

Further thought on the life of Joseph:

About 4 weeks ago, I started a series call Chasing Dreams and Slaying dragons.

We have been utilizing the stories of Genesis 29-50, looking at the life of Joseph.

I believe that success is the pursuit of a worthwhile goal.

So by this definition we should always be striving for something that is out there.

We should never settle.

Success is not a destination, but the journey to pursue something that is worthwhile.

It is the person I am called to be doing what I believe I was created to do.

Using that premise, we never arrive.

Because once we obtain one goal, we are not a success if we don't set another unreachable goal.

If we are not aiming to become someone better.

I say goal, you may hear possessions, house, car, income; I didn't say that.

I said worthwhile goal...something of value, something that it is worth exchanging your life for.

In other words, dreams are always things that we are in pursuit of.

Last week we looked at:

You have the God-given ability to exchange your dreams for reality if you're prepared to pay the price of pursuing them.

That is what Joseph did.

He gave everything he had in order to obtain something that could not be brought....his future.

Joseph started off with a God-given gift.

But God had to build God-given character into his life in order to sustain it and make it useable.

So now we come to what I believe is the single greatest reason behind Joseph's success:

My question to you this morning is....

Who are you when no one is looking?

Genesis 39:1-2 ESV

(1) Now Joseph had been brought down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, had bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there.

(2) The LORD was with Joseph, and he became a successful man, and he was in the house of his Egyptian master.

Genesis 39:6-12 ESV

(6) So he left all that he had in Joseph's charge, and because of him he had no concern about anything but the food he ate. Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance.

(7) And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, "Lie with me."

(8) But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, because of me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my charge.

(9) He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except yourself, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"

(10) And as she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie beside her or to be with her.

(11) But one day, when he went into the house to do his work and none of the men of the house was there in the house,

(12) She caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand and fled and got out of the house.

Your really can't make a decision for righteousness in the moment of temptation.

What you do in the moment of temptation is make manifest the decisions that you have made in private for all the years leading up to that point.

As it is dealing with sin, so it is in positioning yourself for success. Decisions always translate into energy.

If you don't make the decision to live a sanctified life, you will not expand the energy in pursuing a sanctified life.

If you don't make the decision to pursue your dream you will not expend the energy on pursuing it.

Joseph learned that he would have to master his passions, or his passions would master him.

The spoiler:

The devil is a spoiler.

He wants to destroy beautiful things

Life

Marriages

Love

He wants to spoil your dreams.

He wants to pollute your mind with fear, and your heart with doubt and bitterness

Now this spirit of the spoiler can manifest itself through people.

There is a certain type of person who doesn't want the best for you, they don't like your success, and they don't even like your attempts at making the most out of a bad situation.

They will do everything they can to crush your dreams and retard your future.

By distracting you.

Discouraging you.

Ridiculing you.

Or undermining the opportunity you have.

Potiphar's wife:

Potiphar's wife was like that.

She was operating under the influence of this same spirit.
She had everything that she could ever need.
Her husband was a very wealthy and influential man.
As a family they would have wanted for nothing.

And here came Joseph.
A slave.
He literally owned nothing.
Could never own anything.
Everything he had was at the pleasure of his owner.

Joseph didn't buck his circumstances; he made the most of them.

He was simply doing the best he had with what he had to become the man he needed to be, believing that this vision for his life that he had on the inside of him, somehow, God would bring to pass.

Joseph had nothing she needed.
She just wanted.
She lusted after Joseph.

She wanted to spoil Joseph.
She wanted to take something beautiful and make it ugly.
She wanted to destroy a life to prove she had control over a life.

Let me give you a simple definition of love and lust:

Love is the desire to benefit others at the expense of self,
because love desires to give, love desires to serve.

Where as lust is the desire to benefit self at the expense of
others. Because lust desires to get, to make someone sub
servant to your wishes.

Do you know there are people like that?

The only motivation they have for sleeping with you is they want to degrade or deflower you.

They want to take something innocent and defile it.

The only reason they want a relationship with you is because they are jealous of you and they want to wound you.

Potipher's wife wanted Joseph.

She desired him.

She coveted him, she was greedy for him.

She wanted to own him.

His loyalty wasn't with her.

His affections were not for her.

And she didn't like that.

She used the only tool she available to attempt to lure him and soil him.

Church,

Sex is for loving and giving, not lusting and getting.

This wasn't about her love for Joseph; this was about her lust for him.

If she loved him, the first time he said no should have been the last time he would have needed to say no.

Temptation, moral compromise is like that.

It doesn't matter if you say no to it once; it will keep coming back to you.

It will keep hunting you and haunting you.

And often it will come back stronger than the times before.

I have heard people say ‘ you have to learn to fight temptation. You have to stand and confess you’re strong!’

I have found that only works with small temptations.

With big ones,
Ones that are very attractive and very available, the best thing to do is run!

That’s what Joseph did.

I don’t believe Joseph ran because he was strong,
I believe he ran because he was weak.

Think about it.

You’re a slave.

The master’s beautiful, bored, wife wants to have sex, she wants physical attention.
She is lonely.
She is the wife of one of the most powerful men in the nation.

She doesn’t ask him to woo her.
To buy her flowers and take her to dinner.
Or respect her in the morning.

She says...I want you to have sex with me.....now.

Joseph at this stage in his life:

Joseph had done well for himself.

He was running everything in Potiphar's house; he oversaw all of his affairs.

In fact we read that Potiphar didn't know anything about his household till the bread was in his mouth.

In a sense there was only one thing that Potiphar had access to that Joseph did not.

There was one thing that separated the slave from the master.

The wife.

Then she comes to him.

She comes to him and she says,

'Sleep with me.

Lay with me.

You will have everything the master has,

I will wash away your slave past,

there will be no distinction,

you will have influence,

people will bow down to you

you will have power.

It was the same short cut satan offered Eve in the garden of Eden.

It is interesting to note, the growth that Joseph had been through.

In the original dream, the emphasis was on people bowing down to him

Here he had a chance for personal power and influence and he said no to it.

God was working in his life.

Joseph answered her.

And I find it very interesting the way in which he answers her.

He doesn't say 'Luv, you're ugly.'
He doesn't say 'I am not attracted.'

He doesn't first of all say "God would strike me down if I did this"

He says I can't do this.
It is first of all against my personal values and secondly against my faith.

Notice that.
Both are important.

I think it is an absolutely critical point that you notice that Joseph puts his personal values above his personal faith, because that is the way they should be.

Your values are the visible evidence of your faith.
Your values are the safe guard for your spirituality.

Joseph said.... I can't do this because it would hurt someone I love and I can't do this because it would hurt the God that I love.

Some people say they have a faith, but they have no values.
That's why they live like hell Saturday and turn up to church Sunday and they and their church friends have no problem with it.

Because their faith is not the bedrock of their life upon which their personal values, the visible manifestation of their inner beliefs, is built.

You have to have values that are undergirded by the mission and vision of your life.

LET ME DRAW IT FOR YOU.

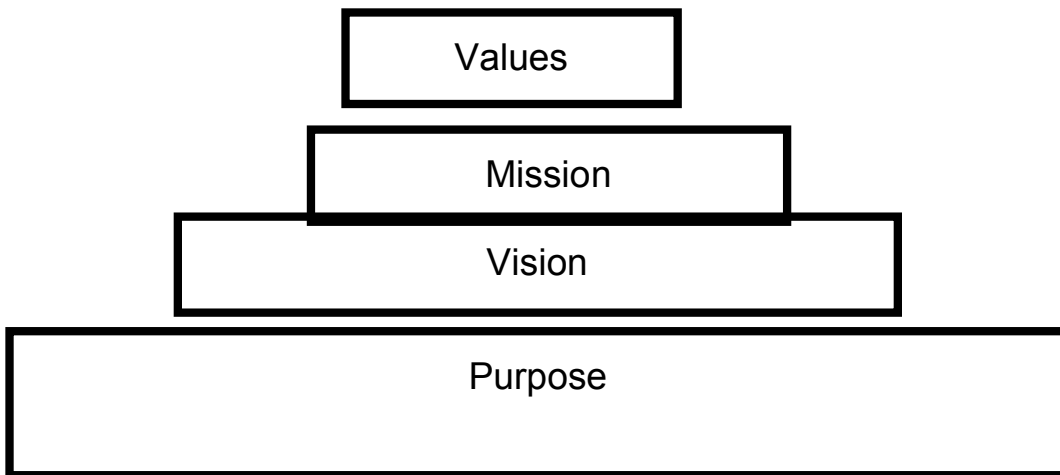
Josephs' values in life were supported by his mission in life, which was undergirded by the vision he had of his life, which rested on the foundational stone of his personal purpose.

That is why he declared first that he could not do this terrible thing because it would corrupt him at every level.

You cannot have personal integrity if these four do not line up.

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FOUR FOUNDATIONAL LEVELS OF AN AUTHENTIC LIFE



KEEP IT BRIEF!!!!

Don't expect people to value what you value:

Even after Joseph had declared his values, his reasons for his actions and his purpose, and the passion that lay behind his action, she didn't stop.

She wasn't interested in what he wanted.

Spoilers never are.

The spirit of self and lust is never satisfied.

In fact if you take a stand, and make a stand, it enrages them more.

They see someone with greater commitment than them.

They see something of beauty in you, something they can't control or have, so they set themselves on destroying or interrupting it.

And when the spoilers move from simply spoiling a life, to actively destroying a life, they will do everything they can.

This time she upped the ante.

Genesis 39

(11) But one day, when he went into the house to do his work and none of the men of the house was there in the house,

There was no one else in the house
She laid the trap.

She prepared herself.
She made herself seductive.
She was available, willing, and she prepared the entire household for the seduction.

There was no one to stop Joseph.
No one to tell on Joseph.
No one to report him to Potipher.
No one was around.

No one would ever know.
She wasn't going to tell her husband.
No one would know and she comes to him again.

In one sense, no one would ever know it ever happened.

This was not a logical thing she was trying, this was not a rational thing she was trying, this was a sinful thing she was engaged in.

All sin is unreasonable, illogical, and irrational.
Joseph knew that a man who makes a truce with sin lives in misery.

Because sin always promises to serve and please, but in reality it always enslaves and dominates.

This right here is where the story gets really fascinating for me.

To me this is where the entire future of Joseph lays.

Genesis 39:

(12) She caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand and fled and got out of the house.

The story tells us that when Joseph turned and ran she ripped his clothes from him-

....how did she rip his clothes from him?

Think about it.

She must have been close to him.

She had her hands on him.

She was very close, she had handfuls of Joseph's garment, and maybe he had already started to undress.

Yet here he was.

All but seduced.

All but violating the things he had already declared publically before.

Joseph had gotten in to deep this time.

He had allowed himself to be lured.

He had made a mistake.

He had gotten to close to the fire.

Joseph didn't talk this time.

I don't think Joseph could talk this time.

She was beautiful, he was speechless.

She reached for,

He came to her

She grabbed him, he came close.

He realized what he was doing and he ran.

He didn't have the courage to stay and talk about it.
He knew he was in a battle he could not win.
His flesh yearned.
His mind said yes, so he ran.

Friend if you let the enemy in close you are going to have to take drastic steps to escape.

If you get close to sin, if you allow yourself to get drawn into a situation, even your most drastic action will lead to your nakedness, and your errors of judgment being exposed.

Friend, sometimes the bravest thing you can do is run.

Run to church.
Run to a pastor.
Run to a friend.
Run to your family

If you let the enemy in close, he deceives you in to thinking you have no one to turn to.

If you have to run fully exposed, fully naked.
DO IT.

You may look foolish, you may feel weak and exposed, but at least you haven't compromised on your values.

But it is better to run and live, than stay and fight.

Sin will satisfy for a moment.
But the consequence will be with you for a lifetime.

Moral decision have ramification:

There is one way of looking at Joseph's decision, that Joseph's stand landed him in jail.

It got him to kicked out of the house AND into prison.

The other way is that Joseph's moral decision saved his life and his dream.

When it says of Potiphar was Captain of the Kings Guard, some commentators believe it means he was the head of the jail.

In fact the same term is used later in chapter 41 after pharaoh's dream.

Genesis 41:12 ESV

(12) A young Hebrew was there with us, a servant of the captain of the guard. When we told him, he interpreted our dreams to us, giving an interpretation to each man according to his dream.

Why would such a powerful man allow someone like Joseph not to be put to death, when he was the man who made the decision, and a slave was his own property?

This is what the Spoiler says to the men of the household.

Genesis 39:14-15 ESV

(14) She called to the men of her household and said to them, "See, he has brought among us a Hebrew to laugh at us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice.

(15) And as soon as he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried out, he left his garment beside me and fled and got out of the house."

This is what she says to her husband

Genesis 39:17-18 ESV

(17) And she told him the same story, saying, "The Hebrew servant, whom you have brought among us, came in to me to laugh at me.

(18) But as soon as I lifted up my voice and cried, he left his garment beside me and fled out of the house."

Potiphar was not a silly man.

He would have killed Joseph for mocking his wife.

In fact he got angry when he heard that he mocked her.

So what changed his mind?

I don't believe this was the Spoilers first seduction of the household slaves, and I believe Potiphar probably knew about them.

He would have killed Joseph for mocking his wife, but I believe he rewarded him with his life for running from his wife as she tried to seduce him.

So he did the best thing that he could to save the life of Joseph and the shame his wife brought on his household.

He took him to work with him; he was after all the head of the prison system.

And he put him in charge of the prison.

Potiphar did what God needed him to do.

God needed Joseph in prison so that he could take him from managing a private household to managing a government department.

God needed Joseph in a place where he could finish his preparation and have him interpret dreams and step up to lead a nation.

Moral stands may not always turn out like you think they should.

But all things work together for the good of those that love God.

My story:

I remember I had been away from home for 9 weeks, ministering all over the states

We had just had an incredible series of meetings in Forth Worth.

I was heading to my room.

I was tired.

I was lonely.

And I had been away from home and my wife WAY to long!

I got into the elevator and a woman got in with me.

She told me I could go to her room and no one would ever know.

She would tell know one.

And the things she said we could do...oh my!

I got out of that elevator and ran to my room

I ran to the phone and spend \$150 dollars on overseas phone calls to speak to Beccy and my kids.

I couldn't stand in that elevator.

I couldn't listen to that voice of lust.

I had to run and call home and listen to that voice of love.

I can't remember the call home.

But I am pretty sure the kids were fighting.

The wife was sick of being a single mom.

We probably talked about everything and nothing.

The dish washer from hell, the lawn mower that didn't work, the weather...

But I was safe.

My decision to run was not made on that night.

My decision to run was made 15 years before that when I asked her and she said yes.

Why did I run?

Because if I had stood there a second longer,

I would not have made it.

Once you say no, it gets worse:

Did you notice that once Joseph made a stand, the temptation intensified?

The more you resist the pull of the world and the flaws of your character, the stronger you become.

You may never kill the dark dog, but you can learn how to control the volume.

The end of that story is that I hopped on the plane to head home the next morning and I was propositioned twice more.

Once in the airport lounge in DFW and the last time in the red carpet lounge in LAX.

My answer...I went and brought a catholic priest collar and traveled for the next 6 months with it on, I got the weirdest looks and into some arguments about the Popes stand on abortion, but no more lonely business women!

Guidelines for staying safe and staying away from sexual temptation:

Rules for the road:

1. The road is not real.

Remember that while on the road you are in fantasy land.

Everyone likes you

Everyone serves you

No one complains about you not doing the lawn or the laundry

Don't get a false sense of invulnerability....all the servants may have been sent outside, but your still not safe.

2. Suggestion for the hotel room.

When traveling order your food to your room, or pick up take out and eat it in your room, don't eat alone in the bar area.

Prostitutes frequent them looking for business people.

3. Guard you eyes.

Buy DVD's and play them on your computer in bed don't turn on the TV.

If you do, don't channel surf, know what channels the news is on or the history channel, if you sit there going around the horn, you will end up in trouble.

After 8 pm at night, it all turns to porn as it is.

When check into the hotel ask them to block all of their adult TV shows because even the preview channels show things none of us need to be watching.

Las Vegas hotels report that the greatest amount of pornography is purchased during Christian Conventions.

If you are struggling when you travel, let me know.

I will help you set up a hotline with myself or another key guy in church so that you can call 24/7.

I am my brother's keeper.

4. Make it home away from home.

Always take a picture of your wife and kids and put it on the bedside table.

I have them on my phone, computer as a slide show.
Every and any occasion I show them to the people I am doing business with so they know they are top of my mind and there is no room for anything else.

Always call your family before bed and pray with them and ask about their days....you become intimate, with whom you pray, for whom you pray about whom you pray.

Get a couple of computers with video cameras so you can 'see them' if you are away on extended trips.

5. Be inclusive and open with your schedule.

Send your spouse your full itinerary with phone numbers.
Give them permission to call you anytime that you are free.
Ask them for permission to go out on business dinner with members of the opposite sex.
Never go out to dinner or lunch with just a member of the opposite sex.
Always make it at least 2 other people.

Mel and I had a business dinner a couple of months ago, I asked her to check it with Kevin, and he said he was fine. I ran it past Beccy, she said it was fine.

We drove in separate cars, ever though we both left from the office.
Why because we don't trust ourselves? No, we just love our spouses and our reputations more than the convenience.

6. Be wary of social networking sites:

a) Don't friend old flames on face book or other social networks.

50% of all divorces in the USA now cite social networking sites as a major cause in divorce.

It is emotional adultery. There is no such thing as innocent flirting. If your wife or husband would feel uncomfortable with what you are saying and how you are saying it...then you are probably way over the line.

b) Social networks provide a false sense of intimacy.

I believe that there's a false sense of intimacy you develop when you chat or message someone on those sites... like someone really thinks they know you because they see your pics, read your profile, see the picture of your life.

And it is inciting, a sense of mystery.
Someone finds me attractive.
Someone says I am pretty.
Someone compliments me.
It's a place where your ego gets fed.
Because they really don't know you.

And it creates a false relationship and opens yourself up to emotional adultery at the very least.

That is why I have a picture of my wife and I on my FB site.
It is very clear that I am very married.
And very happy.
And I think she is very hot.

c) Give others access to your face book or MySpace site.

Beccy always says no to some random guy trying to friend her, and she always asked for permission to say yes to someone from our time in Australia.

My sites are set up differently, they are used to try and target non church people in the local area.

Both Joni and Mel have access to my FB site.
Beccy can see it anytime she wants.

Mel helps me manage a lot of the content on my pages; she sees every message that has ever been sent.

They have the ability to see every conversation, every private message, and every so called friend.

d) Say no to work functions your unsure of.

No one goes to Hooters for the wings!

If the team wants to go celebrate and that is the level of their creativity, bail.

Value what you have.

Love what you have and run to what you have.

And if you don't get the promotion from your boss because you are not a 'team player' look to God because he certainly rewards the right and disposes the wrong.

e) Be honest about your love life.

I have been pastoring for over 20 years now and all marriage problems come down to an issue over communication, sex or money.

She often says it is an issue of communication and money.
He often says it is an issue of sex and money.

If you are struggling in communicating in one area of your life, it will affect all areas of your life.

The worst thing you can do is live in denial.

Someone once told me that when you first get married you take a jar and every time you have sex in your first year you put a jelly bean in it and after the first year you take one jelly bean every time you have sex and that you will spend the rest of your life trying to empty the jar, but to know avail.

RUBBISH!

Everything gets better with age sunshine.

Sex is communication expressed in a physical form.
It is the confirmation and celebration of a covenant between a man and a woman.

And I think we should all celebrate our divine covenant as often as we can.

But struggling in your marriage,
struggling in your communication,
struggling in your sex life,
are not things to be embarrassed about,
but things to talk about,
to get help with so you can enjoy them.

I know Beccy is still waiting for middle age to kick in...I told her it will in about another 80 or 90 years.
If you are struggling in your intimate marital life, talk to someone.

We all struggle at times.
We all go through seasons.
But any good Christian woman and good Christian man is committed to doing their part to ensure that their spouse doesn't wander.

Ladies you have your emotional needs, yes he should be aware of those and cater to those-

But-

He has his physical needs and you should be aware of those and cater to those.

It is a two way street.

He needs to listen to you.

You need to put out when he wants it.

As long as there is communication and sex, you can both work on the money issue.

Some ideas:

- Plan intimacy
- Schedule date nights
- Schedule times to talk, to connect

- Put the kids to bed early, and get the kids up early, wear them out

- New mom's you married him before you had kids
- Kids are the manifestation of your life, not a substitute for physical intimacy with your husband

- Talk about your dreams, hopes, desires, future

GET A COPY OF LETS TALK ABOUT SEX