

Personal Purity In A Culture Of Sexual Malice

Genesis 39:6-23

I. How To Prepare For Temptation (6-7)

- A. _____ Pulls Us From A Wholesome Appreciation Of A Capable And Attractive Person/Thing To A Covetousness Of Him/Her/It (6-7a; cf. Prov 22:3; 7:7-8)
- B. _____ Crosses The Line From Tempting Considerations To Sinful Action (7b)

II. How To Think Through Temptation (8-9)

- A. **Refusal:** How Can I Act _____? (8a; cf. 1 Pet 5:8-9)
- B. **Respect:** How Can I Hurt Someone Who Has Been _____ To Me? (8b-9a)
- C. **Relationships:** How Can I Sin With Someone Else's _____? (9b)
- D. **Righteousness:** How Can I Sin Against The God Who _____ Me? (9c)

III. How To Respond To Temptation (10-26)

- A. **Persistently:** Don't Let Your _____ Wear Down (10)
- B. **Attentively:** Be Aware Of Your _____ Circumstances (11; cf. Prov 22:3)
- C. **Evasively:** _____ Sexual Temptation (12; cf. 2 Tim 2:22; James 4:7-8)

IV. How To Manage The Price For Resisting Temptation (13-15)

- A. Our Possessions/Finances May Take A Hit (13)
- B. Our Reputation May Take A Hit (14)
- C. Our Comfort-Zone Will Take A Hit (15)

V. How To Prepare For The Rejected Tempter's Response (16-23; cf. Prov 7:4-5)

- A. They May Blame-shift Responsibility Away From Themselves (16-17)
- B. They May Emotionally Manipulate Anyone They Can Convince (18)
- C. They May Sway The "He Said, She Said" Debate Because Of Their Influence (19)
- D. They May Take Away Our Freedom To Grant Them A Temporary Reprieve (20)

VI. How To Find Comfort In Obedience When Your World Turns Upside Down (21-23)

- A. God's Presence And Steadfast Love Is All We Need (21a)
- B. Not Everyone Will Appreciate Your Integrity, But Some Will (21b-23)

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III. How To Respond To Temptation (10-26)

- A. Persistently: Don't Let Your Resistance Wear Down (10)
- B. Attentively: Be Aware Of Your Vulnerable Circumstances (11; cf. Prov 22:3)
- C. Evasively: Flee Sexual Temptation (12; cf. 2 Tim 2:22; James 4:7-8)

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Genesis 39:6-23 (ESV) 6 So he left all that he had in Joseph's charge, and because of him he had no concern about anything but the food he ate. Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. 7 And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, "Lie with me." 8 But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, because of me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my charge. 9 He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" 10 And as she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie beside her or to be with her.

11 But one day, when he went into the house to do his work and none of the men of the house was there in the house, 12 she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand and fled and got out of the house. 13 And as soon as she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and had fled out of the house, 14 she called to the men of her household and said to them, "See, he has brought among us a Hebrew to laugh at us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice. 15 And as soon as he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried out, he left his garment beside me and fled and got out of the house." 16 Then she laid up his garment by her until his master came home, 17 and she told him the same story, saying, "The Hebrew servant, whom you have brought among us, came in to me to laugh at me. 18 But as soon as I lifted up my voice and cried, he left his garment beside me and fled out of the house."

19 As soon as his master heard the words that his wife spoke to him, "This is the way your servant treated me," his anger was kindled. 20 And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined, and he was there in prison. 21 But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. 22 And the keeper of the prison put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners who were in the prison. Whatever was done there, he was the one who did it. 23 The keeper of the prison paid no attention to anything that was in Joseph's charge, because the Lord was with him. And whatever he did, the Lord made it succeed.

Introduction:

- More prominent entertainers, politicians and athletes were exposed this week for sexual impropriety
- Congress has a slush fund that has paid out \$17 million in the last 20 years to cover up the sexual misconduct of our elected Congressmen. This fund is paid for by our taxes.
- God's Purpose for Sex
- God's Protection Of Holiness

I. How To Prepare For Temptation (6-7)

- Bruce Wilkinson, in *Personal Holiness In Times Of Temptation*, wrote of a meeting with 40 men asking them the 3 biggest temptations men face today. Man instantly called out: #1 – Sex, #2 – Sex and #3 – Sex.
- R. Kent Hughes: “Sensuality is easily the biggest obstacle to godliness...today and is wreaking havoc in the church. Godliness and sensuality are mutually exclusive and those in the grasp of sensuality can never rise to godliness while its sweaty grip.”
- C. S. Lewis: “Hell is the only place outside of heaven where we can be safe from the dangers of love.”

A. **Temptation Pulls Us From A Wholesome Appreciation Of A Capable And Attractive Person/Thing To A Covetousness Of Him/Her/It (6-7a)**

6 So he left all that he had in Joseph's charge, and because of him he had no concern about anything but the food he ate. Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. 7a And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph

- Joseph was a young man with the same sexual desires of other young men in their early 20's
- He was also a slave
- How tempting it might have been to have a powerful woman desire him – it could have satisfied his physical urges and promote him in other favorable ways in the community
- He was also handsome
- The Old Testament gives this description 4x: Joseph, Saul, David and Absalom
- There is an extra measure of temptation for those who are both handsome and successful that many of us don't have to deal with
- “cast her eyes” = to look on with desire
- this is more than a glance of appreciation, this was lustful
- E.g. The new 49'ers QB – all the radio guys said if he doesn't work out in football, he can be a movie star
- You don't think the QB has to deal with more attention than the Left Guard?
- She was a woman who was married to a very powerful man may have been away at war a lot
- She felt this young and handsome Joseph could be used to meet her unfulfilled needs
- The Scriptures don't say she was old and unattractive
- But Moses doesn't give us her name – just her title: “**master's wife**”
- Bruce Waltke cites Sarna who states the irony: “She, the mistress of the house, is a slave to her lust for her husband's slave!” (Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary*, p. 520)
- Isn't it interesting that the 3 realms we are hearing the most about sexual malice is in: entertainment, politics, and sports?
- The 3 realms where the aspects of fame and power are so dynamic
- And if the Church becomes about power and not serving, the Church will be just as susceptible to this temptation as those in entertainment, politics and sports.
- Ie/ The #metoo movement also has a #churchtoo version

Proverbs 22:3 The prudent sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it.

But in contrast:

Proverbs 7:7-8 7 and I have seen among the simple, I have perceived among the youths, a young man lacking sense, 8 passing along the street near her corner, taking the road to her house

B. Sin Crosses The Line From Tempting Considerations To Sinful Action (7b)

7b and said, "Lie with me."

- It's one thing to admire a handsome man or an attractive lady, it's another thing to want to have unbiblical sexual relationships with them
- If Mrs. Potiphar wasn't something – she wasn't indirect or subtle

The Analysis Of The Affair

(summarized from Tom Eisenman's *Temptation Men Face*, pp. 88-93)

- "Our two enemies here are rationalization and denial. We rationalize when we give acceptable reasons for unacceptable thoughts, feelings and behaviors. Denial is our often intense refusal to recognize the truth about our thoughts, feelings and behaviors." (p. 88)
- 1. Readiness** – The first step is the condition of emotional readiness. Something is occurring in a man's life that has him leaning away from the marriage.
 - 2. Alertness** – The second stage in the affair process is a growing awareness of a particular person in our web of relationships....The innocent thoughts can turn to fantasizing about her.
 - 3. Innocent Meeting** – During the time of heightened awareness of the other woman, there can be truly innocent, chance meeting, often legitimate business contacts that can potentially build the relationship. This is the stage where some flirtation can develop, prolonged eye contact, interchange of harmless-sounding sexual innuendo, enticing body language. Both people involved at this point would deny any real interest in each other.
 - 4. Intentional Meeting** – Meetings occur frequently which appear to be by chance when in reality one person has acted in such a way to increase the likelihood of meeting.
 - 5. Public Linger** – The man and woman now spend time together while in group settings....There is a growing interest in each other at this point... The man thinks: "It's fine to focus on her. Nothing can happen. We're with others."
 - 6. Private Linger** – Soon the man and woman find that they are still together long after the others have left. There is now a growing excitement in being together alone.

It is a seductive feeling, enticing. Conversation shifts from ideas to feelings. Caring is shared.

7. **Purposeful Isolating** – Now the man and woman begin to plan times alone for “legitimate” purposes. The man asks the woman if she will meet and help him sort out his marital problems. Or the woman asks the man to stay late at the office to lend his expertise to a certain project she’s trying to wrap up. The couple would still deny any suggestion that their relationship was not completely appropriate. At home the man’s wife might notice a decrease in verbal and nonverbal communication. He seems suddenly detached, cool, almost formal in his relating.
8. **Pleasurable Isolating** – Now the man and woman are planning times alone with each other for the sheer enjoyment and fun of being together. The relationship takes on a youthful euphoria. There is the shared experience of excitement and adventure. There is more intimacy. The man and woman are touching.
9. **Affectionate Embracing** – There is embracing without letting go. There is increased touching and playful caressing....The rationalization is that there is nothing wrong with physically expressing support for one another.
10. **Passionate Embracing** – Affectionate touching and embracing lead to passionate interchanges....The couple will still rationalize and say that it is fine to get aroused because it is innocent and unplanned. “Besides, my wife no longer makes me feel this way,” the man thinks.
11. **Capitulation** – The couple gives in to sexual intercourse. Denial is eliminated at this stage. There is no way that they can deny the reality of what has occurred between them.
12. **Acceptance** – Here the man and woman admit to themselves and to each other that they are truly having an affair. If they continue their relationship from this point, it is out of mutual choice. Here the emotional investment in the affair is at its peak, and the emotional investment in the marriage is at its lowest point.

II. How To Think Through Temptation (8-9)

- God is testing Joseph’s integrity
- Ie/ To test a truss or a bridge – you put weight on it to see if it will survive

- Abraham didn’t pass the test when he was in Egypt in giving his wife to the Pharaoh
- Joseph will succeed morally and prosperously in Egypt

- Joseph & Judah are also contrasted
- Ie/ Genesis reads like a Consumer Report product test – testing 2 cars or cameras side by side – but in Gen 38-39, it’s 2 brothers: Judah and Joseph
 - Judah and Joseph were brothers
 - Both were tested

- Erwin Lutzer: "Temptation is not a sin; it is a call to battle."
- John Churton Collins : "We are no more responsible for the evil thoughts that pass through our minds than a scarecrow for the birds which fly over the seedplot he has to guard. The sole responsibility in each case is to prevent them from settling."

A. Refusal: How Can I Act Unrighteously? (8a; cf. 1 Pet 5:8-9)

8a But he refused

- **Just Say NO!**
- Joseph didn't reason with her
- He didn't try to let her down easily
- He just refused
- Allen P. Ross: "His refusal was possible because he was convinced that 1) God had chosen him for a special task and 2) God had been prospering him to give him the responsibilities that he had. He had evidence of God's plan in his rise from the pit and enjoyment of God's presence." (*Creation & Blessing*, p. 626)

1 Peter 5:8-9 8 Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9 Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

B. Respect: How Can I Hurt Someone Who Has Been Good To Me? (8b-9a)

8b and said to his master's wife, "Behold, because of me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my charge. 9a He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me

- Joseph was loyal to Potiphar
- He enjoyed Potiphar's trust and worked all his life to gain it
- Why would he betray Potiphar at this point?
 - Reasons To: Single, Slave, Have Desires
 - Reasons Not To: God trusts me, Potiphar trusts me, Mrs. Potiphar is just trouble!
 - "I knew you were trouble when you walked in"

C. Relationships: How Can I Sin With Someone Else's Spouse? (9b)

9b except you, because you are his wife.

- She needed to be reminded that she is Potiphar's wife and Joseph wanted to keep that relationship in the forefront of his relationship with her
- The woman you lust for could be someone's wife, daughter or mother – we must remember that
- Ie/ King David was given clear confirmation from his servant that the woman he was lusting after was the wife of Uriah the Hittite

- normal reference of individuals relates them to their father, grandfather, etc. in the lineage (“daughter of Eliam”)
- Eliam is one of his close friends
- Bathsheba is also the granddaughter of Ahithophel – another of David’s friends and counselor
- but here, the servant adds “the wife of Uriah”
- David is about to betray two of his close friends (her father and grandfather) as well as one of his faithful soldiers (Uriah)

D. Righteousness: How Can I Sin Against The God Who Saved Me? (9c)

9c How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?”

- Clarence Edward Macartney recounts an old story of how Potiphar’s wife “flung her skirt over the bust of the god that stood in the chamber and said, ‘Now, God will not see.’ But Joseph answered, ‘My God sees!’” (cited by Chuck Swindoll, *Joseph: A Man of Integrity and Forgiveness*, p. 28)

<p>III. How To Respond To Temptation (10-26)</p>

A. Persistently: Don’t Let Your Resistance Wear Down (10)

*10 And as she spoke to Joseph **day after day**, he would not listen to her, to lie beside her or to be with her.*

- Didn’t listen to her
- Didn’t lie near her
- Didn’t be with her

B. Attentively: Be Aware Of Your Vulnerable Circumstances (11; cf. Prov 22:3)

11 But one day, when he went into the house to do his work and none of the men of the house was there in the house,

- Potiphar’s wife was persistent in her temptation
- But the most intense day was an unusual day
- V. 11 – “But one day” – that’s trouble
- “none of the men of the house was there” – that’s also trouble because now there is no accountability

Proverbs 22:3 The prudent sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it.

- Ie/ Kevin Leman illustrates this idea with basketball player Steve Kerr who played for the University of Arizona. He was short and slow, but had a great shot. He would eventually be one of the NBA’s best 3 point shooters. Leman recounts: “How could someone who isn’t all that tall and not gifted with natural speed be so effective in the toughest competition on earth? Coach [Lute] Olson summed it up best when he said, ‘The key to using Steve is to keep him out of situations where he is overmatched.’....If you want to affair-proof your marriage: **STAY OUT OF SITUATIONS WHERE YOU ARE OVERMATCHED.**” (*Keeping Your Family Together When The World Is Falling Apart*, Focus on the Family)

Publishing, 1993, Chapter 7: "The Union Fidelity Love Bank Is Always Open: How To Affair-Proof Your Marriage," pp. 146-147)

- Chuck Swindoll: "If you plan to resist temptation, you must meet four requirements:
 1. You must not be weakened by your situation
 2. You must not be deceived by the persuasion
 3. You must not be gentle with your emotions
 4. You must not be confused with the immediate results"*(Joseph: A Man of Integrity and Forgiveness, p. 34)*

C. **Evasively: Flee Sexual Temptation (12; cf. 2 Tim 2:22)**

*12 she **caught** him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he **left** his garment in her hand and fled and **got out** of the house.*

- "caught"
 - Waltke: "The word describes an act of violence. Normally, a man rapes a woman by force with little dialogue and a woman violates a man with seductive speech (cf. Prov 5; 7). Her masculine attack is unique in Scripture." (*Genesis*, p. 521)
- Most temptations we fight against
- Sexual temptations we flee

2 Timothy 2:22 So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

James 4:7-8 7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

IV. **How To Manage The Price For Resisting Temptation (13-15)**

- There's a price for purity in the world, but the freedom

A. **Our Possessions/Finances May Take A Hit (13)**

13 And as soon as she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and had fled out of the house,

- For poor Joseph, it was like: "Man, another coat gone!"

B. **Our Reputation May Take A Hit (14)**

14 she called to the men of her household and said to them, "See, he has brought among us a Hebrew to laugh at us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice.

- "she called to the men of her household" – to gain witnesses, but remember, they weren't there – so it's a "Who are you going to believe?" situation and they're going to believe their employer

- “laugh” = “mock” – with a sense of disdain
- the verb “mock” was used of Lot rebuking the people of Sodom and they accused him of mocking them (Gen 19:14)
- Isaac was also mocked by Ishmael (Gen 21:9)
- The world feels mocked when we try to be righteous

C. Our Comfort-Zone Will Take A Hit (15)

15 And as soon as he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried out, he left his garment beside me and fled and got out of the house.”

V. How To Prepare For The Rejected Tempter’s Response (16-23; cf. Prov 7:4-5)

Proverbs 7:4-5 4 Say to wisdom, “You are my sister,” and call insight your intimate friend, 5 to keep you from the forbidden woman, from the adulteress with her smooth words.

A. They May Blame-shift Responsibility Away From Themselves (16-17)

16 Then she laid up his garment by her until his master came home, 17 and she told him the same story, saying, “The Hebrew servant, whom you have brought among us, came in to me to laugh at me.

- This wife not only blamed Joseph, but added an extra layer of blaming her husband for bringing him in the house

B. They May Emotionally Manipulate Anyone They Can Convince (18)

18 But as soon as I lifted up my voice and cried, he left his garment beside me and fled out of the house.”

C. They May Sway The “He Said, She Said” Debate Because Of Their Influence (19)

19 As soon as his master heard the words that his wife spoke to him, “This is the way your servant treated me,” his anger was kindled.

D. They May Take Away Our Freedom To Grant Them A Temporary Reprieve (20)

20 And Joseph’s master took him and put him into the prison, the place where the king’s prisoners were confined, and he was there in prison.

- The punishment for rape was death
- Joseph received a lesser sentence from Potiphar
- Potiphar also puts him in a better prison – where the kings put their prisoners
- Perhaps he knew the character of his wife and did believe Joseph – but was he going to do to save face before his wife and his subjects?

VI. How To Find Comfort In Obedience When Your World Turns Upside Down (21-23)

A. God's Presence And Steadfast Love Is All We Need (21a)

21a But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love

B. Not Everyone Will Appreciate Your Integrity, But Some Will (21b-23)

21b and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. 22 And the keeper of the prison put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners who were in the prison. Whatever was done there, he was the one who did it. 23 The keeper of the prison paid no attention to anything that was in Joseph's charge, because the Lord was with him. And whatever he did, the Lord made it succeed.

Conclusion:

1. Our salvation gives us way more than sin will.
2. Flee sexual temptation (1 Pet 2:11; Gal 5:16-17)

1 Peter 2:11 Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul,

Galatians 5:16-17 ¹⁶I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. ¹⁷For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

3. Temptation is a test that can strengthen us.