

Flee Youthful Lusts

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Paul admonishes Timothy to “flee youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace” (2 Tim. 2:22). Youthful lusts are a great danger that must be avoided at all costs. The young are not to merely go the other direction. They must flee as if their life depended upon it. The Christian must pursue godliness instead. A great example of one who fled youthful lusts was Joseph. When the wife of Joseph’s master tried to lie with him, he refused and chose purity instead.

1) **Joseph’s Susceptibility.** It was not easy for Joseph to do what was right. Many people would have sinned if they were in his place. First, notice that the Lord was with Joseph so that he became a successful man (Gen. 39:2-3). While this may seem like a deterrent from sin, many have fallen victim to earthly success. In the midst of a successful military campaign (2 Sam. 8-10), David brazenly sinned with Bathsheba and murdered her husband (2 Sam. 11). After Uzziah, a king of Judah, was blessed by God, he became proud and acted unfaithfully (2 Chron. 26:16). Success breeds arrogance, and we must guard against sin at those times (1 Cor. 10:12). Second, Joseph could have escaped detection from those around him. He was entrusted with everything in the house by his master (Gen. 39:4-6). At one point, Joseph was left alone in the house with the master’s wife (Gen. 39:11). Even if no one else found out, Joseph recognized that he was in God’s presence (Gen. 39:9; Ps. 139:1-12). Third, Joseph was a young man. Many people use youth as an excuse to sin. However, youth should be a time of devotion to God and dedication to purity (Ecc. 12:1; Ps. 119:9). Despite Joseph’s susceptibility, he refused to sin against God.

2) **Joseph’s Stand.** Joseph made a true stand for the Lord. When Potipher’s wife requested that Joseph lie with her, he simply refused, explaining that such action was a great evil and sin against God (Gen. 39:8-9). He did not yield to sin to impress her. He was not embarrassed. He simply stated that it was sin. Joseph overcame more than her initial request. She repeatedly enticed Joseph, but he continued to refuse. His resolve to obey God could not be diminished. Finally, she grabbed his garment and tried to physically make him lie with her. The time for talk was over. Joseph fled, leaving the garment in her hand. He removed himself completely from the temptation.

3) **Joseph’s Suffering.** Even though Joseph did what was right, he had to endure suffering for his decision to serve God. He experienced a loss of reputation. Potipher’s wife claimed that Joseph tried to rape her (Gen. 39:13-15). Although this was untrue, others may have believed such a lie. Joseph also experienced a loss of position. He was entrusted with all that was in the house. However, his trust and position were removed. Joseph also lost his freedom. He was treated like a common criminal and thrown into jail by Potipher (Gen. 39:20). Today, Christians may also suffer for doing what is right (2 Tim. 3:12; 1 Pet. 4:15-16).

When Joseph was presented with the opportunity to fulfill his lusts, he chose purity and obedience to God. Let us make the same decision when we are faced with lusts today.

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