

# JOSEPH: A MAN OF INTEGRITY AND FORGIVENESS

## A Classic Series

### Resisting Temptation

Genesis 39:1–20



#### LET'S BEGIN HERE

When it comes to temptation, our culture offers very little motivation to resist it. More often than not, we hear voices yelling, “Give in! You deserve to be happy!” Truly, yielding to temptation is much easier than resisting it. But for those who yield, the path of life is strewn with the litter of remorse and shame. Their souls grow sick, not for longing to taste forbidden fruit but because the fruit made them sick. If we wish to avoid such soul sickness, we must resist temptation. But how? Joseph provides a sterling example of one who could have cuddled lust and enjoyed its warm embrace but instead chose to resist its persistent, alluring offer in favor of righteousness. Let those of us who stand today take heed, lest we fall tomorrow.



#### LET'S DIG DEEPER

##### 1. The Historical Situation (Genesis 39:1–6)

Every person who has cast a shadow upon the earth, including Jesus, has faced temptation. And every person who has ever lived, except Christ, has yielded to it. Temptation's appeal to our desires is lust disguised with many different masks. *Material temptation* is the lust for things. *Personal temptation* is the lust for status. *Sensual temptation* is the lust for physical pleasure. This message will address sensual temptation.

We live in a sex-saturated society. We can't escape that fact. And though we try to avoid it, temptation surrounds us. Our society resembles the society in which Joseph lived. So if we want to resist sensual temptation like Joseph, we must examine his response in Genesis 39.

After Joseph began working for Potiphar, Potiphar noticed that the Lord was with Joseph, giving him success. Potiphar, a shrewd man who recognized Joseph's diligence and trustworthiness, promoted Joseph to manager of all his business and household affairs. But behind Joseph's success—his increased responsibility, trust, and freedom—lurked great danger.



## Quotable

*In resisting temptation, don't allow the immediate results to confuse you. Think long-term.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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#### 2. The Sensual Temptation (Genesis 39:7–12)

Joseph was a handsome young man, and his position put him in the path of a woman whose only desire was to seduce him. When Mrs. Potiphar pursued Joseph with a very direct approach—“lie with me” (Genesis 39:7)—Joseph responded with an equally straightforward and abrupt refusal. Joseph must have been acutely aware of the consequences of succumbing to sexual temptation. Joseph refused to violate his master’s trust and, more important, sin against God (39:9).

But Mrs. Potiphar wasn’t persuaded by Joseph’s reasoning. She kept pursuing Joseph day after day and always when they were alone (39:10–11). With each advance, Joseph refused. But one day, Mrs. Potiphar resorted to more than just words . . . she grabbed him (39:12). So Joseph ran.

When we face sensual temptation, we can’t reason with it. We can’t even stand there and quote Bible verses. All we can do is run! If we stay, we will probably give in.

#### 3. The Personal Ramifications (Genesis 39:13–20).

We might assume that once Joseph made it outdoors, having overcome temptation, he would have heard angels singing his praises and would have experienced peace. Instead, he heard the screams of rage and revenge—Mrs. Potiphar’s accusation of rape—hurling him from the heights as Potiphar’s overseer to the depths as Potiphar’s prisoner.

Imagine how Joseph must have felt! He had never read the book of Genesis, so he didn’t know how it would all turn out. All he knew was that he had done the right thing and he ended up in jail. But God accompanied him and prospered him. Just as he ruled over Potiphar’s house, so Joseph gained a leadership position in prison (Genesis 39:21–23).



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#### A CLOSER LOOK

##### *The Danger of Internet Pornography*

There is no greater danger to an idle mind than the Internet. Though it has potential to enrich our thinking, it has the power to corrupt it as well. Each month thousands of new pornographic sites are created. Don't be fooled into thinking that just one look won't hurt or that your behavior is harmless. Like a spider's web, the images stick in the mind, trapping victims until their life is sucked out by the spider of addiction.

And let's not make the mistake of assuming that the web of pornography allures only men. Women are often attracted to the flickering light of virtual sex too. And given the right set of emotional conditions, exchanges with an anonymous man via e-mail can evolve into much more. An emotional affair, fed by false intimacy, incubated in the secrecy and anonymity of cyberspace, can stifle a pure mind just as quickly as lurid images.

If you or someone you love is caught in the web of sexual sin, don't be deceived into believing that these habits will just go away. Address them directly. A variety of excellent books, support groups, and counseling programs exist to help people recover from the devastation and shame of sexual sin. Additionally, Insight for Living Ministries provides the services of pastoral counselors. You can correspond with one of our pastors using the contact information below.

Insight for Living Ministries  
Biblical Counseling Department  
Post Office Box 5000  
Frisco, Texas 75034-0055  
972-473-5097 (Monday through Friday,  
8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. central time)  
[www.insight.org/contactapastor](http://www.insight.org/contactapastor)



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#### LET'S LIVE IT

Joseph's life provides us with four important insights to help us say no when our lust says yes.

First, *don't be weakened by your situation.*

Second, *don't be deceived by persuasion.*

Third, *don't be gentle with your emotions.*

Fourth, *don't be confused by the immediate results.*

**Under what circumstances are you most vulnerable to sensual temptation? Do you make yourself accountable to people who can spot a lie and who will call you out on it?**



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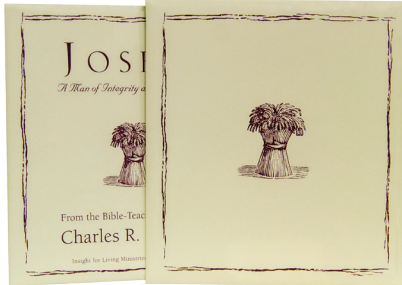
## A Classic Series

Resisting Temptation

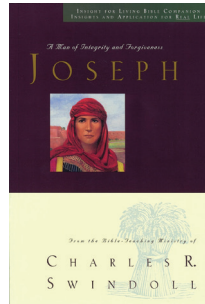
*Genesis 39:1–20*



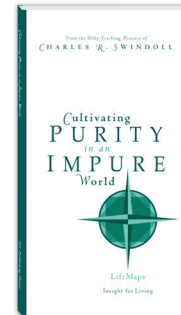
### Tools for Digging Deeper



**Joseph: A Man of Integrity and Forgiveness**  
by Charles R. Swindoll  
compact disc series



**Joseph: A Man of Integrity and Forgiveness**  
by Charles R. Swindoll and  
Insight for Living Ministries  
softcover Bible Companion



**Cultivating Purity in an Impure World**  
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