

“Maybe Just This Once...”

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Pastor Mic Thurber

Here's what some have said about temptation:

- **I generally avoid temptation unless I can't resist it. -Mae West**
- **Yield to temptation. It may not pass your way again. -Robert A. Heinlein**

- **Lead me not into temptation; I can find the way myself. -Rita Mae Brown**
- **What makes resisting temptation difficult for many people is they don't want to discourage it completely. -Franklin P. Jones**
- **Those who flee temptation generally leave a forwarding address. -Lane Olinghouse**

Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. Potiphar, an Egyptian who was one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him there.

²The LORD was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master.

⁵ From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the LORD blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the LORD was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field. ⁶ So Potiphar left everything he had in Joseph's care; with Joseph in charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate.

Genesis 39.1-6f NIV

Two Things Joseph Couldn't Help...

**^{6ff} Now Joseph was well-built and handsome,
⁷ and after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, "Come to bed with me!"**

Genesis 39.6ff-7

⁸ But he refused. “With me in charge,” he told her, “my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. ⁹ No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?”

¹⁰ And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.

¹¹ One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside. ¹² She caught him by his cloak and said, “Come to bed with me!” But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house.

¹³ When she saw that he had left his cloak in her hand and had run out of the house, ¹⁴ she called her household servants. “Look,” she said to them, “this Hebrew has been brought to us to make sport of us! He came in here to sleep with me, but I screamed.

¹⁵ When he heard me scream for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house.”

¹⁶ She kept his cloak beside her until his master came home. ¹⁷ Then she told him this story: “That Hebrew slave you brought us came to me to make sport of me. ¹⁸ But as soon as I screamed for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house.”

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²⁰ Joseph’s master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king’s prisoners were confined.

Genesis 39.8-20

How Joseph Did It

1. Joseph had made the important decisions *before* Mrs. Potiphar ever spoke to him

“Joseph must have reasoned, *Everyone thinks I’m Potiphar’s slave. But I’m actually God’s slave. And since I am God’s slave, serving Potiphar, I’m going to be the best slave Potiphar ever had.* There is a lesson here we need to see.

Joseph's witness was not in protesting the paganism of Egypt or trying to reorient the culture in which he lived. Those options were not available to him. The only opportunity he had for witness was to be a good slave."

The Hand of God, Alistair Begg, p 53.

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.

² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 12.1-2

“There is no more powerful force in over-coming temptation than the fear of God. ‘The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.’ (Proverbs 9.10). This is not the servile fear of God that is the fear of a pagan. This is not the fear of what God will do to me, but the fear of what I, by my actions, will do to Him – the fear of dragging down the Family Name. Joseph feared God.

The Hand of God, Alistair Begg, p 67.

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Autobiography in Five Short Chapters By Portia Nelson

Chapter I

I walk down the street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I fall in.
I am lost ...
I am helpless.
It isn't my fault.
It takes forever to find a way out.

Chapter II

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I pretend I don't see it.
I fall in again.
I can't believe I am in the same place,
but it isn't my fault.
It still takes a long time to get out.

Chapter III

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I see it is there.
I still fall in ... it's a habit.
My eyes are open.
I know where I am. It is my fault.
I get out immediately.

Chapter IV

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I walk around it.

Chapter V

I walk down another street.

**No one can be caught in a place
he does not visit.**

Danish proverb

How Joseph Did It

1. Joseph had made the important decisions before Mrs Potiphar ever spoke to him
2. Joseph met the temptation head-on. His resistance was decisive, principled, unyielding, ruthless, and confident
3. As best he could, he removed himself from the temptation (he ran away)
4. **Something we can add: a new image to help resist the temptation**

⁸ If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. ² He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

1 John 1.8-9; 2.1-2