

CREW Bible Study

Message – What To Do When You Don't Know What To Do - - Week 3

- **BOTTOM LINE:** When you don't know what to do, do the next right thing.
- **GOAL:** To help students understand that doing the right thing means doing the right thing today and not controlling the outcome of tomorrow.
- **SCRIPTURE:** *Genesis 39:1-9 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. 2 The Lord was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. 3 When his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord gave him success in everything he did, 4 Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned. 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. 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!" 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?"*

MESSAGE

Have you ever been in a situation where the line between right and wrong wasn't so clear?

Let's say you just finished a Target run and in the middle of the parking lot you find a \$20 bill. No one else is around, so you have no idea who it belongs to. Do you just ignore it and leave it there thinking whoever dropped it will be back to get it? Do you put it in your pocket and think it's your lucky day? Do you take it inside to the store manager?

Sometimes the right thing to do isn't so obvious. What about these?

- If you're dating somebody, but you're texting someone else. Like....a lot. And you think, "We're just texting. I'm not *cheating* on them. There's nothing wrong with just texting." But are you sure?
- Or what if your teammate is going on and on about how the coach is a jerk and benched them for no reason, but you know they really need to work on their game. Is it wrong to "yes" them along and agree? Is it wrong to tell them the truth when you know the truth will hurt? Is it wrong *not* to tell

them if this would help them get more time in the game and make the team better too?

Sometimes the right thing isn't so obvious. Other times it might be more obvious, but we know it will cost us something if we follow through and do the right thing. Like when.....

- You know the right thing is to be honest with your parents. But if you're honest with them, you'll probably be grounded and lose your phone.
- You know the right thing is to break up from your relationship. But if you break up, you'll be alone.
- You know the right thing isn't to let someone cheat off of you. But if you say no, it will be awkward and you could be the outcast because of it.

Do you see what I mean? Sometimes what's right feels complicated. And even when we do know what's right, it's difficult to actually do it.

So with that in mind, let's pick back up with the story of Joseph. For the past two weeks, we've been talking about this guy who was one of the most famous people in early history and his story is pretty wild. But there are many parts of his story that can help us know what to do when we don't know what to do.

We left off last week with Joseph sold as a slave and taken to Egypt. We hear that he was put to work in the house of an officer of Pharaoh, who was like a king, emperor, and president all rolled into one. Whatever Pharaoh said, that's what happened. So, you can imagine that working for one of Pharaoh's important officials was kind of stressful. Let's pick up the story in Genesis 39, beginning with verse 1.....

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. 2 The Lord was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. 3 When his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord gave him success in everything he did, 4 Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. 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.

So things weren't so bad for Joseph in Egypt because Potiphar trusted him. And things weren't bad for Potiphar because with Joseph in charge, he was thriving. But then things took a very weird turn. The story continues with this.....

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!"

Well, there you go. Things just got complicated. Because Joseph was a servant, he was required to obey not only Potiphar, but also Potiphar's wife. If he refused her requests, she could punish him. He could be kicked out of their house – or worse. But if he did what she asked, it would create a whole other set of problems.

So, what did Joseph do when he didn't know what to do? Listen to this next part of the story.....

But Joseph 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?"

Out of respect for Potiphar - and out of an even BIGGER respect for God – Joseph simply did the next right thing. It was a complicated situation. It was challenging to know what to do. But Joseph made a decision based on what was right. He did what was right with God and trusted God with the outcome. And in that moment, the right thing to do was to turn down Potiphar's wife.

Unfortunately for Joseph, it created even more drama for him. Potiphar's wife clearly didn't like being turned down. She falsely accused him of assault and had Joseph thrown into prison. But there's a word that relates to Joseph's story today that I want you to know and remember. That word is "integrity." Integrity means being the kind of person who does the right thing regardless of the outcome and regardless of who may be watching.

- Sometimes doing the right thing will get you applause, sometimes it won't.
- Sometimes doing the right thing will cost you something, sometimes it won't.
- Sometimes doing the right thing will make you look good, and sometimes it won't.

But doing the right thing and being a person of integrity will help you lead a life you can be proud of. Here's two things to think about this week:

Think of one situation where you know the right thing to do, but are afraid to do it. What are you afraid of? If fear wasn't a factor what would you do? If you can't think of a current situation, has there been a situation in the past? A time when you wish you had done the right thing in the first place? How could things have turned out differently?

Determine what kind of person you want to be. Don't think too far into the future yet. Think about right now. This week. Today. What do you need to do today that will set you up to be the kind of person who respects themselves and can be proud of their decisions, not because they're easy but because they're right?

Here's the truth: Most of us know the right thing to do in *most* situations, but fear keeps us from acting how we know we should. More than that, fear and inaction keep us from becoming who we want to be, right now. Living with integrity means living in a way on the outside that matches what we think and believe on the inside. It's the most direct route to being who we want to be.

Know the next right thing, and do the next right thing.

FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. If you found a \$20 bill laying on the ground with no one around, what would you do with it? What if it were \$100?
2. Integrity means doing the right thing regardless of the outcome and regardless of who might be watching. Who is someone you know that shows "integrity"? How do they show it?
3. Has there been a time when a situation tested your integrity? Share.
4. What are some things that keep us from doing the right thing?
5. Have you ever had to suffer consequences for doing the right thing?
6. Think of one situation where you know the right thing to do, but are afraid to do it. What are you afraid of? If fear wasn't a factor what would you do? Or is there a situation from your past where you wish you had done the right thing in the first place?
7. When you don't know what is the right thing to do, simply do the next right thing. Do one right thing, then look at the next right thing. Don't worry about ten steps ahead. Read Psalm 119: 105. How does this verse apply?