Living A Life of Integrity

“The Purity Test”

GENESIS 39:7b-23

Read Scripture Text: Genesis 39:7b-23

PRAYER

Introduction

Thus far in our series, Living A Life of Integrity, have seen two ways in which Joseph’s integrity was tested. The first test was THE PRIDE TEST. The second was THE PIT TEST. Today we will be looking at the third way in which Joseph’s integrity was tested and that is: THE PURITY TEST.

OBJECT LESSON: I hold in my hand a bottle of drinking water……pure drinking water. In fact it says right here on the bottle, PURIFIED WATER: Enhanced with minerals for a PURE, FRESH TASTE.

There is something attractive and inviting about the crystal clear, sparkling beauty of this bottle of water isn’t there?

-NO pollutants!
-NO contaminates!
-NO cloudiness!

Just PURE, REFRESHING DRINKING WATER!
Let me show you another bottle of water. (hold up bottle of “cloudy” water)

This bottle of water looks anything but PURE! The water is cloudy! It looks polluted and contaminated. There is nothing attractive or inviting about this bottle of water.

As you look inside your mind and heart right now, which of these two bottles best represents your MORAL CHARACTER and INTEGRITY? Which of these two bottles of water best represents the person you are behind closed doors when no one is looking?

I’m going to leave these two bottles of water sitting here throughout my message. And every time you look at these bottles of water pray that prayer David prayed in Psalm 139……

“Search me O God and see if there is any wicked way in me.”

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Joseph’s Purity Test

Well let’s get back to our scripture text and see how JOSEPH handled his own PURITY TEST.

When we last left Joseph, he was being lifted out of THE PIT his brothers had put him in and SOLD to a band of Midianite merchants for 20 pieces of silver. These merchants took JOSEPH on to Egypt and sold him as a slave to POTIPHAR, a high ranking official in the Egyptian government.

Now that JOSEPH is hundreds of miles from home, a slave in a foreign land, has GOD abandoned Joseph? NO!
Look at verse 2 “The Lord was with Joseph…….”

Then look at the very next verse, verse 3 “When his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord gave him success in everything he did, Joseph found favor in his eyes……….

Skip down to verse 21 “The Lord was with him…….”

And then look at verse 23 “……..the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.”

Four times in this 39th chapter we are reminded that GOD’S PRESENCE WAS WITH JOSEPH THROUGHOUT THIS WHOLE DIFFICULT ORDEAL. There’s a valuable lesson for you and me here and that is: Our Heavenly Father never abandons or forsakes His children under any circumstance!

As time passed, GOD granted JOSEPH favor in the eyes of POTIPHAR.

Potiphar saw Joseph as a man of impeccable character.

In Joseph, Potiphar saw a young man of such honorable integrity he entrusted all his personal affairs into Joseph’s hands. In fact, verse 6 tells us, with Joseph in charge, the only thing Potiphar concerned himself with was “eating three square meals a day.”

But with a position of high honor often comes many dangerous PITFALLS and SNARES. This was certainly true in the case of Joseph.

In verses 7-20 we see Joseph’s “Purity Test” unfold.
First of all, notice……..

I. The Request    verses 6b, 7

1. Look at this situation closely……..

   - On the one hand you have Joseph.

       * He’s young.

       * He’s single.

       * He’s available.

       * He’s well-built.

       * And he’s handsome.

       Had he lived in our day and time, Joseph had the kind of raw, rugged good looks that might land him on the cover of GQ Magazine.

   - On the other hand you have POTIPHAR’S WIFE.

       * She’s not a tramp.

       * She’s not some prostitute off the street or a call-girl.

       * Potiphar’s wife was a high class gal. She was the wife of one of the highest ranking government officials in all of Egypt.

       * She was a refined woman. A woman of means…….. a woman who was likely well-educated……..a woman who was looked up to and envied by the other Egyptian women.
2. But as is the case quite often with wives of prominent men, there was an emptiness in this woman’s personal life.

   Chances are hers’ was not much of a marriage. In fact it was probably more of a political partnership than a mutually satisfying relationship.

3. We can gather from the text that Potiphar probably wasn’t home a lot of the time, so in time Potiphar’s lonely, neglected wife who didn’t get enough attention from her husband began lusting for physical attention from Joseph.

4. One day Potiphar’s wife made a request of Joseph in the form of a blatant proposition………

   vs. 7 “Come to bed with me!”

5. This woman was willing to throw away her marriage, her character, her integrity and her reputation for a few moments of sinful pleasure. And she was willing to take the life of a young, godly, man of honor and integrity down with her.

6. Lonely, neglected wife beware of any man who pays extra attention to you or seems to care for you, listen to you or understand you more than your husband.

   Lonely husband who feels like you’re not respected or appreciated by your wife, beware of that woman who makes you “feel like a real man.”

7. The same trap Satan set for Joseph is the same trap Satan has used to destroy the marriages, the careers and the reputations of hundreds of thousands of men and women throughout the ages.
How did JOSEPH respond to THE REQUEST of Potiphar‘s wife?
Let’s look at............

II. The Refusal   verses 8-12

1. I want you to notice Joseph’s response was immediate!

*He didn’t hesitate!

*He didn’t entertain the idea!

*He didn’t take a few minutes to think about it!

JOSEPH decided IMMEDIATELY and DECISIVELY!

“NO!”

2. How did Joseph do it? How did he resist the temptation?

He did it by setting a moral boundary long before he ever found himself in this compromising situation.

Joseph had a moral line drawn in his mind and heart that he refused to cross under any circumstance for any reason. Joseph had built an impenetrable wall around his character.

*It didn’t matter that there was no one else in the house.

* It didn’t matter that he could probably get by with it and never get caught.

Joseph was not going to cross that boundary line for any reason.
3. Joseph’s boundary was based on a two-fold allegiance.

(A) For one thing, Joseph had allegiance to his Master.

vs. 8, 9a  My master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife.

Simply put, Joseph could not allow himself to sleep with the wife of the man who had entrusted the care of his entire household.

(B) But more importantly, Joseph had allegiance to his GOD!

vs. 9b  “How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?”

Joseph knew in his heart that ultimately all sin is against GOD. David admitted this in Psalm 51 when he repented of committing adultery with Bathsheba.

David said, “Against You and You only, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight……”

You see, Joseph knew that truth as well. He knew if he slept with Potiphar’s wife and Potiphar never found out his sinful act would be witnessed by his all-seeing, all-knowing God.

It was his allegiance to his MASTER and allegiance to his GOD that formed Joseph’s moral boundary.
4. Now before we move on to our final point, we must consider a very important truth.

    Just because Joseph rejected Potiphar’s wife’s request once didn’t mean he was home “scott free.”

    vs. 10 And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.

    vs. 11 One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside.

    vs. 12 She caught him by his cloak and said, “Come to bed with me!” But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house.

5. Day after day after day after day JOSEPH was put through this PURITY TEST. The intentions of Potiphar’s wife were obvious and that was to proposition Joseph until she wore down his resistance and caved in.

6. This same truth applies to you and me. Hardly a day goes by but what our moral purity won’t be tested.

    Satan has placed “moral land mines” everywhere.

    The shows, movies and commercials we see on TV.
    A provocative picture on the front of a magazine at the check out line in the grocery store.
    A momentary encounter with an attractive female or male in a store or restaurant.
    Pop up ads while surfing the internet.
    Seemingly harmless chats with a member of the opposite sex at work……or on a FACE BOOK or MY SPACE web-page.

    Just because you pass THE PURITY TEST today is no guarantee you won’t be faced with another purity test tomorrow.
We have looked at THE REQUEST.  
We have looked at THE REFUSAL. 

Finally, let’s consider……

III. The Revenge vs. 13-20a

1. Remember that old saying, “Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned.”
   
   After spurning her repeated advances, Potiphar’s wife went after Joseph with a vengeance.

2. With Joseph’s cloak as evidence, Potiphar’s wife concocted a lie that Joseph had attempted to rape her while she was alone in the house.

3. When Potiphar got home and heard his wife’s tearful and theatrical rendition of what had happened and saw she was holding Joseph’s cloak in hand, verses 19, 20 tell us Potiphar “burned with anger……then he had Joseph thrown into prison.”

4. Just as it was before when his brothers threw Joseph into a pit, Joseph is once again the target of someone’s jealous rage.

   But while Joseph was there in the prison, the Lord was with him; He showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden.
Application and Conclusion

As American Christians we live in one of if not the most sexually
dominated society in the world.

- People have thrown away their marriages for sex.
- People have destroyed their families for sex.
- People have thrown away their careers for sex.
- Women have sacrificed their virginity and their purity
  for a few moments of gratification only to carry a load of
guilt and shame for many years afterwards.
- Men have sacrificed their honor, their integrity and their
  character for nothing more than to validate their manhood.

It seems that many people, including a great number of Christians,
have bought into Satan’s lie that instant sexual gratification, regardless
of the long term consequences, is worth the cost!

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PAUSE
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If we had just one lesson to learn from JOSEPH about dealing with
sexual temptation it would be this: RUN!

…….Joseph didn’t WALK AWAY from Potiphar’s wife!
…….Joseph didn’t SLOWLY MOSEY away from Potiphar’s wife!

JOSEPH RAN AWAY FROM THE TEMPTATION AS FAST AS HE
COULD GO! Or as we used to say when I was growing up in
Indiana, “Joseph high-tailed it out of there!”
I Corinthians 6:18    Flee from sexual immorality.

I Thessalonians 5:22    Avoid every kind of evil.
(KJV----Abstain from the very appearance of evil.)

-If someone of the opposite sex is flirting with you or trying to lure you into an illicit relationship……RUN AWAY AS FAST AS YOU CAN!

-If you are tempted to visit sexually explicit websites on the internet……RUN! RUN AWAY AS FAST AS YOU CAN!

-If you getting into some suggestive conversations with someone on FACE BOOK or MY SPACE…..RUN AS FAST AS YOU CAN RUN!

-If you are being tempted to turn to an ADULT MOVIE channel on your Satellite or Cable TV…..RUN! RUN AWAY AS FAST AS YOU CAN!

Because sexual temptation is virtually everywhere in our society we can never drop our guard.

(A) We must always guard our eyes.

Jesus warned us about guarding our eyes in Matthew 5:28,29

*But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.*
(B) We must also guard our minds and our hearts.

Proverbs 4:23 Above all else, guard your heart for it is the wellspring of life.

The heart refers to our whole inner being……our thoughts, our passions, our desires, and our motives.

If we are going to remain morally pure we must keep our mind and heart in constant check. Or as Paul says it in II Corinthians 10:5 We must take captive every thought and make it obedient to Christ.

Perhaps this morning we have looked at an area that has been an ongoing battle for you for a long, long time. Perhaps you have failed the PURITY TEST not once, but many times.

Is your life ruined? Must you carry a heavy burden of guilt and shame the rest of your earthly life? Is there any hope of forgiveness and healing?

Absolutely! Remember that Adulterous Woman in JOHN 8?

Caught in the very act of adultery, that woman had miserably failed the PURITY TEST!

But while everyone was ready to stone her to death, Jesus offered her grace, mercy and forgiveness. And with these words Jesus dismissed her: “Go now and leave your life of sin.”

Friend JESUS is offering you the same grace, the same mercy and the same forgiveness. If you have failed the PURITY TEST why not bring your sins to the foot of the cross? Why not leave here today determined not to go back to your life of sin!

(INVITATION)