

TRIUMPH OVER TEMPTATION

“Joseph was well-built and handsome, and after a while his master’s wife took notice of Joseph and said, ‘Come to bed with me!’ But he refused. —GENESIS 39:6-8

At about 20 years old, Joseph would have been ripe for seduction. Scripture tells us he was well-built and handsome. He was also single, far from home and unaccountable to family. Genesis 39:10 says that though his master’s wife “spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.”

There is no question temptation is all around us, and among the most prevalent is the lure to immoral sexual activity. We are all vulnerable, and should never underestimate the power of our sinful natures. 1 John 2:16 speaks of the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life, which is the root cause of sin that we never outgrow. Our sinful natures are always going to fight against the Spirit.

The people who live the most precariously are those who think they’re immune to temptation. Paul writes, “So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall” (1 Corinthians 10:12). Unrestrained lust of the eyes feeds and leads to lust of the flesh, which feeds and leads to the pride of life. When you look at a person you find appealing, the lust of the eyes begins to feed the flesh, and the pride of life sets in where we start to think the rules don’t apply

to us. We may agree with the rules, but come up with all kinds of rationalizations why our situation is the exception.

Sexual promiscuity is symptomatic of a lack of wholesome relationships, proper self-esteem and intimacy with God. We are all created to be indwelt by God, and the deep need of the human heart; that sense of completion, of being satisfied and fulfilled comes from our relationship with God. All the evidence we have of God's activity in Joseph's life served as a barrier against temptation. He lived in a vital, growing relationship with God, and was secure enough in who he was and who God was that he didn't need illicit sex to find satisfaction.

Where it concerns sin, there are no bargains, rationalizations, or compromises acceptable to God. Paul tells us, "But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it" (1 Corinthians 10:13). If we fail to turn our minds toward God, we will fail to look for that way out, and be well on our way to the path of least resistance. Such is our inherent nature, but when our lives are rooted in Christ, our minds are made up beforehand. It is in His strength we 'stand up under it' and are empowered to triumph over temptation.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, every day there are many temptations facing us. I pray for your strength and discipline in facing them.

TO REFLECT UPON: How would I respond when faced with temptation?