

Catechism Story 8

The Sixth Commandment

Memory Verse and Catechism Prayers from Congregation at Prayer

BIBLE STORY: JOSEPH FLEES FROM ADULTERY

Genesis 39:1-23

Central Thoughts

- Joseph is a picture of Jesus who was faithful to the Lord even though he suffered for it.
- Adultery and fornication are sins against God and injure God's gift of marriage and family.
- Joseph was strengthened to flee from the sin of adultery by faith in the Lord's grace and mercy.
- Joseph believed that God's will for him to lead a chaste and decent life was good, even if it called him to deny the covetous desires of his sinful flesh.
- The gift of marriage and human sexuality, as God ordained it, is a blessing for life and family.
- True love always sacrifices itself for the benefit of the beloved.

Discussion Questions

How did Joseph become a servant in the house of Potiphar?

He was sold by his brothers to Ishmaelite slave traders who sold him to Potiphar in Egypt.

Why was Joseph successful and a blessing to his master Potiphar?

The Lord was with Joseph, and he served his master faithfully.

What did Potiphar recognize about Joseph's faith in the Lord?

Potiphar recognized that Joseph was a blessing to Potiphar because of Joseph's faith in the Lord and that the Lord had blessed Potiphar because of Joseph.

Why did Potiphar make Joseph the overseer of everything in his house?

Potiphar trusted Joseph because the Lord had blessed Potiphar through Joseph.

What was Joseph's physical appearance?

He was a handsome, good-looking man.

How did Potiphar's wife respond to Joseph?

She coveted him and wanted to commit adultery with Joseph.

What does it mean to covet?

It means to desire or want something that God expressly forbids you to have.

What reasons did Joseph give for not committing adultery with Potiphar's wife?

Potiphar trusted Joseph. Potiphar gave Joseph authority over everything in his house. It would be sin against Potiphar and against God to steal Potiphar's wife from him and to commit adultery with her.

How frequently did Potiphar's wife tempt Joseph to commit adultery?

Every day

How did Joseph respond to Potiphar's wife?

He refused to commit adultery with her.

Why didn't Joseph tell Potiphar about his wife's desire to commit adultery with him?

Joseph was covering her sin and wanted to preserve their marriage.

What did Joseph do, when he found himself alone with Potiphar's wife and she grabbed him by his garment to tempt him yet again to commit adultery with her?

He ran out of the house, leaving his garment behind, rather than commit adultery with her.

What did Potiphar's wife do when she realized that Joseph would never commit adultery with her?

She falsely accused him of trying to commit adultery with her.

What evidence did Potiphar's wife give to her husband to prove the false accusation against him?

She gave her husband Joseph's garment.

How do we know that Potiphar's wife didn't love Joseph in a godly way?

She was selfish, thinking only about her own pleasure, lashed out in anger and lied about Joseph because she did not get what she wanted.

Do feelings of love or desire for another person make it right to have a relationship with them?

No, not if it is sinful in the eyes of God.

What is it inside of us that desires relationships with others that God forbids?

The sinful flesh. The Old Adam is full of selfish, sinful desires that threaten to destroy us and other people. The sinful flesh will always fight against God's good and gracious will for our lives and the lives of others.

Why does God want us to live "a sexually pure and decent life in what we say and do"?

True love is not selfish or self-centered. True love sacrifices its own desires for the benefit of others, so that marriages and families are protected, and husbands and wives learn to love and honor each other.

Did Joseph defend himself from the false accusations of Potiphar's wife?

No. He continued to cover the sins of Potiphar's wife to preserve their marriage.

What happened to Joseph when Potiphar believed his wife's accusation against him?

He was thrown into prison.

Do bad things sometimes happen to us even when we do what is right?

Yes, just as Jesus was crucified even though He had committed no sin.

What happened to Joseph while in prison?

The Lord was with Joseph, showed him mercy, and blessed his work in the eyes of the keeper of the prison

What promise do we have from the Lord for leading a sexually pure and decent life?

He will bless us according to His good and gracious will, even if we are called to suffer for being faithful and for doing what is right.

Meditation on the Bible Story

Joseph is a picture of Jesus. Many bad things happened to Joseph, but through it all he was faithful to the Lord. When he was sold as a slave, he trusted in the Lord. When he was in the house of Potiphar, he served the Lord faithfully as Potiphar's servant. Even Potiphar recognized that the Lord was with Joseph and that Potiphar was blessed because of it through Joseph's faithful service. Even when Joseph fled from the temptations of Potiphar's wife to commit adultery, he was faithful to the Lord and protected Potiphar and his marriage by not defending himself from false accusations. It was the grace of God that strengthened Joseph to resist temptation and flee from adultery. And it was the grace, mercy, and forgiveness of the Lord that enabled Joseph to cover the sins of Potiphar's wife and to suffer in prison rather than defend himself. It is the grace, mercy, and forgiveness of the Lord that gave Joseph the strength to "lead a sexually pure and decent life" in everything that he said and did.

The Catechism teaches us that marriage is good and that it is a wonderful blessing for life, love, children, and family to honor marriage as God's gift, and for husbands and wives to be faithful to each other. Satan wants to destroy marital love and faithfulness by selfishness, self-centeredness, lust, covetousness, and pride. Jesus strengthens us to love our wives and husbands by the forgiveness and mercy He gives to us. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ teaches Christian husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the Church, giving himself in sacrificial love to his wife. Christian wives are strengthened to submit to their husbands as to the Lord when their husbands love their wives as Jesus loves the church.

Prayer on the Bible Story

Heavenly Father, thank You for the gift of marriage and for faithful husbands and wives who love and honor each other according to Your holy will. As you strengthened Joseph to be faithful when tempted to commit adultery, so strengthen us to lead a pure and decent life in everything that we say and do. Protect and bless Your gift of marriage and family among us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.



Joseph Flees From Adultery
Genesis 39:1-21