

**June 18th, 2023**

**Ask More, Get Less: Week 3**

Today I want to pose another question. We have mentioned it a little bit in the past weeks, but I really want to dive into it as a question about our legacy.

“What story do I want to tell?”

We can all agree that we have a story or testimony. Regardless of Good or Bad, we all are writing our stories here and now. How does one write their story? Every decision you make becomes a permanent part of your story.

Our lives are made up of our decisions. If our decisions tell our story, shouldn't we take time to consider EVERY decision we make?

What story do you want to tell? The good news about writing our stories is that YOU get to decide what the story says, NOT by your words but by your decisions. Because with every decision you make your story continues.

If you haven't already guessed, the theme of today is this: Your decisions matter.

They have consequences and they have impact. Doesn't matter if they're good or your decisions have consequences.

So when you're making decisions of any magnitude, you owe it to yourself to pause, look ahead, and ask yourself: What story do I want to tell?

The goal of this series is to be asking ourselves these questions because of the magnitude and severity of what's in the balance. I want us to have a story that we are able to share without skipping any chapters or having to lie about details!

And we all have those chapters in our life. I have chapters of my life that are embarrassing/shameful/disappointing.

*Genesis 37-47* talks about a teenager faced with multiple decisions and was faced with a question of “What story do I want to tell?”

*Genesis 37* talks about Joseph. He was high fashion... Nah, he just had a coat of many colors. Joseph had 11 older brothers, and his father Jacob loved him more than them, and he showed it. Hence the coat of many colors.

We continued the narrative, and Joseph was given the task to go check on his brothers. Joseph has done this before and he hasn't given the best reports to his dad. Well homeboy rolls up and his brothers DECIDE to act on a feeling they've had. They DECIDE to kill him.

But as Joseph is rolling up on the scene, they decide to just throw him in the empty well until they can muster up the courage to kill him.

Here's my first point: It is crucial for us to think through our decisions because they can have direct influence on others.

To put it in more practical terms in how it applies today, I think of parenting, or family. As parents, our decisions directly impact our children.

We continue with Joseph. Good news is his brothers don't kill him, just sell him into slavery. Not much of a better outcome but better than being dead.

Joseph ends up with a guy named Potiphar. Potiphar was captain of Pharaoh's palace guard. He bought Joseph at the auction and now Joseph is faced with a decision.

Does he try to run away? Does he try to work as little as possible? Or does he throw himself into this with everything he has?

Even though decisions of OTHER people got him into the "mess" he's in, HE STILL GETS TO WRITE HIS STORY.

Let me put it in today's terms. When people's decisions intersect into your life, impact your life, or even change your life, YOU DECIDE HOW TO RESPOND. Even though their decision is now a part of your story, YOU decide how it plays out.

Look to Joseph, he decided to give it his all, his story is going to be HIS to write. And it landed him as Potiphar's man. He was in charge of Potiphar's entire household.

Well the story continues, Joseph is roughly 19-20, good looking dude right? Potiphar's wife starts tempting. She tried to seduce him time and time again. This was a life and death issue. Cause if Potiphar found out then he was a goner. But here's another little nugget, this was done in secret. Potiphar had no idea what he was doing, Joseph could've made this decision in secret, in private, without anyone else around or anyone knowing.

But even our private decision won't remain private. Eventually they come to light in some way. Joseph knew that. Joseph knew the story he wanted to tell and there wasn't going to be an adultery chapter.

Genesis 39:7-10 (NIV)

...and after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, "Come to bed with me!" But he refused. "With me in charge," he told her, "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. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against

God?" And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.

He said respectfully no... cause I am writing a good story over here.

Potiphar's wife was mad, embarrassed, etc, she accused him of doing what she was trying to do to him! What'd Potiphar do? Threw him right in jail. Not a great ending to the chapter.

Now I know what you're thinking. Pastor, Joseph has been doing it all right, making good choices and HE STILL ended up a slave and in prison.

Even when bad things happen, things might go the way you had planned, knowing that your story isn't done. Joseph's story looks pretty dismal. In hard times it looks pretty rough. BUT YOUR STORY ISN'T OVER! God is still working on your behalf. God is still moving in your life.

And that's exactly what we read in scripture, because Joseph gets restored, but not to Potiphar. He interprets one of Pharaoh's Dreams, and through that he appointed him to be prime minister of Egypt.

Look at the work he put in as a slave. Look at his story. At any point he could've said "I'm going to be a slave forever, so I'm not going to work hard." But he didn't, he worked hard because that's how he wanted to write his story.

For 13 years Joseph was writing his story one decision at a time, a story that paved a way for him to become the second most powerful person in the nation. And that's not even the best part.

Even though we're into the "happy ending" of the story, it gets even better. Joseph rose to power because of his God given ability to interpret dreams, and the dream was talking about 7 years of abundance and 7 years of famine and he was on the disaster committee. His job was to make sure there was enough for the 7 years.

Because of Joseph's hard work, the nation was ready for 7 years of famine. To the point where surrounding areas came to Pharaoh to ask for assistance. Egypt was in such abundance Joseph opened the storehouse and began selling to others.

Sure enough who came rolling up... his brothers. The same brothers that sold him into slavery, the ones who hated him.

(Remember when I said your decision you make can have a direct impact.) Well guess what, the same thing applies. Because of Joseph's decision to write a story worth telling, his choices now impact his family IN A GOOD WAY.

Bottom line, you decide how you want your story to be written.