Thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against thee.”

- ✓ Before Satan can make inroads into your life, He has to separate you from the Word. That’s why it’s so important to have a daily time in the Word. Joseph refused to be drawn away from the Word.

6.) He Distanced Himself

Verse 10 – “She kept putting pressure on Joseph, day after day, but he refused to sleep with her, and **he kept out of her way as much as possible.**”

- ✓ Think about this. Joseph couldn’t just quit his job. He had been *sold* to Potiphar. (Maybe *you* can walk away from *your* situation. And, in some cases, maybe you should! But Joseph couldn’t.) So, he did the next best thing. “... he kept out of her way as much as possible.”

7.) He MUST Have Controlled His Thought Life

- ✓ He was as “human” as we are. When Joseph got home, what do you suppose Satan was bringing to his mind? What she *said*. How she *looked*. How she *smelled*. And the devil was whispering in his ear: “She wants you! She’s not gonna tell! Who’s ever gonna know?” Joseph must have controlled those thoughts. Otherwise, he’d have talked himself into it. (He won the “looking and longing” battle.)

8.) He **Kept On** Saying “No”

- ✓ This is the key to long-term victory. He was *persistent* in his resistance. How could he do that? **When he walked in every day, he walked in with his mind made up.** If you don’t make up your mind *before* you’re under the pressure of temptation, you’ll probably fold. The time to decide to not take drugs is BEFORE your friends are

pressuring you. The time to decide to not cheat on your wife is *before* the opportunity comes up. Joseph walked in every day, *already knowing* how he’d respond.

9.) He Ran When the Pressure Was Too Great

- ✓ “She kept putting pressure on Joseph, day after day, but he refused to sleep with her, and he kept out of her way as much as possible. One day, however, no one else was around when he went in to do his work. She came and grabbed him by his cloak, demanding, ‘Come on, sleep with me!’ Joseph tore himself away, but he left his cloak in her hand as he ran from the house.”
- ✓ The New Testament counterpart of this is 2 Timothy 2:22 – “Flee youthful lusts.” Sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do is run. If you feel yourself weakening, don’t stand around trying to be strong. Don’t stand around and pray. Put on your Nike’s and get out of there!
- ✓ That’s how Joseph handled temptation. He had some really good strategies. (We’ll put all these stories together and draw up a master strategy later.) Let’s look at someone else that blew it.

Peter’s Denial of Jesus

Matt. 26:31-41 – “On the way, Jesus told them, ‘Tonight all of you will desert me. For the Scriptures say, ‘I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’ But after I have been raised from the dead, I will go ahead of you to Galilee and meet you there.’ Peter declared, ‘Even if everyone else deserts you, I will never desert you.’”

- ✓ This might look like a minor thing, but you’ll notice a running theme with Peter. (He does this a couple of times in the story.) It seems like Peter had too much confidence in his own ability. He was the first to jump up and say, “Even if these other guys deny you, I never will.” (Think about that! When Jesus – the Son of God – said, “You’re going to deny me” ... He said, “No Jesus, you’re wrong!”)

- ✓ In the face of temptation: There's nothing like a healthy realization that you're human, and under the right set of circumstances, even *you* could fall.

1 Cor. 10:12 – *“Therefore let the one who thinks he stands firm [immune to temptation, being overconfident and self-righteous], take care that he does not fall [into sin] ...” (Amp. See also MSG)*

- ✓ Peter's SELF-confident here. Jesus is going to tell him how he can stand, but he's going to miss it, because he doesn't think he's at risk. Jesus replied, 'I tell you the truth, Peter – this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny three times that you even know me.' 'No!' Peter insisted. (When Peter said he wouldn't deny Jesus, I believe he really meant it. He was just oblivious to his weakness.)

v. 36 – *“Then Jesus went with them to Gethsemane, and he said, ‘Stay here while I go over there to pray.’ He took Peter, James and John, and he became anguished and distressed. He told them, ‘My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch (pray) with me.’ Then he returned to the disciples and found them asleep. He **said to Peter, ‘Couldn’t you watch with me even one hour? Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation.** For the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak!’”*

- ✓ What's going to give Peter the strength to “not give in”? Prayer.
- ✓ The things that God gives us to do – (like stay in the Word, pray, worship, go to church) – those are the things that get us safely through this life. We ignore them at our own peril. Peter wouldn't get “prayed up”, and it resulted in him denying the Lord.
- ✓ Notice the other statement Jesus made. “The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” That's where we find ourselves as Christians. Most people who fall, don't set out *wanting* to fall. Our spirit is willing. The problem is our flesh. What did Jesus prescribe? Prayer. ONE HOUR would have done it! Think about that. One hour was the difference between betraying the Lord or standing strong. Prayer helps you overcome the weakness of the flesh.