Day Four: Potiphar’s Wife
Genesis 39:6-23

Potiphar’s wife. For many of us, this phrase says enough. It’s not pretty picture that is brought to mind.

Why would we talk about her? Isn’t her story really about Joseph’s strong faith?

Yes. The main point of the story is how exceptional Joseph was as a young man. His faith in God caused him to flee from situations that would go against God’s will. Each of us should imitate him in that (1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:22).

We have something to learn from Potiphar’s wife – a warning.

In our modern times, feminism is everywhere. As sexual immorality becomes more acceptable, women are pushing women to be overtly sexual.

Whether it is pretending that the small percentage of homosexuality is really the normal thing or telling women to flaunt their bodies (and telling men shame on them for noticing), women’s sexuality is on display more than ever. Or so it would seem.

Potiphar’s wife is a woman from Ancient Egypt. She had no problem expressing her wants and doing everything in her power to meet them.

This woman saw Joseph and said, “lie with me”.

This woman. When rejected by Joseph (in the kindest of ways possible), she continued to pursue him “day after day”.

Adulterous Women

31 DAYS OF WOMEN FROM SCRIPTURE
Volume 2

The Diligent Woman
The world likes to say that men have the corner on selfishness and abusing others. They do not.

This woman exhibited vile behavior. She had no care for Joseph. He as only an object to satisfy her desires.

When she failed to get him, she laid in wait and cornered him.

Joseph saw no reason to talk with her anymore – he just ran away, leaving his outer garment behind.

Did she give up her conquest? No!

This woman then turns her sexual desire into vengeance. With the same deliberate intent, she took his garment and lied to others about him. She made herself the victim and he the aggressor.

She had no care for Joseph’s future. She only wanted to punish. So, she drove the final nail – she went to her husband, said it was her husband’s fault for bringing Joseph into their home, and then lied again about the situation.

I am going to sound like a broken record about this, I know. Ladies – do not listen to those who say that the Bible makes women powerless.

This woman – this sinful woman – God shows EXACTLY how much power she held in her hand.

She didn’t use that power for good. She used it for her own ends.

Potiphar’s wife used her sexuality and her femininity to manipulate the men around her.

The warning to us – do not be like Potiphar’s wife!

While our sexuality is a beautiful thing and given by God, it is NOT to be used in this way.

While our bodies are designed to be pleasing to men and pleased by men, it was not designed to lure him into sin and to only fulfill our own pleasure.

Potiphar’s wife is an adulteress. She is a perfect example of the woman in Proverbs 5:1-14, 20 and Proverbs 7.

Ladies – we need to careful that we do not become like Potiphar’s wife.
As single women, no matter what the world will say, you do not have the right to the pleasures of the sexual relationship that is meant for marriage.

Take great care so that you do not fall prey to predators who behave like the adulteress in Proverbs. Men can act this way just as much as women. Do not fall prey to the lies, the false “I love you” (2 Sam. 13:13:4), and the plays on your heart.

But just as well, take great care that you do not become a predator. Do not do anything to tempt the young men in your life to sin.

Married women, the obvious point is, don’t go looking for sexual pleasure outside of your marriage. But there is another here as well – don’t use sexuality as a weapon against your husband. Show respect to him and his needs, as well as the way God designed that those be met.

On a brighter note – I would make one quick suggestion.

Married women, pay attention to the “cunning” of the harlot in Proverbs 7.

- Verse 15, she says she has been waiting for him, looking out for him.
- Verse 16, she has prepared her bed with comfortable bedding – expensive linens
- Verse 17, she has used myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon to make the room smell nice (and these are also known to encourage sexual interest)
- Verse 18, she promises him pleasure and caresses.

His response to these things? “Suddenly he follows her as an ox goes to the slaughter” (Prov. 7:22)!

In the adulteress, these things are flattery and lies. The warning is to the young man to be aware that she is going to use these things and she knows that they WILL attract him. When it’s not the woman you’re supposed to have – avoid this.

BUT – when you are the woman he is supposed to have. When you are the wife and have the right to these pleasures with your husband (Song of Sol. 4:9-16; Prov. 5:15-19), make use of the knowledge that the harlot knows. She uses it for evil and to his detriment. A loving wife can use them to please him!

No need to bring in the filth of the world to learn how to please your husband. Use his senses – smell, taste, touch, hearing, and sight. Take the
power out of the evil woman’s devices. These things at home, will not be novelty away from home.

OK – back to Potiphar’s wife. Another nameless woman God shows exhibiting great use of power. She has intelligence, she has cunning, she has passion.

The thing she didn’t have was a heart of obedience and commitment to her husband.

We can say, “well, that’s how political marriages worked back then”. Maybe so, but it does not mean that it is not something that can, and does, happen in this age.

Your marriage is one that needs protecting. Your purity is valuable and needs to be kept – when single and married. Joseph knew this. He knew that God’s way was what was best.

We need to take the warning of Potiphar’s wife. Do not use other people as toys. Do not make light of the precious thing that is the sexual relationship in marriage. It is not a game.

God worked things out for good in Joseph’s case, but only because Joseph was obedient.

Use the power that you have, and make no mistake, God gave you that power and influence, but use it for good. Control your own desires (1 John 2:16; James 1:14-15). Care for what is best for others above yourself (Phil. 2:3-4; 1 Pet. 1:22).

Ladies, “the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world” has truth to it. What are you going to be, so that you can live in such a way as to teach those who come after? Potiphar’s wife thought only of herself in the moment. Choose to be a better woman than her.

Enjoy!