

Integrity

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[0:00] Hey FCC family, my name is Pastor Tyler. I'm the worship and tech pastor here at First Christian Church in Greensburg, Indiana. If you'd like to join us on a Sunday morning, you can do so at 8 a.m., 9.30 a.m., or even at 11 a.m. here in Greensburg at 425 North Broadway Street.

We would love for you to come and be a part of our family and worshipping with us, even if you're just traveling through. We would love to have you here. You could also check us out on Facebook at FCC Greensburg.

You could go to our Instagram page by the same name. You could go to sccgreensburg.com and look at all of our previous sermons, along with a bunch of other helpful information about who we are as a body of believers.

Now, normally, I'm not the guy who gets the privilege to be able to deliver the Word of God to you. Normally, that's Pastor Ray, and we're already in week four of our new series called Living the Dream.

And Ray has taken us through three weeks of Joseph's story, one of the most prolific dreamers in the Bible. More on the series here in just a minute or two. But Pastor Ray did tell me, he said, hey, you're not the normal guy, so I'm going to have to give you your report card at the end of me listening to your sermon.

[1:14] And I thought I was pretty flat-footed there, but I realized that he was just joking, and all is good. But speaking of report cards, I wanted to tell you a story from my own life.

Now, I grew up in rural Ohio, okay, and it was an awesome experience. I loved growing up in that way. I had parents who worked hard to provide for us, for me and my two siblings.

And although we didn't have a ton of money, we knew that we were loved, and we were very much a part of a church family as well, just like we would love for you to be a part of us. And our school system as a whole, they didn't offer digital report cards until I was in high school.

So I can remember something I did. Now, listen, this might sound kind of ornery. And my kids, they sometimes can come across a bit ornery as well. But no matter what I tell you, just know that the reason my kids are ornery is because of their mom.

It has nothing to do with me. So just keep that in mind as we go through our story here in just a second. So I would be the one who would get the mail from the end of our quarter-mile-long driveway.

[2:27] My dad, he worked long hours, and so he wouldn't be home to get the mail. My mom was already up at the house with my two younger siblings. And so I would get the mail, and I did something that maybe wasn't the best thing to do.

I would screen the mail. Remember that whole report card thing I was just talking about? Well, if I saw my report card had been mailed or my mid-term progress report had been mailed to our house, I may have opened them up and screened them to see exactly how well I did during that semester or during that nine-week period.

And if I had done well, what I would do is I would take it out of the envelope. I would make sure that nobody ever saw the envelope, and then I would post it on their fridge and then say, look, Mom, I brought home my report card.

I did such a good job, right? But if I hadn't done so well, I might have just made sure that that envelope went into the burn pile for our wood burner, not the most full of integrity move that I've ever made, right?

Now, all of that is just to help us set up to talk a little bit more about integrity, which is actually the title of today's sermon. And I thought about naming it something different, maybe like ridiculous integrity or insane integrity, but I really just thought that the simplicity of that word was powerful,

integrity.

[3 : 55] Speaking of integrity, I want to talk to you a little bit about a guy named Monty Roberts. Monty Roberts grew up around horses in California. His father was actually a horse trainer, and Monty was riding before he learned how to walk.

This was during the heyday of Western movies. And as a child, Monty rode horses in movies, often even as a stunt double for child actors. He later got into rodeos and horse shows, and he earned a reputation as a really good horseman.

Now, Roberts always dreamed of being a horse trainer himself, and with a wife and a couple of kids to support at home, he figured it was time to get serious. So he decided to get into the business. But in spite of his reputation as a great rider, Roberts was an inexperienced trainer. They're very different. And he had trouble getting clients. He had only four horses to train, which wasn't bringing in nearly enough money to support his growing family.

Now, just a quick note. If you're around horses, you may already know this, but when you take them to a trainer, you can't just drop them off and come pick them up the next day and expect it to be a whole new creature.

[5 : 03] No, you had to drop off this horse for an extended period of time sometimes to make sure that the trainer had time to fully train this animal and make sure that they gave this animal back to you as a functional part of your farm or as a high-performing sports animal and competitor.

Now, Monty wasn't really sure what he was going to do, but this opportunity arose to work as an apprentice with Don Dodge, who was one of the most well-known and well-respected trainers in that area.

He was told to bring two of his horses with him. Now, after the 10-week apprenticeship, which by the way, looked like a horse trainer training a horse rider to train horses.

I just wanted to make that very clear. So after 10 weeks of this apprenticeship, it ended and Roberts met with Dodge one last time. And one of the horses that he had brought with him was named Panama Buck.

And Dodge told Monty that he should go home and he should actually call up that horse's owner. And he should tell him that he was wasting his money because Roberts was not going to be able to train this horse and that that horse would never amount to anything.

[6 : 16] Well, Roberts was understandably reluctant to do this because that would eliminate 25% of his already meager income. And when he asked Dodge, well, why should I do this?

And then Dodge responded with the most important thing that he could do, which was to always tell the owners the truth about their horses. And if he did this, he would soon get more than enough business to replace the loss.

So Roberts went home and he did as he was instructed. But Panama Buck's owner didn't take the news very well. He actually berated Monty Roberts and screamed at him. He called him a useless son of a gun.

And he told him that he wouldn't know a good horse if it leapt up in between your legs. That's the last horse you'll ever get from me. Well, of course, that hurt Monty's heart. But a few days later, his phone rang and he had a person on the other line that said, hello, my name is Joe Gray.

I was actually having lunch with Panama Buck's owner yesterday and he was complaining about you. But from what I heard, you must be the only honest trainer that I've ever even heard of. So I've decided to do this.

[7 : 23] I know that that Panama Buck horse of his just wasn't any good. So I'm going to take a chance on you and I'm going to send you one of my horses to train. From that point on, things started to turn around for Roberts.

He gained a reputation not only as a great trainer, but as an honest trainer. And soon he had more than enough horses to train. Eventually, he would even have the opportunity to train horses for the Queen of England.

And it all started with following some wise advice from a mentor to always be honest, even when the price is high. Sometimes being honest is hard, but it almost always seems to pan out.

And that level of integrity that Monty showed in that situation definitely isn't common nowadays. But I think it's safe to say that it has never been common. Consider our story from 35 centuries ago. We're going to be exploring a little bit more of Joseph's story today. And so if you have your Bible and you'd like to follow along, go ahead and turn to Genesis chapter 39. Now, the word Genesis

literally means beginning.

[8 : 32] And so Genesis is appropriately placed at the very beginning of your Bible. So if you go to the beginning of your Bible and then go to the 39th chapter, that will land you where we are going to be today.

Now, last week, Pastor Ray took us through somewhat of a difficult talk, which is on how we should be dealing with our bitterness. And he sort of used a similar symbol to help us process through our bitterness in a healthy way.

We actually built a well at the front of our sanctuary just for one week. And he encouraged us to take a sheet of paper that we had provided for us at the end of the pews and in the bulletins.

And we were to write down a situation or a scenario or some bitterness or maybe even a name, someone who had wronged us and that had caused us that bitterness. And we were to go and to crumple it up and to throw it into this well as an act or a symbol of letting God do the work that only he can do.

Now, most of that came from chapter 37. And then in chapter 38 in Genesis, we kind of took a break or it takes a break rather. And the author talks a little bit more about another brother.

[9 : 47] But then we pick back up in chapter 39 where we're going to be talking about today. Now, Joseph, just to give you an idea here, he's been sold as a slave. He has been bought as property.

And now we are picking back up with him. And he is in Egypt as a 24 or so year old man. Let's go ahead and read this together. 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. Now, I just want to point out that captains of the guard were not little dudes, okay?

Let me just put it to you this way. If you were the king of a kingdom and you wanted to hire somebody who was going to be in charge of the crew, who was going to protect you, protect your family, protect everybody who was living in the castle along with you, you probably wouldn't pick a guy who you thought was kind of a weakling.

No, you'd probably pick a guy that kind of looked like a bouncer, you know what I mean? Like a big guy at a nightclub who was going to make sure that things didn't go awry. Somebody who was like 6'5 and had mitts the size of my head, you know what I mean?

[11 : 01] Like a big guy that could hold his own in a fight. So, it's very likely that Potiphar was not a tiny guy. It's probably more likely that he was actually a big guy as the captain of the guard.

Let's go ahead and pick back up here in verse 2. Now, the Lord was with Joseph so that he prospered. We'll see that a lot, by the way, repeated that he was with Joseph and he prospered. And he lived in the house of his Egyptian master, that's Potiphar. And when his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord gave him success in everything he did, Joseph found favor in the eyes and became his attendant, sort of his right-hand man.

Potiphar put him in charge of his household and he even entrusted to his care everything he owned. From the time that he put him in charge of the household and 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 house and in field. Can we just pause there for a second and just realize what it would take for a high-ranking official to look at a slave, a young 20-something-year-old slave, and say, hmm, there's something special about this kid.

[12 : 15] Something I'm just curious about is if you look at yourself and the way that you live and in your life, do you think that people look at you and see God?

Do you think they look at you and see someone whose God's hand is on? Maybe you've known somebody like that. Maybe you've known someone who you could just look at them and they just seem to ooze this confidence.

Not a confidence in themselves or their abilities, but a confidence in the fact that they are a child of the Most High God. Do you have that confidence? You know, have you ever known somebody who just seems to not be bothered by anything, whether it's big or small?

It's almost like water off of a duck's back. It just sort of comes and goes, but all the while they're going to praise God in the midst of all of it. I want to encourage you to be that type of person.

And Joseph, whenever he did anything, the Lord was with him and he blessed him and people around him saw that. Let's keep looking here. We're going to pick back up in verse 6.

[13 : 20] So Potiphar left everything he had in Joseph's care. With Joseph in charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food that he ate. Another funny way you could say that is big dude, big appetite, right?

All right, let's continue. Now, Joseph was well-built and handsome. I think that it's really interesting that there's a description of me in the Bible.

Okay, maybe not. And maybe I stole that joke from Pastor Ray from a couple of weeks ago. Let's continue before my report card suffers too much. Okay, verse 7. After a while, his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, Come to bed with me.

That's a pretty bold way to approach this. Many of you may have heard of the author Liz Curtis Higgs or perhaps you've seen some of her work. One of her books that I really have enjoyed reading is this book here, Bad Girls of the Bible and what we can learn from them.

Now, Liz Curtis Higgs does such a good job at covering some pretty tense topics and things that may make us uncomfortable, but doing it in a way that makes you laugh with humor.

[14 : 33] She does a great job and I would definitely encourage you to read this book or maybe even the sequel, Really Bad Girls of the Bible. Here's what Liz Curtis Higgs says about Potiphar's wife.

She made quite an entrance though with her eye-popping opening line, Come to bed with me. The woman was not subtle. As the wife of a powerful man, she was clearly accustomed to getting exactly what she wanted.

And what she wanted was Joseph, hubby's handsome slave. As a foreigner, Joseph was forbidden fruit and Potiphar's wife knew that. It was undoubtedly part of the attraction.

You know, in Egypt and also in Hebrew culture, it was something that was punishable by death, adultery. So if someone were to cheat or be infidelitous to their spouse, they could be punished by death.

In fact, it was pretty common at that point. But she still continued to pursue him. Let's look at the next verse. But he refused.

[15 : 39] With me in charge, he told her, My master does not concern himself with anything in the house. Everything he owns he is entrusted to my care. 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? And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.

I love the way that he responds, that Joseph responds to this. He's incredulous when she suggests that this should be something they should do, right? He says, How could I do that?

How could I sin against my master, your husband, by the way, but also against God? Like that's just such a ridiculous thing for me to do. Why would I want to do that? I also am appreciative that the author decided to put in there under the guidance of the Holy Spirit that she had pursued Joseph day after day after day.

The reason I say that is because we might be tempted to offer Mrs. P or Potiphar's wife some grace to say maybe she just kind of had a weak moment.

[16 : 55] He was a good looking guy. And so at some point she was weak and she sort of twirled her hair and said like maybe we could get some coffee sometime, you know. I don't think that's what happened because the Bible says no, she came to him day after day after day.

And as we just saw, she was not exactly a subtle person. And this is going to be our first point for today. I want to zoom out a little bit and talk not just about sexual immorality, but I also want to talk about temptation as a broader idea.

This is the first point, which by the way, you can go to the YouVersion Bible app to download the fill in the blanks for this by going to events, finding our church and finding this week. But if you're taking notes or if you have that YouVersion up right now, here is the first one.

Giving into temptation is often the result of a subtle attitude shift. Giving into temptation is often the result of a subtle attitude shift.

And here's what I mean. When you choose to soften and flirt with sin, you sort of step off the path that God has for you. And at some point you won't recognize yourself.

[18 : 09] Here's what I mean. At this point you've probably realized that not, that coincidences don't really happen. There's not really a coincidence. God has you on a path on purpose. He who had you born at this time on purpose.

Your life has a purpose. And while you're walking on this path, you might be sort of distracted, right? You might find yourself being tempted with something, whether that's a Mrs. Potiphar of sorts.

Maybe that is with anger. Maybe you're tempted with some kind of addictive personality. Many of us have those issues. Maybe you're someone who enjoys drinking a little bit too much or enjoys flirting with disaster just a little bit too much.

And at some point you sort of like step off the path and you soften towards sin. And at some point you've taken so many steps that when you look back at your previous self, the person who had stayed away from that, you don't even hardly recognize them.

You see them as naive and as a distant foggy memory. But my friends, my church family, I think that it would be much better instead to step towards Jesus.

[19 : 14] And every step that you take towards Jesus, every step that you take towards being more and more like Him, is going to be a step away from your old self. And you'll again look back at yourself and you won't even hardly recognize them.

But not because they were such a goody two-shoes and naive, but instead you'll look back and you'll say, Wow, I was such an incomplete person and God has done so much work in me.

He has made me just a little bit more complete or more into the image of His Son, Jesus. What an amazing thing. So don't step off the path. Don't subtly soften towards sin.

Instead step towards Jesus. Or in other words, put Him first. We say that all the time around here at FCC. To put Jesus first. Now let's go ahead and continue in verse 11.

Here's what it says. One day he, Joseph, went to the house to attend to his duties and none of the household servants were inside. Hmm. I wonder what happened there.

[20 : 21] Why were all the servants out? Did anybody put them up to leaving? What about this? She, Potiphar's wife, 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.

Now, I don't know about you, but it's pretty easy to recognize that people in Egypt didn't necessarily need a parka. So the coat or the garment that she grabbed may have been one of his only sources of covering himself.

So when he left, he may have ran out of there a little indecent, but it was worth it to him because he needed to get out of there. He ran. Look here at verse 14. Look here at verse 14.

Or 13 rather. When she saw that he had left his cloak in her hand and had run out of the house, 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. And when he heard me scream for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house. Sorry for the Mrs. Potiphar impersonation, but it's going to continue just for a moment.

[21 : 31] So she kept his cloak beside her until his master came home when she told him this story. That Hebrew slave you brought home has come to make sport out of me.

But as soon as I screamed for help, he left his cloak beside me and he ran out of the house. Right?

Now, I don't know why, but when the Bible mentions that she kept it beside her the entire time, I almost picture this like super fake cry, you know, like, oh, woe is me.

And she's holding on to it. And as soon as the servants were all out of sight, she's like smelling his cologne, you know. And then when they come back into sight, she quickly puts it down and wails again.

Okay, that's enough of the wailing. I promise I won't do any more Mrs. Potiphar impersonations for the rest of our time today. But did you also notice something too? In addition to all of the fakeness that she displayed, she also blamed her husband.

She said, look at what this slave that you brought in here has done. Look at what he is doing. And it's kind of like, you know, when a spouse tells you, maybe you've heard this before, you would not believe what your son told me today.

[22 : 34] Or how about this one? You would not believe what your cat decided to do today. Right? Both of those are things that I've heard from my spouse. It almost seems like she wants to blame everybody else, but not herself.

So, look with me a little bit later on here. And let's go down here to verse 19. When his master, that's Potiphar, had heard the story of his wife told him, saying, this is how your slave treated me

again, that's how she goes again, he burned with anger.

And Joseph's master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined. You know, I think that it's interesting that he didn't just go and annihilate Joseph.

I think it's interesting that he didn't have him put to death immediately. And I actually read recently that one of the reasons that's a possibility is that maybe Potiphar saw through the lies a little bit of dear old wifey.

Maybe he saw through the fakeness of her heart and of her actions, but he couldn't exactly allow Joseph to stay in charge when his wife is accusing this Hebrew slave of trying to get with his wife.

[23 : 49] Right? Like that, that can't be allowed. So perhaps he, he did enough to get out from underneath of the heat, but he didn't have Joseph killed because maybe he had mercy.

Now, I'm not saying that's a hundred percent going, what's going on, but I do think that it's a good possibility that, that perhaps he saw through those lies a little bit. So here is the next fill in the blank. Guard your heart. Guard your heart. Now with temptation in general, sometimes that temptation comes from somebody advising you, just follow your heart.

Follow your dreams. Your heart will help you decide what the best thing is for you to do. And I want to, to inform you that the heart is not a good thing to follow all the time.

In fact, very rarely is it a good thing to follow. Here's what I mean. Look at some of these verses.

The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

[24 : 50] Jeremiah 17, 9. Above all else, guard your heart for everything you do flows from it.

Proverbs 4, 23. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Christ Jesus and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.

Romans 13, 14. Isn't it interesting how the Bible says, don't, don't trust your heart. Don't be a slave to your heart. And said, you should guard your heart. You should lead your heart, not let your heart lead you.

And in doing so, you are setting yourself up for success in the face of temptation. Now, with all forms of temptation, you are supposed to stand firm.

You are supposed to put on the full armor of God. You are supposed to resist the devil and he will flee, except for one type of sin. And that's our next fill in the blank. Run from sexual sin.

Or flee. Run from sexual sin. Check out this verse from 1 Corinthians. Flee from sexual immorality.

All other sins a person commits are outside the body.

[25 : 56] But whoever sins sexually sins against their own body. 1 Corinthians 6, 18. Check out this graphic. This might be a helpful reminder to us that in all forms of sin, we're supposed to stand firm and to resist.

But with sexual sin, we're supposed to run away from it. Why? It's because it has such a profound impact on who we are, on our physical forms. It's hard to reason with.

And as such, it's something to avoid if you can. And at some point, it will feel like you have to stand firm and resist. But it's almost always in a way that helps you to remove yourself from the situation or to flee from sexual sin.

Just like when we look at Joseph's example when he was being approached by Mrs. P. And really, you could say all of these things and sum it up maybe into a simple phrase like this.

Live like Jesus. Which is your last fill in the blank for today's message. Live like Jesus. Now, at FCC we say, Jesus first.

[27 : 03] And so this is definitely a version of that. Live like Jesus. Put Jesus first. And here's why I say that. If you look at Joseph's story and Jesus' story, they have a lot of parallels, don't they?

Maybe you've caught up to this already or not. But oftentimes what we find is in the Old Testament, everything points to Jesus. Everything points to the Savior.

And Joseph's story and Jesus' story has some striking resemblances. For instance, faithfulness in the face of temptation.

We see Jesus had a successful resistance. In fact, the last time that I was able to preach, it was on that successful resistance that Jesus showed against Satan in the desert when he was tempting him.

And for Joseph, it was when he was avoiding the advances of his master's wife. How about this one? Suffering despite innocence. Obviously, Jesus did not need to be crucified as the innocent lamb of God.

[28 : 06] And yet he was. And with Joseph, he was thrown in prison. We're going to talk more about that next week. But he did not need to be thrown in prison. He was innocent. What about this one?

God's presence in the trials. Over and over again, we see where Jesus says that God is with us. In fact, he was God. He is God. And for Joseph, it says over and over again.

We just read it today where it says that God was with Joseph. Exalted after humiliation. Right? We know where the story goes.

I will try not to spoil too much of it. But at some point, Joseph goes on to become someone who helps to save many, many lives. But he had to first be humiliated or lowered.

That's part of their story. And with Jesus, he is seated at the right hand of the Father right now. And at some point, some day, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord.

[29 : 06] But first, he was humiliated even on a cross. And then the last one, agents of salvation. Jesus, of course, brought forth salvation for all of us, for whoever will accept him as their Lord and Savior and get baptized.

That person is saved. And with Joseph, eventually, he would go on to save many, many people's lives through preparation and through famine or despite that famine.

Like I said, I don't want to give too much away today, but that's something we're going to talk about. But I wanted you to see that there was these similarities between Jesus and between Joseph. And that everything in the Bible points to Jesus.

What an amazing God that we serve. You know, I really want to make sure that we don't lose track of the fact that temptation can come to us in a bunch of different ways.

It can come to us as sexual immorality. It can come to us in the form of perhaps jealousy or enviousness. It can come to us with anger.

[30 : 16] It can come to us with bitterness. And like Ray said last week, it's not like anybody just wakes up one morning and says, Hey, I'm going to let this sin just totally separate me from my friends and family. Right?

It happens and it's a slow fade. And so stay strong. Be a person of integrity and put Jesus first. Because when we put Jesus first, everything else just seems to fall in place.

Let's pray. Jesus, we are so grateful that you came to this earth, that you were willing to die for us, that you were willing to show us how it was done, and that we are able to grab hold of that free gift of salvation that you offer us.

God, I thank you for being the author of history. And that when we read your book, your words, your scriptures that you've given to us, that whether we're in the Old Testament or the New Testament, we know that everything points to Jesus.

And Holy Spirit, I thank you that you are moving despite me. You are moving through your word and that it is not going out void. And I thank you, God, for everything that you are doing through the people who are watching and listening right now, and for what you are doing even in me today.

[31 : 32] It's in your name we pray. Amen. Amen. Hey, I just wanted to give you a quick invitation, kind of like what I did at the beginning. I want to make sure that you know that you can come join us anytime.

You can even watch us online, like maybe what you're doing right now, or listen to us on the radio station every Sunday morning. But I want to make sure that you know that you can also get a hold of me, too.

Maybe you have some faith questions. What does it look like to be a person of integrity or to make Jesus the Lord and Savior? Like, what does that mean? And if you have those kinds of questions, please feel free to call us here at FCC.

You can do that by calling our phone number, which is 812-663-8488. That's the church office, and you'll be able to get a hold of one of the pastors here.

You can also email me directly if you have some questions. My name is Tyler, once again. You can email me at Tyler at FCCGreensburg.com. Tyler at FCCGreensburg.com.

[32 : 30] And that's also the way that you can get a hold of any of the pastors here on staff. Because Steve, friends of mine, is Steve at FCCGreensburg.com. And Pastor Ray is Ray at FCC.com, and so on and so forth.

And so, if you want to get a hold of us with some faith questions, if you want to get a hold of us just to get some more information, we would love that. Hey, thank you so much, once again, for joining

me here today. Whether you're listening or watching.
Maybe this video came out 10 years ago and you're watching it. I just am so appreciative of what God is doing because of this right now. And I just pray that He would continue to bless you, and that you would live as a Christian, as a person, a follower of Jesus, full of integrity.
Thanks.