

Joseph's Temptation

(Genesis 39)

Introduction

Have you ever been tempted to sin? How do you cope with temptation? What should you do? God wants us to say “No” to sin and He is more than willing to help us if we'll just ask him to.

Opening Prayer

Lord, we know that You hate sin, but every day Satan tempts us to do things that are not pleasing to You! We need to know what to do when that happens. Open our hearts this morning to the lesson and help us to pay attention so that we are prepared before Satan tempts us. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

...the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world. (1 John 4:4)

Lesson

We've been learning about the Fathers of our Faith. [Teacher, review the lesson series up to this point.]

Last week we learned how Joseph's brothers were so jealous and hateful they first planned to kill Joseph; then they decided to sell him into slavery.

Let's pick up the story in Genesis 39.

Genesis 39:1

When Joseph was taken to Egypt by the Ishmaelite traders, he was purchased by Potiphar, an Egyptian officer. Potiphar was captain of the guard for Pharaoh, the king of Egypt.

Joseph's brothers had sold him to the Ishmaelite traders that were heading down to Egypt. The Ishmaelites sold Joseph to Potiphar.

Ask: Can you imagine what Joseph must have felt to find himself suddenly stripped of his freedom?

He had gone from favorite son to slave! When you're a slave you don't get to choose anything for yourself. You must do exactly what your master tells you to do. If he says, “jump,” you say, “how high?” and just do it or else you can get whipped. It just wasn't fair! But you never hear Joseph complaining!

The Lord was with Joseph and gave him favor with Potiphar.

Genesis 39:2-3

***The LORD was with Joseph**, so he succeeded in everything he did as he served in the home of his Egyptian master. Potiphar noticed this and realized that **the LORD was with Joseph**, giving him success in everything he did.*

Joseph made up his mind with God's help, to never do anything that would displease God. And God honored Joseph for that desire; God gave Joseph success in everything he put his hand to.

Genesis 39:4-5

This pleased Potiphar, so he soon made Joseph his personal attendant. He put him in charge of his entire household and everything he owned. From the day Joseph was put in charge of his master's household and property, the LORD began to bless Potiphar's household for Joseph's sake. All his household affairs ran smoothly, and his crops and livestock flourished.

Potiphar was so pleased with Joseph's work that he promoted Joseph to be the “overseer” or “boss” of his house and estate. Joseph was given the highest position to which a household slave could rise. He was responsible for the food, clothes, finances, and property of his master.

Genesis 39:6a

So Potiphar gave Joseph complete administrative responsibility over everything he owned. With Joseph there, he didn't worry about a thing—except what kind of food to eat!

Potiphar trusted Joseph with all that he had! But Potiphar's wife liked him, too! And this was a big, big problem for Joseph.

Genesis 39:6b-7

Joseph was a very handsome and well-built young man, and Potiphar's wife soon began to look at him lustfully. “Come and sleep with me,” she demanded.

Mrs. Potiphar asked Joseph to do a wrong thing! She thought that Joseph was good-looking and wanted him to lie with her in bed. God says in His word that only a man and woman who are married should get in bed together. What she had asked him to do was wrong. Joseph had to decide what to do.

Ask: Have you ever had someone try to get you to do something you knew was wrong? [Let the children talk about specific temptations.]

When someone asks you to do something you know is wrong, you must decide what to do, too.

If you know Jesus as your Savior, the Spirit of God lives in you to give you the power to say "No" to temptation. Satan wants you to do wrong, but you must decide *now* what you will do when you are tempted. Joseph knew what he would do.

Genesis 39:8-9

*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."*

Joseph knew God is holy and hates sin. God hates your sin, too. But He loves you and wants you to be successful in everything you do, too. That's why you need to decide now *before* you are faced with the temptation to sin that with God's help you will not think, say, or do anything that will disappoint God. He will give you the power of the Holy Spirit to keep that promise, just like he did for Joseph.

Joseph knew God hates sin and he refused Mrs. Potiphar. But this made her furious.

Genesis 39:10

*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.*

She kept after Joseph, but he didn't give into the temptation.

Genesis 39:11-12

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.

Joseph was in such a hurry to get away from this woman that he ran away leaving his robe in her hand. Joseph ran from temptation. That is what you can do when someone asks you to do something God says is wrong. God can give you the power to say "No" to temptation. Remember, "... *the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world.*" (1 John 4:4)

Genesis 39:13-15

When she saw that she was holding his cloak and he had fled, she called out to her servants. Soon all the men came running. "Look!" she said. "My husband has brought this Hebrew slave here to make fools of us! He came into my room to rape me, but I screamed. When he heard me scream, he ran outside and got away, but he left his cloak behind with me."

Potiphar's wife lied about what happened and falsely accused Joseph of a terrible sin! When she told her husband this lie about Joseph, it made him very angry and he ordered Joseph to be taken to prison.

Ask: Suppose you were put in prison even though you had never committed a crime. How would you feel? What would you do?

How hard it is to be misjudged! Yet God was still with Joseph.

Let's see what Joseph did...

Genesis 39:21-23

*But **the LORD was with Joseph** in the prison and showed him His faithful love. And the LORD made Joseph a favorite with the prison warden. Before long, the warden put Joseph in charge of all the other prisoners and over everything that happened in the prison. The warden had no more worries, because Joseph took care of everything. **The LORD was with him** and caused everything he did to succeed.*

Even in prison Joseph was so kind, thoughtful and helpful that the jailer put him in charge of the other prisoners. What a fine young man he must have been to have made such a good impression on everybody, no matter where he was, even in prison! God honored Joseph for saying “no” to sin.

The Bible tells us four times that “**the LORD was with Joseph**”. Joseph had made up his mind not to do anything that was displeasing to God. And, God helped him to stay blameless and to keep doing his best in every situation. And, God will help you, too. The Bible tells us twice that Joseph *refused* to sin against God.

Will you choose to say, “No” to sin?

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, Satan wants us to sin because sin separates us from You. That's why You hate sin so much. We always want to stay in close fellowship with You, so I pray that You will give us the desire in our hearts to say “No” to sin before we are even tempted. Then, give us the power of the Holy Spirit to say “No” to sin so that we might be blameless in Your eyes. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

CRAFT CORNER

Toss for it —

Students toss a beanbag to earn points for correctly answered review questions.

Place several rows of numbered playing cards face down with a few inches between them to form a grid pattern. (Make sure to put several wild cards or Jokers down, too!) Use masking tape to make a tossing line several feet from the cards.

For a correctly answered review question, a player tosses the beanbag onto a card, reveal the points he received for his team.

- Numbered cards = 50 point
- Face cards = 100 points
- Aces = 200 points
- Jokers = 0 points (or, 150, if you prefer!)

If the child answers incorrectly, give the other team a chance to answer that question. If neither team knows, give the answer and ask that question again later. Have student pick up the card and put it in the team's basket to be counted at the end of the game.

GAME CENTER

1. Who was Joseph? (Jacob's favorite son.)
2. Who was Potiphar? (An Egyptian officer; the captain of the guard for Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. See verse 1)
3. How did Joseph end up at Potiphar's house? (His brothers had sold him to the Midianite traders and they sold him to Potiphar.)
4. What was Joseph's job at Potiphar's house? (He was the chief household slave in charge of everything.)
5. Why did Potiphar give Joseph the highest position in his household? (Whatever he was asked to do he did it well and Potiphar was very pleased with Joseph's work.)
6. What wrong thing did Potiphar's wife ask Joseph to do? (Go to bed with her.)
7. What did Joseph do when Potiphar's wife tempted him to do wrong? (He ran away.)
8. What reason did Joseph give for resisting Potiphar's wife? (It would be a great sin against God to do such a wicked thing. Vs 9)
9. What should you do when someone asks you to do something you know is wrong? (Say, “No” to sin and turn away from it.)
10. What did Joseph do when Mrs. Potiphar grabbed him by his cloak? (He tore himself away, leaving his cloak in her hand.)

11. What happened to Joseph when Potiphar's wife lied about what had happened? (Potiphar sent Joseph to prison.)
12. What was Joseph's job in prison? (He was in charge of the other prisoners.)
13. What special power has God given us to say "No" to sin? (The power of the Holy Spirit.)
14. Find a phrase that is repeated in verses 2, 3, 21, and 23. Why was that important for Joseph to know?
15. What happened to Joseph that was especially hard or unfair? (He was sold as a slave and put in prison for something he didn't do.)
16. Why do you think Joseph could do all these good things even when bad things kept happening to him? (He trusted God; he knew God would work things out.)

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