

UNEXPECTED

“Temptation: How to get free from things that pull you down”

“No human longing is more powerful, more difficult to rein in, than sex. It has enough combusive force to incinerate wedding vows, family commitments, career goals, religious devotion, and anything else in its path.” Dr. Les Parrott, “Crazy Good Sex”

“I can resist everything but temptation. The only way to get rid of temptation is to yield to it...”
-Oscar Wilde

“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.”

Genesis 39:6-7 (NLT)

Hebrew: שָׁכַב – “Shakab”

Practical measures to keep from giving in to temptation:

1. Commit to purity before the temptation comes

“But Joseph refused.” Genesis 39:8 (NLT)

2. Rehearse the painful consequences for giving in

“Look,” he told her, “my master trusts me with everything in his entire household. 9 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.” Genesis 39:8-9 (NLT)

At this moment God is quite unreal to us, he loses all reality, and only desire for the creature is real; the only reality is the devil. Satan does not here fill us with hatred of God, but with forgetfulness of God. -Dietrich Bonhoeffer, “Temptation”

3. Avoid putting yourself in temptation’s pathway

“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.” Genesis 39:8-10 (NLT)

4. Run away

“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.”

Genesis 39:11-12 (NLT)

5. Replace false narratives with the truth

“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.” She kept the cloak with her until her husband came home. Then she told him her story. “That Hebrew slave you’ve brought into our house tried to come in and fool around with me,” she said. “But when I screamed, he ran outside, leaving his cloak with me!”

Gen. 39:13-18 (NLT)

Start rejecting lies and rehearsing truth:

- God knows what we do in secret (Hebrews 4:13)
- This is not private, but reaches heaven and eternity (Psalm 51:4).
- Sexual sin isn't harmless (Proverbs 6:27-29)
- Sexual sin goes beyond the physical to the spiritual (1 Corin. 6:18)
- People are not objects, but made in God's image (Genesis 1:27).
- When you start down the path of sexual sin, it is hard to turn back. (Hebrews 3:13).
- When you're close to God, He helps you avoid sexual sin (Gal. 5:16)
- This is not inevitable, since God provides a way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13).
- Your past does not define you – belonging to Christ does (1 Corinthians 6:11).

Resources:

- Read: “Every Man's Battle” or “Every Woman's Battle”
- Get web accountability or internet filter
 - www.xxxchurch.com (Free accountability)
 - www.integrityonline.com (Pay filter)
 - www1.k9webprotection.com (Free filter)
- Find a good counselor or accountability partner
- Monitor your media at www.screenit.com

Leadership Tip!

Life groups are a great place to help people overcome the fear of praying openly. Consider asking members in advance to pray before or at the end of group. Often the chance to gather their thoughts is the only barrier they really have.

UNEXPECTED - TEMPTATION**STARTER QUESTIONS:**

How do you define temptation?

What is one subtle thing in life right now that tempts you? Why?

MAIN IDEA:

We are currently in a series titled "Unexpected", looking at the life of Joseph and how we can relate to his story. This week we are studying temptation.

Temptation could easily account for the main reason many good Christians have setbacks, pain and suffering in their lives. Everyone experiences temptation. Even Jesus Christ was tempted, and he is the only one that ever lived that did not yield to it.

What does temptation mean to you?

NOTE: Have a good discussion among your group about what temptation is

By definition temptation is defined as:

"Something that causes a strong urge or desire to have or do something and especially something that is bad, wrong, or unwise" - Merriam-Webster Dictionary

Like Joseph, a great number of people struggle with temptation on a daily basis. Joseph faced temptation as a slave in the house of Potiphar. In *Genesis 39:6-18* we see that Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Joseph, and even in resisting the temptation, it cost Joseph suffering.

READ Genesis 39:6-18 as a group

As we read through the story, we see that Joseph seemed to do everything right, but the lies of Potiphar's wife put him in a bad position.

Describe a time when you did not yield to temptation but it impacted your life?

There are obvious influences that lead to temptation. It can emerge from the desire for something material, or relationships that often lead to lust. Temptation leads to urge, urge leads to desire, and desire leads to decisions that are poor choices.

What are some things that lead to temptation?

When we let temptation take over, it can lead to marital problems, financial problems, and spiritual problems. Once we start to experience temptation, and it begins to take over our thoughts, we try to justify these thoughts and it changes our behavior pattern. There are false behaviors that we often use to justify our desires.

Pastor Hank listed several examples of how we try to justify temptation in our lives:

“I deserve this”

“everybody else is doing it – why not me?”

“nobody will ever know”

“God doesn’t really care about something like this”

How do we replace these desires?

How have you seen behaviors change because of temptations?

God is willing to help us overcome temptation....assuming you want to avoid it. How do we overcome temptation? Pastor Hank mentioned several practical steps in avoiding temptation:

1. Commit to purity before the temptation comes
2. Rehearse the painful consequences for giving in
3. Avoid putting yourself in temptation’s pathway
4. Run away
5. Replace false narratives with the truth

When we look at the temptation Joseph faced, we see that he used these steps. Let’s look at the rest of the story in Genesis 39.

READ Genesis 39:19-23

Reading this passage seems like a terrible end to the story but that is really not the case. Although the lies of Potiphar’s wife landed Joseph in prison, we see the Lord was with him and showed him love and protection. Often the consequences of temptation have aftershocks that can cause suffering in our lives, but if we keep our

faith we will soon realize that God never leaves us. He is always there to comfort us as we fight against the temptations in life.

Has there been a time that you avoided temptation and you felt Gods presence?

How did that feel?

As with any struggle we have in our life, we should pray and dig into scripture for strength to help us overcome and win our battle. Here are several examples of scripture that we can lean on for strength.

When you're close to God, He helps you avoid sin (*Gal. 5:16*)

This is not inevitable, since God provides a way of escape (*1 Corinthians 10:13*).

Your past does not define you, Christ's blood does (*1 Corinthians 6:11*).

FINAL THOUGHTS:

What is one area that you are currently struggling with temptation?

God offers us power to overcome temptation. But we first have to come clean with ourselves and ask for help.

How can our group pray for you as you walk through anything that may be tempting you?

Temptation can destroy marriages, families, friendships, lives and weaken our faith. It is important for us to engage authentically when we are facing temptations. As a group we need to be willing to lean on each other to overcome temptations that we face. Satan will not let temptation go away if we do not turn to Christ for strength and fortitude to resist.

As a life group it is important for us to help each other and encourage each other in our struggles.

"But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness" Hebrews 3:13 (NIV)

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE:

Genesis 1:27

Psalms 51:4

Proverbs 6:27-29

Hebrews 4:13

1 Corinthians 6:18

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

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