

WHAT WAS HE THINKING?

Dowlen Road, April 26, 2009 PM

INTRODUCTION

- A. Reading: **Genesis 39:1-20**.
 - 1. Joseph is facing a critical decision. Will he yield to this temptation or maintain his sexual purity? It's a decision you will have to make. Young people get a lot of pressure to have sex. You will have to decide if you will cave to this pressure or maintain your purity.
 - 2. Joseph's decision would dramatically impact his future. God would ultimately use Joseph for great purposes – to save his father and brothers from a famine, preserving the family from whom Jesus would come. But if he was to be used by God, he would have to make the right choice.
 - 3. Similarly, the choice you make about your purity may well have a dramatic impact on your future. Young people have found their lives radically altered by the decisions they make about their sexual purity. This is important!
- B. What was going through Joseph's mind at this pivotal moment in his life?
 - 1. His words in verses 8-9 reveal at least four things that factored into his decision.
 - 2. I want us to take note of these because they are things that we should consider as we wrestle with decisions about our sexuality purity.
 - 3. What was he thinking when confronted with this temptation?

HE IS THINKING ABOUT POTIPHAR (vs. 8-9).

- A. Although Joseph was in a slave-master relationship with Potiphar, his master had been good to him.
 - 1. He mentions three things specifically on this occasion.
 - a. Potiphar had been fair with him, promoting him as Joseph distinguished himself ("no one greater").
 - b. Potiphar had entrusted Joseph with great responsibility ("all that he owns in my charge").
 - c. Potiphar did this because he had confidence in Joseph ("does not concern himself").
 - 2. Joseph is thinking about all of this as Potiphar's wife proposes this sin.
 - a. After all the kindness that had been shown to him, there was no way he would repay him with this betrayal.
 - b. I'm impressed that this is on his mind. He's not just thinking about himself – what he wanted to do in this situation, what his desires might have had. He's thinking about others and how his behavior would impact them.
- B. This is something we must consider as we wrestle with sexual temptation.
 - 1. Sometimes a guy will pressure a girl to have sex by feeding her some line like this: "This is just a way of showing you how much I love you."
 - a. Ladies, when he says that, you need to laugh in his face. The last thing on his mind is demonstrating love for you. It's not about his love; it's about satisfying his lust.
 - b. Sometimes girls give in because they don't want to lose this guy they "love." But this too is not about love. It's about selfishly using this guy to satisfy my need to have someone in my life.
 - 2. God's people don't operate this way.
 - a. We don't run around just thinking about what we want and satisfying our needs. We think about how our conduct will impact others (**Philippians 2:3-4**).
 - b. Because this is the way we operate, we would never pressure anyone to commit sexual sin. If you have someone in your life putting that pressure on you, you need to know that they don't love you. Let me add that, if you give in to their pressure, then you don't love them either. When you love someone, you don't join them in committing sin.
 - 3. But the impact of sexual sin will extend beyond the two people involved.
 - a. It will impact the people who love me – my spouse, my parents, my siblings, my brethren.
 - b. It will impact my friends at school or work that I've been trying to influence.
 - c. I need to think about all of that as I fight this battle for my purity.
 - d. It's one of the things that was on Joseph's mind.

HE IS THINKING ABOUT THE SANCTITY OF MARRIAGE.

- A. Potiphar had given Joseph many things (position, responsibility, trust).
 - 1. But Joseph says that there is one thing he had not been given...this woman. Potiphar's wife was the only thing he had withheld.
 - 2. But of course he withheld her. She was HIS WIFE!
 - 3. Joseph understood that there was a sacred covenant involved, promises shared between these two people, an expectation of faithfulness.
 - 4. He had no right to be with this woman; she was married to another man.
 - 5. How odd that Joseph has more respect for her marriage vows than she does! He's thinking about all of this at this crucial moment.
- B. When faced with sexual temptation, we need to think about it too.
 - 1. Sexual intimacy is reserved for couples who are married to each other. God's law is clear (**Hebrews 13:4, Proverbs 5:15-20**).
 - 2. To those who are married...
 - a. We have made a sacred covenant. We made promises to each other and to God. We said that we would forsake all others and be faithful to our spouse.
 - b. For this reason, WE HAVE NO RIGHT to have sex with someone else. We don't ever have the right to make a "special friendship" with someone who is not our spouse.
 - c. It doesn't matter what's wrong in my marriage or how much some other person comforts me. I HAVE NO RIGHT to be with them.

3. To those who are not married...
 - a. For many reasons God said that only a married couple can have sex.
 - b. You must discipline yourself and wait until marriage and give your spouse the gift of your purity.
 - c. YOU HAVE NO RIGHT to have sex with someone you're not married to
 - d. YOU HAVE NO RIGHT to have sex with someone who may one day marry someone else. You are stealing what belongs to another.
4. I'm impressed that Joseph was thinking about that. We need to think about it too.

HE IS THINKING ABOUT HIS PRINCIPLES (v. 9b).

- A. Joseph's family life was certainly bizarre.
 1. He was the favored child of his father, and for that reason hated intensely by his brothers.
 - a. This led to constant family friction.
 - b. Ultimately his brothers plotted to kill him.
 - c. They chose instead to sell him into slavery because they could make some money on the deal.
 2. But with all that was wrong in Joseph's family, this young man was taught something right.
 - a. He learned that it was wrong to have sex with another man's wife – "this great evil" (v. 9b).
 - b. At the moment of crisis, this teaching served him well. He did not falter with uncertainty at this crucial moment.
 - c. His principles showed him clearly what he ought to do.
- B. In this age of moral relativism, we need to be armed with moral absolutes.
 1. Did you catch what happened at the Miss America pageant? One contestant stated her personal belief that marriage ought to be between a man and a woman and she was scorned by the media.
 2. In a world like this, our minds need to be trained with morality learned from God's word so that at any moment we can immediately size up what is right and what is evil (**Hebrews 5:14**).
 - a. Specifically, if we are to win the battles for our sexual purity, we need to understand clearly what God requires.
 - b. When the crisis comes, I need to see clearly what I ought to do.
 3. Our kids need this.
 - a. Some parents have decided to allow kids to figure out right and wrong on their own – to make up their own minds.
 - b. God tells us to do exactly the opposite (**Ephesians 6:4**).
 - 1) Moms and dads need to be sure that values are taught and ingrained at home so kids have a clear picture of what is right when faced with crucial moral choices.
 - 2) This is especially true when it comes to issues of sexual purity. Our kids need to have clear understanding of what God expects.
 4. Joseph weathered his crisis because he had principles and he considered those principles. We need to do the same.

HE IS THINKING ABOUT GOD (v. 9c).

- A. It is interesting that even though Joseph is a long way from home in the middle of idolatrous Egypt, he still has a sense of God's presence.
 1. He knew that God could see, that God was watching (v. 9c).
 2. Notice also Joseph recognized that to do this thing would not only offend Potiphar, it would offend God.
 3. Notice that this mattered to him. Joseph was not living to please himself. More important than his selfish concerns, Jesus wanted to please God.
- B. We need to think about God as we battle for our sexual purity.
 1. Sometimes we fool ourselves into thinking we've really done something when we hide something from our parents or from other Christians. But what have we really done? In the end, the One who matters most, the One to whom I will give an account sees everything. He even knows about the motives that drive my actions (**Hebrews 4:11-13; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14**).
 2. I need to think about all of this when I'm faced with sexual temptations. It may seem that I'm in some private spot and have arranged things so that no one will ever know. But remember at that moment, the windows of heaven are open and the eyes of our loving Father look down on us and see it all! Nothing we do is hidden from the sight of the One who will hold us accountable for our deeds.
 3. Joseph thought about God at his moment of crisis. We need to think about Him more often than we do.

CONCLUSION: ONE DAY WE WILL GIVE AN ACCOUNT (II CORINTHIANS 5:10). ARE YOU READY?