



May 12-13, 2012

Genesis 39

“Fighting Temptation”

Pastor Gary Hamrick

This study is the second of two in Pastor Gary’s series dealing with temptation. We’re going to see the clear and distinct difference in the philosophy of the world and a biblical approach to temptation. The “World” would have us believe that it’s best to just go ahead and indulge yourself and hope you don’t get caught. And if you do get caught, just cover up the messes and problems. Joseph models the Bible’s approach to temptation in Genesis 39. We’re taught in this account to resist any temptation to sin, so that we won’t suffer any negative consequences and we won’t have anything to cover up. And when we resist, God will be honored and we will be blessed!

In Joseph’s case, it seems, at least on the surface, that he wasn’t blessed, especially when you consider the fact that he was put in prison for his actions. Remember, he was sent to prison because he was falsely accused concerning a crime he didn’t commit. Living a life of honesty and integrity may result in other people becoming angry and making all kinds of accusations against us. However, it is better to be true to the Lord and suffer temporary fall-out from others than to be unfaithful to the Lord and suffer eternal consequences. The writer of [Proverbs 16:7](#) said it best: *“When a man’s ways are pleasing to the Lord, he makes even his enemies live at peace with him.”*

Don’t forget, that even though Joseph ended up in prison for doing what was right, the *“Lord was with him... showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden.”*¹

¹ [Genesis 39:21](#)

In this study Pastor Gary points out that dealing with temptation requires counting the cost, considering certain things off limits, calling yielding to temptation sin, and crying out to the Lord for help.

Count The Cost

1. **Genesis 39:7-9a** - *"... 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."*
2. Joseph realized how blessed he was and how much was at stake if he was to give in to this temptation to commit adultery.
3. Oftentimes people give in to temptation because, in the heat of the moment, they don't stop to calculate the cost.
4. When you think about it, we are all really only one bad decision away from losing the blessings from the Lord and the blessing of the Lord.
5. Temptation appeals to irrational thought, which is why many people express regrets over a sinful choice they've made, by saying, "I just wasn't thinking, and I wish I could take it back or do things completely differently.
6. Joseph had taken stock of his life and he had come to the conclusion that God had been good to him, even though his brothers had betrayed him and he was a slave in a foreign land.
7. He recognized that the Lord loved him, and that it was the Lord who had given him blessing and favor.
8. There will always be a cost when we give in to temptation.
 - a. At first, it may be on a smaller scale that affects us personally but, gradually, over time, even the smaller things will become larger and larger things that could potentially affect our career, marriage, family, reputation, health, dignity, and self-respect.
 - b. Some people are able to recover, but for many, they are never able to recover because the cost of their sin was too great.

9. We would do well to make a list of all the blessings of the Lord in our lives and post the list in a highly visible place so that we would always be reminded what we stand to lose if we give in to temptation.
10. We need to decide *now* and determine that we will not jeopardize the blessings of the Lord for the momentary pleasure of sin!

Consider Certain Things “Off Limits”

11. **Genesis 39:9b** - *“My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife.”*
12. Joseph had made up his mind that he would not go certain places, as well as not befriend certain people or be involved in certain relationships.
13. Joseph’s decision-making was done well in advance of this encounter with Potiphar’s wife, so he didn’t find himself entertaining or giving thought to the offer of sex with another man’s wife.
14. Considering certain things off limits applies to other temptations, including drinking alcohol, using illegal drugs, stealing, cheating, overeating, and lying.
15. Believers must draw boundaries to ensure there will be people and places that are off limits, because the temptation to yield to sin poses too much of a risk.
16. **1 Corinthians 15:33** - *“Do not be misled: ‘Bad company corrupts good character.’ ”*
17. In **Genesis 39:10**, we read that not only did Joseph refuse to go to bed with her, he refused to even be with her!

Call Yielding To Temptation, Sin

18. **Genesis 39:9c** - *“How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?”*
19. Joseph demonstrated wisdom and spiritual maturity when he said that yielding to this temptation would be not only wicked, but a sin against God.
20. He understood the fact God was looking, even when no one else was!

21. No matter how skillful people are at concealing or covering something up, they will never be able to escape the all-seeing eye of God.
22. **Hebrews 4:13** - *"Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account."*
23. **Jeremiah 23:24** - *"'Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?' declares the Lord. 'Do not I fill heaven and earth?' declares the Lord."*
24. We often hear people attempt to be clever when they call minimizing sin "a mistake" or "I have some issues" or "I did something wrong."
25. The simple truth is that not calling yielding to temptation sin, makes us more likely to commit sin.

Cry Out To God For Help

26. When we read that Joseph ran out of the house with Potiphar's wife holding his cloak, we see that he was willing to do whatever it took to escape temptation.
27. **1 Corinthians 6:18** - *"Flee from sexual immorality..."*
28. "The Bible teaches us in times of temptation... there is one command: Flee! Get away from it... for every struggle against lust in one's own strength is doomed to failure." - Dietrich Bonhoeffer
29. There are two weapons Christians need to fight the battle of temptation:
 - a. The Word of God
 - i. We must stay in the Word to build ourselves up in our faith.
 - ii. When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness by Satan, the Scriptures were his consistent and powerful weapons against Satan.
 - iii. **Matthew 4:4** - *"Jesus answered him, 'It is also written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "*
 - iv. **Matthew 4:7** - *"Jesus answered him, 'It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.' "*
 - v. **Matthew 4:10** - *"Jesus said to him, 'Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.' "*
 - vi. **Psalms 119:9-11** - *"How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. I see you with all my heart; do not let*

me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.”

b. Prayer

- i. [Matthew 26:41](#) - *“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”*
- ii. [Matthew 6:13](#) - *“ ‘And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’ ”*
- iii. [Hebrews 2:18](#) - *“Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.”*
- iv. [Hebrews 4:15-16](#) - *“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”*

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [Genesis 39](#) to provide an overview for this study.
3. Allow the people in your group to share experiences they've had in which they've sinned and attempted to cover it up.
 - a. Were there any short-term or long-term consequences?
 - b. How severe were the consequences?
 - c. What did sin cost you in this situation?
4. Have there been times in your life when you've resisted temptation, only to have others accuse you of a “crime” you didn't commit?
5. Read and discuss [Proverbs 16:7](#).
6. Spend time talking about specific situations when you've been able to resist temptation because you first counted the cost.
7. Do you agree with Pastor Gary's statement that, “temptation appeals to irrational thought.”
8. Read and discuss [Ecclesiastes 8:11-13](#): *“When a sentence for a crime is not quickly carried out, the hearts of the people are filled with schemes to do wrong.*

Although a wicked man commits a hundred crimes and still lives a long time, I know that it will go better with God-fearing men, who are reverent before God. Yet because the wicked do not fear God, it will not go well with them, and their days will not lengthen like a shadow."

9. What do you think of the idea of literally writing a list of the Lord's blessings in your life and posting it in a prominent place so you'll be reminded of how much sin could potentially cost you?
10. How has pre-temptation decision-making helped you not yield to temptation?
11. Spend time talking about the people/situations/things you consider to be "off limits."
12. Read and discuss [1 Corinthians 15:33](#).
13. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about times when they have tried to shy away from using the word sin and inserting words like "mistake" or phrases like "I have issues."
14. How have you tried to cover up sin in your life?
 - a. How successful were you and how long did your "secret" last?
15. How has the Lord helped you when you've called out to him to help you resist temptation?
16. Read and discuss Dietrich Bonhoeffer's quote about fleeing temptation. (See #28 above)
17. How has the Word of God played a part in your victories over temptation?
18. Read and discuss [Psalm 119:9-11](#).
19. How has prayer played a part in your victories over temptation?
20. Read and discuss [Matthew 6:13](#), [Matthew 26:41](#), plus [Hebrews 2:18](#) and [Hebrews 4:15-16](#).
21. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: determine in their heart and mind that they will not forget to count the cost of yielding to temptation and committing sin; make sure they draw specific boundaries that would ensure they stay as far away from temptation as

possible; call out to God for help when confronted by temptation, whether it be from within or without, trusting that he will provide the strength to stand firm in the face of the fiercest temptation; (have someone ready to read [Psalm 119:9-11](#) and pray the Scriptures); thank the Lord for his promise to bless and honor those who honor him by the kind of life they live.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).