

00-03-26b

George Beverly Shea singing from Psalm 24. Let's resume our study now in Genesis chapter 39 and have quite an interesting turn of events here because as we see the fortunes of Joseph go badly, he starts out being treated as a prince in his own household and then his princely garment is taken from him and he's sold into slavery. Now he is a servant in the household and now his servant's garment is going to be taken from him and he's going to suffer another reverse.

So every time Joseph loses an article of clothing he goes to a lower status. But the cause of this of course is Potiphar's wife and we've seen the first three principles I wanted to offer to you on temptation. Of course we don't have the time to do a full-blown study.

There are many wonderful passages. The Bible in general as teaching us about this life is replete with examples and illustrations and wonderful scriptures that have to do with our decision-making. That is after all the substance of our calling is to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, all our souls, and all our might and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

And that all takes place in the soul. Anything that doesn't spring from faith, anything that doesn't result in hope, in love rather, anything that's not sustained by hope as a motivation is going to be sin. And that is the issue.

We sometimes try to define the mission of Christians or the mission of the church as evangelism or as ministry or reflecting the glory of God to the world through overt action when in fact God's calling for us is to reflect his glory in this life through inner transformation. And that will oftentimes itself be manifest in works but we keep wanting to skip to the work step and miss the inner transformation. So obviously there are going to be a lot of scriptures and a lot of passages that deal with our mental struggles against sin and against temptation.

You can make your own comparison of Peter's situation when Jesus is under trial. It's already been predicted that he will deny the Lord thrice. And you know we think well we've got to choose, shun the wrong and choose the right.

But when you look at Peter, even knowing beforehand that there was going to be, oh no Lord I'll follow you to the death. He didn't stand in the courtyard by that fire with the servant girl and with the other servants and decide that he would abandon the Lord or that he would reject or deny the Lord. His eyes are on his vulnerability, his fear.

He's vulnerable to arrest. He's vulnerable to the fact that his life could end on that night if he owns up to his identity as a disciple of Jesus Christ who is even now in some unknown inner chamber being raked over the coals by the Inquisitors. And wouldn't it be great if all of our temptations came in the calm light of day where we had the chance to sit down and lay out the scriptures and who we are and why we're here on one hand and

all of the problems with the temptation on the other.

But in our experience we're just like Peter. We're going along and it just blindsides us. We typically learn most of our lessons in retrospect.

We look back and say oh I should have and you know Peter could have been the king of retrospect and looking back at all the ways he could have avoided that very disastrous situation for him personally. But to understand that temptation is going to be appealing. It was certainly appealing to Peter to just take the easy way out and say oh no you know what difference does it make what these servants think around the fire.

They're not priests. They're not legal officers. They're not Romans.

What's the harm in telling a servant girl that I was not with him? And this will avoid making us stir. This is not the time to take a stand. It could be dangerous.

That was very possible for him to do. So we saw that temptation is attractive. Temptation is possible.

Temptation oftentimes will resist reason and will still be there and still be exerting its pull in spite of your best arguments. Joseph gives all these arguments to Potiphar's wife. It doesn't calm her down.

She doesn't say you know Joseph that's really true and it sure would be a shame to betray Potiphar's confidence in you and she wants what she wants and she just reiterates her two-word request. Lie with me. She sees Joseph.

He's beautiful of form and handsome of figure and a rare example of physical beauty like his mother Rebecca was or his mother Rachel rather and his grandmother Rebecca was and so she wants what she wants and she's a woman used to getting her way. So the fourth thing I'd like to point out here is resisting temptation may not always produce an immediately good result. It may produce a bad result.

If you do the right thing in the face of temptation you can't say well if I do the right thing everything will turn out fine. You just can't say that. In terms of circumstances you can say it in the long term and in the spiritual sense but in terms of what happens in life you may take a stand on principle and lose your job or lose a relationship.

You may end up offending someone because they ask you can you please co-sign this loan? Can you please give me a receipt for something I didn't buy? Can you please do something that is a compromise or is dishonest or is out of character? Not an example of Christian integrity and by refusing to do that you lose this person. If you're in business they might take their business elsewhere. If you're in personal relationship they may start bad-mouthing you to the circle of acquaintances and it can cost something to resist temptation and it often does and because this goes back to point one.

Temptation is attractive not just appealing in the positive sense but it may be attractive as a way to avoid trouble. Wouldn't it be better to just not make waves, not rock the boat? This is convenient, it's expedient, it's practical, it's pragmatic. This will cause the least problem.

Why don't I just squint a little bit and do this thing or take this course? Resisting temptation may be bad for you from a human perspective. Could John have resisted the temptation to comment on Herod's marriage? Probably. That's a little bit different example.

It was the truth that he spoke but by being silent, by compromising his calling, he would not have been locked up in prison but he took a stand for what was right and it cost him his life. The Lord Jesus Christ never compromised the truth of his identity or the gospel or anything else. It cost him his life.

There are many examples in scripture. Elijah going up and telling Ahab how it is and then fleeing for his life because it wasn't a popular message. So that's our fourth point.

Resisting temptation you can't just say well if I do this I know everything's going to be the yellow brick road to the Wizard of Oz. It's just not. Fifth, what are our options when we do identify temptation? That's of course the hardest part.

You think about Peter once again and some others in the Bible. You think about David looking over the rooftop and seeing Bathsheba in the altogether bathing herself and deciding that he had to have her. You typically don't see these things coming.

They don't come in an envelope marked temptation here. Open and read contents. It blindsides us.

It catches us unawares. It sneaks up behind and ensnares us. It scandalizes us.

The Greek verb *skandalizo* is used in this connection. That's why Satan is pictured as a lion who is prowling the earth seeking whom he may devour. Lions prowl and they obtain their prey by stealth.

We get a lot of these stealth attacks that don't come with big neon signs saying this is a temptation what should you do. We typically pick ourselves up out of the mud and say what was that truck that just hit me and we look and see it receding in the distance and it says that was a temptation and you just failed to identify it. What are our options if we can identify a temptation and of course what is the means of identifying? We need to take heed.

We need to watch. We need to pray. If we're walking in the light, the light is going to expose the deeds of darkness and expose the things of darkness.

In John chapter 1 men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. In 1st John it says we need to be walking in the light. It's a durative present tense.

Keep on walking in the light because that's where God is. He is in the light and we will keep on having fellowship with Him when we so do. So that's rather than necessarily looking under every rock to see if there's a temptation there.

If we maintain our spiritual health and our spiritual vigilance when something accosts us, when someone says something or the phone rings or an accident happens, some issue arises when we open the mail or have a conversation. Because we are alert and aware of who we are and why we're here, we'll identify it in the moment as a temptation. But once you identify it, it's kind of like identifying the guy that just raised up out of the bushes and is shooting his AK-47 at you, knowing that he's an enemy doesn't necessarily protect you from his attack.

What are our options when we are successful in realizing, well this is the charge of the elephant or this is the charge of the angry mule or this is the charge of the very small insect. Whatever it may be, it's equally important, whether it's a small test or a large one, for us to seek to not be deflected by it, to be tripped up and caused to sin. Well, scripture gives us two basic choices and they talk about how when adrenaline hits your system it activates your fight-or-flight instincts.

And those are basically our choices. We can fight or we can flee. The question is, how do you know? You remember that thing, God grant me the wisdom or the power to change the things I can, the patience to endure the things I cannot change, and then, you know, the wisdom to know the difference, some such thing.

Discerning when to flee and when to fight is a big part of our spiritual vision. So the very same thing that enables us to identify a temptation will enable us to discern whether it is time to take a stand or to flee. Your classic passages for this, we go over to James 4, wonderful wisdom from God in the book of James on temptation, the fact that God does not tempt us, it was a great observation made during the break.

But James chapter 4 verse 7, therefore submit to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you. Now if you've memorized this verse, if you've heard it quoted, what's the part that gets quoted all the time? Resist the devil and he will flee from you. But what precedes that? Submit to God.

You cannot resist the devil if you have not submitted to God. To stand and resist the devil without submitting to God is like stepping out into the middle of an interstate highway and holding up your hand in front of a semi-tractor trailer and saying stop. The power to resist the devil is not inherent within us.

It comes from God and God gives it to those who submit themselves to the mighty hand

of God so that you may be delivered in due time. He gives more grace in James 4, 6. God resists the proud. God gives grace to the humble.

So if we submit to God, we will have the grace to help in time of need. Verse 8 reiterates this point. Draw near to God and he will draw near to you.

Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Verse 10, humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord. He will lift you up.

You'll notice that in this context of resisting the devil, there is far more emphasis on submitting ourselves to God. One of the things that comes as a result of submitting ourselves to God is that we will resist the devil and he will flee. There are other times when we are told in Scripture to flee.

1 Corinthians 6, 18, very well-known passage, flee youthful lusts. You look at the context of that statement, you once again find that relationship with the Lord is in view. Verse 12 of 1 Corinthians 6, all things are lawful for me but not all things are helpful.

This is again something we were talking about on the break. There's a difference between, the first thing we learn as new believers when we start to grow is the difference between good and evil. The difference between what is right and what is wrong.

And if we continue to grow, we will find that our volitional tests go beyond, when you're learning math and they give you little story problems and you can imagine God doing the same thing with us. The multiple choice test is going to have three wrong answers and one right one. And each of the wrong answers will have sin or evil associated with it.

We identify the sin or the evil and we say, well that choice is out. Can't do that because that violates the Word of God. There's one that doesn't have sin or evil involved, that's got to be the right choice.

And that's great for us when we are infants and growing up on the sincere milk of the Word. But as we grow, and hopefully we will, our tests and our challenges become more sophisticated because we will have options, none of which have sin or evil associated with them. You might know, you might be in a circle of people, as a single person there might be two or three wonderful people there.

There's no sin or evil, they're all, they love the Lord and so forth. Well which one should you marry? There are several good seminaries, which one should you go to? Different towns to live in, different jobs to take, different houses to buy, cars to buy, the daily decisions that we make. There's no intrinsic evil in buying a one particular, although people probably argue with me, but one particular brand of car over another.

There are people that live and die by a Dodge or a Chevy or a Ford or a Buick. But

there's nothing intrinsically sinful or evil about choosing one thing over another. Should you have cable TV in your house or not? Should you go see a movie if it's got an R rating or not? These are more complex questions.

A simplistic approach would be, well they show bad things on cable, so no cable for me. Well R means somebody said a bad word or showed something they shouldn't, so no movie for me. Well our choices are more sophisticated and particularly as we grow our senses are exercised not only to discern good and evil, but Paul's prayer for his listeners, his readers, is that you will come to know, come to discern the better things, between good, better and best, where now the law of love and the law of supreme sacrifice enter in.

And it is seeking the best thing that God has rather than settling for what's good or what's acceptable. You know, you have the good, you have the acceptable and you have the perfect will of God. And there's a difference.

There are things that we can do that are not bad. We can go along in kind of the middle of the road with an average level of interest, an average level of commitment, an average level of prayer, or we can push and press toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. And you have these choices where there's discernment involved.

So this discernment of whether to flee or whether to fight is going to be based on wisdom and knowledge from God. Look at what it says here in 1 Corinthians 6. All things are lawful for me. There's no intrinsic sin or evil involved here, but not all things are helpful.

What's the most helpful thing? What is the best reflection of self-sacrificial love? Love that's beneficial toward others, even if it costs me something. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. He talks about foods for the stomach and raising us up by His power and so forth.

Do you not know that your bodies, in verse 15, are members of Christ? Shall I take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not. Or do you not know that the one who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? The two, he says, shall become one flesh. But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.

Where do you spend your time? Do you concentrate on being joined to the Lord, or do you wind up spending a lot of time being joined to the world? If you're joined to the world, if you're exposing yourself to the world, if you're letting stuff come into the eye gate, this is where a lot of immorality takes place and sins against marriage begins with dabbling in pornography. Because you say, well, it's harmless. I'm just looking at something.

No one is damaged. There's no act that has been committed. With that compromise and

that exposure, you're joining yourself to the world.

You're indulging the lust of the eye. And in so doing, you erode the self-control that God puts in our soul. And with the erosion of self-control, you will compromise, and you will dodge, and you will deceive, and you will go down a long, slippery, destructive road toward worse things.

So what do we join ourselves with? If we want to succeed in resisting temptation, if we want to succeed when temptation comes, to be able either to flee it or to fight it, we have to have done preparation. I used to be in the service, and you get training from time to time in hand-to-hand combat. Well, I never did have a chance to use that.

I was never put in a fixed bayonet situation in an infantry context against an enemy. But the preparation in anticipation that that might happen gives you confidence. Gives you confidence not only if you're having to go into a situation, which I have been in, where there actually are enemy-type sneaking around who are actively trying to snuff out your life, but in other situations where you know that if need be, you can defend yourself.

You can protect yourself or your loved ones should the occasion arise. And it gives you confidence, and it gives you objectivity, because you're not swayed by fear. You're not unnecessarily kept from doing things that you need to do by the fear that you're going to be attacked or injured.

And joining ourselves to the Lord is that kind of preparation. Having our souls fortified, spending time in God's presence, and having as a habit of mind reliance on His grace and His power and His preservation, His deliverance. When those times of stress come, one of the first things that temptation tries to do is convince us that we're insufficient.

The provision of God is insufficient. The things that God has currently given us are insufficient. You've brought us out here to die.

Where are the leeks and garlics? Well, who said you need leeks and garlics? You've got manna, you've got water from the rock, the Israelites in the wilderness. But the temptation says the things that God has provided are insufficient. Well, how do we constantly remember and realize that God's provision is sufficient? It's by spending time with God.

It's by seeing things from God's perspective and recognizing what's important and what's not. Knowing the difference between manna and leeks. I don't even know what a leek is, but I think it's some kind of a green thing, like a stringy looking onion or something.

But to think that you have to have that, this presents a false sense of need. So when He says, He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. Then in verse 18 He says, Flee sexual immorality.

Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you? There's a really terrific play of ideas going on here because everybody knows that in marriage God said from the very beginning in Genesis, for this reason shall a man leave father and mother and cleave to his wife and the two shall be one flesh. And to engage in sexual immorality when it says he sins against his own body, that is his partner, his own body that he's become one flesh with, whether it's present, future, or past.

This is not only a sin against the marriage, but it's also a sin against God. And He wraps that all up nicely because He says, you know, and if you think, well that's just a sin against your either current or prospective wife or husband, remember that you've been joined to the body of the Lord. You're part of the body of Christ.

And to do this is also a sin against the body. It's a sin against Christ and the body that you've been entered into. Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God and you are not your own, for you were bought at a price.

Therefore glorify God in your body. And we are a dwelling place for God. And what is the ministry of God the Holy Spirit? He seals us into the body of Christ.

And this is something that Paul had taught the Corinthians. So to fight or to flee, it's not like we have a little quick rule we can just whip out and say, well, if it's a sexual sin, you should always flee. If it's some other kind of sin, you should always fight.

This is a decision that requires wisdom. In general, if there is the potential or the propensity in the area of sexual immorality, the usual answer is to flee, to get away from that situation. He says in another place, of course, flee youthful lusts.

You also have 1st Timothy 6.6. You might take a quick look at that. 1st Timothy 6.6. Paul says, godliness with contentment is great gain, but we brought nothing into this world and it is certain that we carry nothing out. Having food and clothing with these, we shall be content.

But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare into many foolish and harmful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But you, O man of God, flee these things.

Go in the opposite direction from these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life, to which you are also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. So it is not only turning away from and fleeing these bad things, but

pursuing something on the positive side.

Sometimes we have trouble with our minds running on bad things, some wrong that someone has done or a character flaw that they have, and we have that exhortation to think on the things that are good and noble and right and lovely and of good report. So that is part and parcel of change of mind, is turning away from one thing and turning towards something else. We don't just spin in the wind looking at nothing.

We turn away from the bad and turn toward the good. So cultivating our relationship with God, which obviously is something Joseph has done, it's interesting and if you have the time you can meditate on this. David is a king and has access to everything.

He's at the opposite end of the spectrum from Joseph who is a servant in a foreign land. David is the king of his own land. When the same type of temptation comes, David, Bathsheba doesn't look up and see David and start doing a little striptease for him.

She is unaware that she's observed. There's no compulsion, there's no enticement going on whatsoever except what's in David's own mind. And when that little visitor comes to David's soul, he caves and gives in and not only commits adultery but also murder.

Joseph is in the opposite situation. He is a slave, he's under the authority control of others and this woman is actively day by day by day trying to entice him into this illicit relationship. And you look at the difference in response in that situation between Joseph and David.

And not to take anything away from David and what a great believer he was, but at that period in his life when he had everything and sometimes it's in our periods of prosperity when things are going well that we are most vulnerable. The church historically has done better under times of persecution than it has in times of plenty. The church in America we've gotten, I think, sloppy and ill-disciplined and have lost our focus because we're not under any kind of persecution and people sit and examine their spiritual navel and buy self-help books on this that and the other and meditate and devotionalize and go off in weird tangents and have lost sight of the fact that we are in a spiritual conflict.

And it's not with flesh and blood, it's in the arena of invisible things and our daily life, our daily challenges that each one of us face are important. We are in the center of a conflict and it is our calling to be faithful. It's our calling to reflect the glory of God by not giving in to temptation, not being lulled to sleep, not being caused to compromise.

And this is the way that we can do it. So these are some things to think about in terms of temptation as we see it suggested here in Joseph's case. And you'll notice in particular point number four, resisting may not always have a happy result.

Joseph does everything right here, doesn't he? He doesn't give in. At most you could say, well, if he had really been vigilant he wouldn't have let himself be alone in the house

with her. But how would he know? And you keep in mind, you've probably seen these Egyptian tomb paintings and you see the servants and you've got all these little people with that funny angle to their heads and their hands and they're all in line marching across the Pharaoh's tomb there.

But you notice that the men have this little headdress on and they're bare-chested and they have a thing that looks like a short skirt on and then they have sandals. Well, there were two garments that were worn. There was this undergarment, which is kind of like a waistcloth, and there was the outer garment, which was a robe.

Well, Joseph's coat of many colors was this outer garment. They stripped that off of him and threw him into the pit in his boxer shorts, if you will. The boxer shorts.

But in Egypt they wore this. It's kind of like the difference between the Scots wearing that kilt type of thing. In Egypt, you can see in the tomb paintings, they didn't wear this thing with legs in it.

They wore this skirt type of deal. Well, indoors in Egypt, if you think about the climate, they typically didn't wear the outer robe. They would take it, hang it on a peg and serve and do their work in this single wraparound type of thing.

So Joseph goes in to do his normal work. As it tells us, on this particular day, in verse 10, verse 11, Joseph went into the house to do his regular work. None of the men of the house was inside.

And whether Joseph knew this or should have been alerted or should have been more diligent, you know, hindsight's 20-20. But she caught him by his garment. And this is kind of a generic term for garment, but we can guess that this is what he had on was his wraparound little skirt thing.

And she grabs him by this. This word for garment is the same one that is used of Tamar. Back in, when she takes off her widow's weeds or widow's garments and puts on the veil and so forth and waylays Judah by the road.

And then she takes it off and puts her regular garment back on. And that's the Hebrew word here. But she says, lie with me.

And he left his garment in her hand. And when it says, she caught him by his garment, this Hebrew verb connotes violence. This means to grab or to seize.

She seized his garment. And so this, she's kind of like she grabbed his clothes and ripped them off. Now the problem is, if she tore his garment, this wouldn't be very good evidence to show Potiphar, because there would be obviously some signs of violence.

And her story is going to be that Joseph took this off voluntarily. So, but when you think

about this little wraparound skirt thing, I mean, how are you going to get his robe up off over his head? But his undergarment, if she seizes this and grabs it, it's just going to come unwrapped and leave him naked. And that's apparently what happened.

So when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and fled outside, she called to the men of the house. We don't have time to go there, but there are scriptures that, when you get to the law over in Deuteronomy, that if there is an illicit relationship that's outside the bounds of marriage, it's fornication or adultery, if the woman does not cry out, if she's in a civilized area, and she doesn't cry out, it is assumed that she gave her consent. That if this was a rape and a forcible relationship, she should have cried out and someone would hear and be able to come in and stop it.

The law also talks about the fact that if they're out in the woods someplace where there is no one to hear, then the woman is not held at fault because nobody can prove that she cried out or not. But if you think about this, the servants in a household, first of all, are all under Joseph's authority anyway. And he is favored by God.

And one of the marks of a good leader is that you have trusting, loyal, faithful people who look up to you and admire you and work for you because they do admire you. So these people are not going to be easily turned against Joseph. She's not going to get a rabble.

The servants have no part in Joseph's fate. Why does she call the servants? She's thinking ahead to what she's going to tell Potiphar. She cries out after Joseph leaves, and this is the mark of a woman who has been attacked.

And she's going to call the servants in and tell them, this is what just happened. And they're going to associate her crying out with the fact that she's not involved. So she's trying to shift the blame from herself to Joseph with this crying out and calling the witnesses in sort of as belated witnesses.

Potiphar said, well, did my wife cry out? Oh yes, we heard her raise her voice, and she called us in, and she had the garment right there beside her. So, and that's the second thing is when she calls to the men of the house, see he's brought us in this Hebrew to mock us. That word mock is from the same word means to laugh in Hebrew that Isaac comes from, Yitzchak.

And we saw that this is what Ishmael did to Isaac when he was a little boy. Ishmael was about 13, and he mocked, or the connotation in some contexts is to taunt. When it's used negatively, it means to taunt.

When it's used positively, it means to laugh or be amused over something. But here, he came in, he says he has brought into us, this is a reference to Potiphar, so she's shifting blame everywhere but herself. See, it's Potiphar's fault.

He brought in this Hebrew, and she brings in a little ethnic, he's not really an Egyptian anyway, he's this Hebrew slave. And it's Potiphar's fault for bringing him into the household in the first place. And now he's taunting.

He came in and taunted me. Came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice, because I didn't want it to take place. It happened when he heard that I lifted my voice, he left his garment with me, and fled and went outside.

So she kept his garment beside her until his master came home. So she's got it laid out as though Joseph took it off voluntarily. She doesn't still have it in her hand where it was when she grabbed it.

So then she spoke to him with words like these. She doesn't say, oh, it was all your fault, Potiphar, for bringing this guy in in the first place, but she implies it. She says, the Hebrew servant, the Hebrew slave that you brought in, came in to me to mock me.

And the implication there is, well, see, if you hadn't have done this, it would have never taken place. He came in to taunt me. It happened as I lifted my voice and cried out that he left his garment with me and fled outside.

Verse 19 is fascinating, though, because so it was when his master heard the words which his wife spoke to him, saying, Your servant did to me after this manner, that his anger was aroused. If you look at Old King James, it says his anger was kindled. And you have that phrase, you probably remember that phrase elsewhere in the Bible, where it says the Lord's anger was kindled against Israel.

Literally, it says his nose burned. The word for anger in Hebrew, the verb for anger is anaph. Anaph means enough.

Anaph is anaph. The word for nose is aph. And anaph literally means to breathe or to snort.

And it became a term for anger, because when you're angry, it's like an angry bull. The picture there is snorting and snuffling and being angry. And people, of course, when they get angry, a lot of times their face will flush and their nose will turn red.

And it literally says that Potiphar's nose burned. His nose turned red. And it means that his anger was kindled.

And the word there for kindle means to set something on fire. And so his nose was set on fire, his nose burned. The thing is, if you look at these phrases, and you can use an English concordance in all the places where it says somebody's anger was kindled, it's used of people, it's used of the Lord, there's almost always an object.

His anger was kindled against so-and-so. Here, the object is left out. And the reason is,

Potiphar is not angry with Joseph.

Potiphar is angry with his wife. Because his wife has calculated out this revenge on Joseph, and she has put Potiphar in an impossible spot. When she grabs his garment and he flees, she doesn't sit there and wait for Potiphar to come home.

She calls the servants. And she impugns Joseph to the servants. Well, now when Potiphar comes home, and the whole household, remember this is, he's a high mucky muck in the government.

And these servants know the servants of everybody else. This is going to spread through the whole palace. Everybody's going to know that Potiphar's wife says Joseph tried to rape her.

Potiphar knows better. Potiphar trusts Joseph. And you don't accumulate that kind of trust without experience and without time.

Potiphar also knows his wife. And if she is this kind of woman, this will not have been the first instance of her desire to be unfaithful. And knowing his wife and knowing Joseph, it probably didn't take Potiphar fifteen seconds to figure out who's telling the truth and who's not.

But, Potiphar is in an impossible position. If she had waited and told him alone, he could have contained this. He could have brought Joseph in and said, see, it's not true.

Mrs. Potiphar, be quiet and let's go on about our business. But because this has been publicized through the servants, Potiphar, if he takes Joseph's side, impugns his wife and destroys the authority in the household and makes a mess of... Because now Joseph, even though the accusation is false, he's tainted. And everybody in the palace is going to know it.

Everybody in the royal mucky-muck level is going to know it. The servants are going to know it. It's going to undermine Joseph's authority.

It's going to cause all kinds of problems. And Pharaoh has been outmaneuvered by his wife because she either wants to have Joseph or get rid of him. She doesn't want him around if she can't have him.

And she's forced Potiphar's hand because he cannot keep him as his second-in-command over all of his household because his integrity has been publicly impugned as the suggestion that he's been trying to sleep with his wife. The reason we know that this anger is against the wife and not against Joseph is what Potiphar does because Potiphar does not execute Joseph, which would have been the eye-blink, knee-jerk response for anybody that had a slave. Slaves could be executed for the smallest infraction.

They could undercook the meat and be executed. This is in any ancient code a death sentence offense. And Potiphar has to remove Joseph from the household, but he doesn't have to kill him.

And so he does the best he can do for Joseph and still being forced by his wife has to take him out of the household. So it says in verse 20, he took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were confined, and he was there in the prison. Well, guess who's over this prison? It's Potiphar.

Guess where the prison is located? It is connected to Potiphar's house. It's at Potiphar's house. And we know this when we get down to chapter 40.

You remember the rest of this because there is a keeper of the prison. There is somebody who oversees this part of the complex where Potiphar lives. This keeper of the prison does the very same thing with Joseph that Potiphar did.

Commits everything into his hand, trusts him, doesn't take any thought for what Joseph does. But when you get to 40 and the butler and the baker come, Pharaoh becomes angry with his two officers and he puts them in custody. Look at verse 3 of 40.

He put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard. Who's the captain of the guard? Potiphar. Pharaoh puts the butler and the baker into Potiphar's house in the prison, the place where Joseph was confined.

So Joseph is confined in the prison. This roundhouse we talked about last time is in Potiphar's household complex. It's adjacent.

This is where the white-collar criminals, the political people are kept. They have freedom to move about. They're not hanging in irons or anything.

This is almost like not exactly work-release. They are very well treated. It's the luxury motel of prisons for the political prisoners.

This is where Potiphar put Joseph. He didn't throw him in the dungeon with the abject groveling slaves. This is the Hotel Hilton for political prisoners.

The captain of the guard, verse 4, charged Joseph with them and he served them. The word served there is the very same word that's used when Joseph served Potiphar back in the last chapter. He's not shining their shoes and so forth.

He's their valet. He brings their breakfast into them and checks on their well-being. These are pretty pampered prisoners, the king's prisoners.

The captain of the guard here that puts Joseph in charge of these two prisoners, that's Potiphar. Potiphar is the captain of the guard. Potiphar does the best that he can do for Joseph in this circumstance, but his wife has forced his hand and that's the reason his

nose burned.

But even in this situation, in verse 21, that's the key. The Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy. That phrase showed him mercy, the verb is natan which means to give and the word mercy is kesed.

God gave him grace.