

Joseph - Finding Who We Are In Christ (Part 4)

Sunday, November 22, 2020

Through Joseph's life we have been on a journey to discover who we are in Christ and understand how we can grow into the person we were meant to be

So far, we have learned that our identity in Christ is...

- We are wanted by God and have been created to *"add"* to His Kingdom.
- We are highly favored and loved by God
- God has a plan for our lives and wants to fill us with His dreams (purposes)
- It doesn't matter how old you are, God has plans for you. And it doesn't matter how long you have been waiting, you can't give up on the dreams God has put in your heart. Believe what God has said. Hold on to the things the dreams and visions he has planted in you.

We said that there will be times when the enemy wants to strip us of our God given identity and discourage us from fulfilling the purposes for which God created us and to which we have been called. In these times we must hold on to who we are in Christ by...

- Having **HOPE** for better days ahead
- **WALKING** forward in faith one step at a time
- **TRUSTING** that God still has a plan and is still in control
- **PRAISING** God in spite of the pain

Then we talked about how God wants to chisel away at our lives in order to form us into the masterpiece that He created us to be. We said that one of the ways that God does that is to shape us through **SERVANTHOOD**

Servanthood shapes us by...

- **Instilling a heart of humility**
- **Exposing the dangers of pride**
- **Teaching us the value of hard work**
- **Shifting our focus from ourselves to others**

Someone has said... "The more you reaffirm who you are in Christ, the more your behavior will begin to reflect [your true identity](#)."

Today we want to look at a key factor in who we are in Christ, a factor that is determined by the choices we make to **LIVE WITH INTEGRITY**

Let's continue on with Joseph's story and see how he chose to live with **INTEGRITY**

Potiphar's Wife - living with integrity

Genesis 39:6-23

6 So Potiphar left everything he had in Joseph's care; with Joseph in charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate.

Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, **7** and after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, "Come to bed with me!"

8 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. **9** 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?" **10** And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.

11 One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside. **12** She caught him by his cloak and said, "Come to bed with me!" But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house.

13 When she saw that he had left his cloak in her hand and had run out of the house, **14** she called her household servants. "Look," she said to them, "this Hebrew has been brought to us to make sport of us! He came in here to sleep with me, but I screamed. **15** When he heard me scream for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house."

16 She kept his cloak beside her until his master came home. **17** Then she told him this story: "That Hebrew slave you brought us came to me to make sport of me. **18** But as soon as I screamed for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house."

19 When his master heard the story his wife told him, saying, "This is how your slave treated me," he burned with anger. **20** Joseph's master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined.

But while Joseph was there in the prison, **21** the Lord was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. **22** So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there. **23** The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.

Before we can live lives of integrity, we must understand what integrity is

- adherence to moral and ethical principles; soundness of moral character; honesty.
- the state of being whole, entire, or undiminished:
- a sound, unimpaired, or perfect condition:
- "have integrity" to the extent that they act according to the values, beliefs and principles they claim to hold.

In simplest terms, Integrity means doing what is right.

But of course, that begs the question... "What is right?"

God defines what is right. We cannot leave it up to the world to define right and wrong. We cannot leave it up to our own hearts to define what is right and wrong. We must submit ourselves to God's truth and God's truth alone. Once again, we see why studying God's Word is so important.

Psalm 24:3-6

3 Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? **4** The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god. **5** They will receive blessing from the Lord and vindication from God their Savior. **6** Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, God of Jacob.

1 Timothy 3:2

2 Now the overseer is to be above reproach...

1 John 3:7-10

7 Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. The one who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. **8** The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. **9** No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God. **10** This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not God's child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister.

1 Thessalonians 5:22

22 reject every kind of evil.

1 Thessalonians 5:22 (ESV, KJV)

22 Abstain from (all appearance) every form of evil.

I have often wondered why we have Genesis 38 sandwiched between the story of Joseph in Genesis 37 and Genesis 39. At first glance I assumed it was just a quick fade to what was happening in Canaan while Joseph was starting his life of slavery in Egypt. But the more I thought about it, the more I felt like the whole point of Genesis 38 (The story of Judah, his three sons and his daughter-in-law Tamar) was to contrast the lack of integrity found in that chapter with the life of integrity that Joseph lived in chapter 39

Maybe that's why we have Genesis 38. Judah whose name means praise was not living a life that brought praise to God.

Joseph whose name meant I will add, was adding to the testimony of his God; but all of that would have been negated if he had not lived with integrity

As I said, INTEGRITY is a choice that we must make. God's plan for us is to live lives of integrity; but He won't force that choice upon us. Through His Word He teaches us what integrity is and through His Spirit, He prompts us to do the right thing; but He will not force us to comply. If we come into agreement with His plan and in our hearts seek to act in obedience' he will give us the strength that we need to live it out.

Potiphar's Wife - living with integrity

1. Even if it seems very small

- a. Lot pleaded to go to a very small city because he couldn't bear to let go of his sin
- b. **Song of Songs 2:15**
15 Catch for us the foxes, the little foxes that ruin the vineyards, our vineyards that are in bloom.

2. Even when we believe it won't hurt anyone

- a. Maybe that's what David believed about his sin with Bathsheba but look at the damage that it did.
- b. Sin always hurts someone
- c. Sin hurts our testimony (Lot's lack of integrity gave him no standing with his son-in-laws)
- d. Sin hurts God
 - i. Sinned against God. Joseph knew this was not what God wanted. David when confessing his sin with Bathsheba acknowledged that his sin was against God

3. Even if we feel we deserve it

- a. One of the most subtle temptations of the devil is to make us think we deserve something that would compromise our integrity

4. Even when we think no one will know

- a. God sees and God knows
- b. Live as though we were on an open mic and being recorded on video

5. Even when we assume we can get away with it

- a. Fraud in the church more than missions

Increasing at an annual rate of more than six percent, researchers expect fraud committed against the church worldwide to reach the \$80 billion mark by 2025. That's still not the whole picture. Most cases of church fraud go unreported and therefore are not included in statistics.

According to the current [Status of Global Christianity](#) report from the Center for the Study of Global Christianity, Christian organizations worldwide were expected to experience more than \$68 billion in financial fraud by mid-2019. Compare that to the \$60 billion churches are expected to give to worldwide mission work during the same time frame.

6. Even when we feel it is justified

- a. Maybe David thought he was justified because he was King, or because he had fought so hard and did what was right for so long. Maybe he felt justified because he wasn't getting the love he thought he deserved from his wives. Maybe he thought no one would ever know. Maybe he told himself that Uriah didn't treat Bathsheba right.

7. Even if others don't

- a. Everybody else is doing it, is not an argument that will hold up with God

8. Even if we are falsely accused

1 Peter 2:11-12

11 Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. **12** Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

9. Even if it doesn't seem fair

10. Even if the cost is great

Other things Joseph teaches us about Integrity...

Integrity begins even before it is put to the test.... Joseph wouldn't be with her

Integrity means obedience in the big and small things

In fact, Jesus said that disobedience starts in our hearts, (i.e. committing adultery in our hearts is the same as committing adultery)

Integrity means putting as much distance between ourselves and the temptation as fast as we can. The more we play around the edge the more likely we are to fall in

Some subtle ways we do not live with integrity...

Saying we will do something and then not doing it

Thinking the rules don't apply to us

Creating our own rules

Not Honoring those who are in leadership over us

Slow obedience is disobedience

Are you living with integrity, at church, at home, at work, at school, when your all alone? Or are you compromising in small ways, justifying your actions, ignoring the conviction of the Holy Spirit, believing the lies of the enemy and your own heart.

God rewards our integrity

But while Joseph was there in the prison, **21** the Lord was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. **22** So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there. **23** The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.