Resisting Sexual Temptation

By David Wright

Handsome young Joseph attracted the romantic interest of Potiphar's wife. She attempted to seduce him. His godly response to her advances suggests a five-pronged strategy for resisting sexual temptation:

1. Just Say No. "He refused" (Gen. 39:8). My friend Byron drives a truck. Women of the night often knock on his cab door and offer themselves. Byron says no and means it.

2. Think Triangle. Joseph said, "You are his [Potiphar's] wife" (Gen. 39:9). An immoral man wants to pretend that his relationship is a tight circle. His sin is nobody's business. But sexual impurity always hurts people outside the intimate relationship. The young woman lewdly displayed on the computer screen is someone's daughter. The college student willing to sleep with a boyfriend is some man's future wife.

3. Take Immorality Seriously. Joseph asked, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Gen. 39:9). Most Americans minimize sexual sin. This is why millions of unmarried couples are living together, why STD's are rampant, and why same-gender marriage is becoming legal. But Joseph understood that sexual sin hurt God.

4. Admit Human Weakness. Young Joseph "would not listen to her, to lie with her or to be with her" (Gen. 39:10). Joseph had strong desires. Realizing that spending time with Mrs. Potiphar would weaken his resolve, he avoided her. The Christian most vulnerable to sexual temptation is the person who thinks himself too strong to fall.

5. Run! Catching Joseph alone in the house one day, Mrs. Potiphar took hold of his outer garment and insisted that he come to bed. Joseph ran outside, leaving the garment in her hand (Gen. 39:12). Sexual sin is better escaped than fought. A wise man takes quick, decisive action to remove himself from compromising situations. This may mean ending a friendship, quitting a job, or dismissing an alluring administrative assistant.

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