

life group study guide

Big Idea: Self Control

Choose to Flee



Life of Joseph

As she spoke to Joseph day after day, he did not listen to her to lie beside her or be with her. Now it happened one day that he went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the household was there inside. She caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me!" And he left his garment in her hand and fled, and went outside. When she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and had fled outside, she called to the men of her household and said to them, "See, he has brought in a Hebrew to us to make sport of us; he came in to me to lie with me, and I screamed. When he heard that I raised my voice and screamed, he left his garment beside me and fled and went outside." So she left his garment beside her until his master came home. Then she spoke to him with these words, "The Hebrew slave, whom you brought to us, came in to me to make sport of me; and as I raised my voice and screamed, he left his garment beside me and fled outside." (Gen 39:10-18)

Human beings are wired with a physiological reaction of "fight or flight" that occurs as a response to a perceived danger. Scripture makes clear either can be an appropriate response to the danger of sin's temptation. What does the Bible say about fleeing?

We should flee from bad associations:

Too many Christians have a commitment of convenience. They'll stay faithful as long as it's safe and doesn't involve risk, rejection, or criticism. Instead of standing alone in the face of challenge or temptation, they check to see which way their friends are going. (Charles Stanley)

Lead me not into temptation; I can find the way myself. (Rita Mae Brown)

Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals." (1 Cor 15:33)

Joseph fled from Potiphar's wife after resisting her many attempts to seduce him. There may be some toxic relationships that need to be ended to maintain our holiness and integrity.

- How do you know when to end a relationship that is bad for you?
- How can you enlist others in identifying and ending those relationships?
- If a relationship cannot be ended (job, customer, family member, neighbor), how can it be proactively limited?

We must remember that the unsaved person is not the enemy, but rather the victim of the enemy (Satan). To end or limit a relationship does not prevent us from praying for that person, and our boundaries may help to restore that person to a right relationship with Christ (such as church discipline).

Jesus was known as a friend of tax collectors and sinners.

- How do we balance our associations with people yet maintain integrity as we strive for holiness?
- How do we know when to break off a relationship (flee) or maintain it to have a positive Christian influence on others?

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We should flee from bad environments:

I can resist anything except temptation. (Oscar Wilde)

Many times our sinful habits are encouraged by our tendency to place ourselves in locations or situations that are difficult to resist temptation. For example, someone with alcoholic tendencies should not go to bars, nor someone predisposed to gambling should not be at the horse track or in a casino.

Read Matt 5:29-31

- How serious does Jesus take the principle of removing ourselves from temptations that ensnare us?
- How can having an accountability partner and participation in a Life Group help with this principle?
- What courage is required to make these relationships an effective guard against temptation?

Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. (1 Cor 6:18)

As we see from Joseph's example, sexual immorality is one area we are commanded to flee (rather than fight).

- Why do you think God specifically warns us to flee from sexual immorality?
- What are some steps we can take to flee sexual immorality?

We should flee from bad thoughts:

Knowledge of God's Word is a bulwark against deception, temptation, accusation, even persecution. (Edwin Louis Cole)

We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, (2 Cor 10:5)

- What "lofty things" does our society raise up against the knowledge of God?
- How can recognizing these things help us flee temptation?
- How did Jesus battle temptation? (see Luke 4:1-13)
 - What can we learn about the memorization of Scripture to help us flee temptation?
 - Satan also quoted Scripture; how can we be sure we are using the Bible correctly with regard to temptation?

No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it. Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. (1 Cor 10:13-14)

This promise of God indicates He will provide that way of escape (sounds like fleeing to me!)

- Why do you think Idolatry is specifically mentioned in verse 14?
- How does idolatry start in our thought life?
- What can we do to "flee idolatry"?

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We should flee from our past:

Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Phil 3:12-14)

- Paul often spoke about his past, yet here he says he forgets “what lies behind.” In what ways are we to recall our past yet “forget what lies behind”?
- How can this help us in our fleeing from temptation?
- As Paul forgets the past, what does he focus on?

Flee to Christ and His Church:

*Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. (John 6:68)
And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart. (Eccl 4:12)*

We are to flee from many areas where we can be tempted. But we can also flee to areas of help.

But flee from these things [love of money], you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness. (1 Tim 6:11)

Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. (2 Tim 2:22)

- Paul instructs Timothy to flee from worldly pursuits; what does he tell him to pursue?
- What practical steps can we take to do this today?
- Whom are we to do this with?