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- ***Biblical literacy courses*** – Three, 13-week Bible courses covering the entire Bible. Includes individual course books, audio, and optional animated slide supplements. Course books and animated slide supplements may be purchased on the web store.
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# FOLKS Like Us

## JOSEPH

Avoiding the Train Wreck of Moral Failure

Timeless truths from our ancient past,  
for a journey with God in the modern era.

**Fran Sciacca**

## “*Folks Like Us*” — an introduction

Over the years I’ve written and published a number of Bible studies that collectively have sold well over a half-million copies. They were forged, most of them, in the furnaces of pain, doubt, and loneliness. Maybe that’s why they were well-used, they touched people where they hurt most.

Recently, my publisher decided that they no longer wanted to handle the books that contained these 60 or so individual studies. So, I’ve decided to make them available to any who might benefit from them. At no cost.

I have always believed that because God thought it best to become human in the Incarnation, that perhaps “incarnational truth” was His preferred method of revealing Himself and His purposes to us. I suppose that’s where the basic genre of these studies originated. I wanted to provide believers with Bible studies rooted in our ancestral past. The lives of men and women, who it turns out, are “folks just like us” in so many ways.

So, please take your time and work slowly through as many of these studies as you care to do... there’s a lot of them! And may God use the combination of the struggles and insights of your *ancient* brothers and sisters, combined with those of mine, your modern brother, to help you in your spiritual journey. That is the goal of this project.

Warmly in The Lamb,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fran Sciacca". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fran Sciacca  
Birmingham, AL

# JOSEPH

## *Avoiding the Train Wreck of Moral Failure*

**A**BIDING PRINCIPLE – Allowing our sexual desires to breach their God-ordained boundaries in thoughts, words, or deeds is one of the surest prescriptions for a moral train wreck. Sexual temptation is one of the greatest enemies of spiritual vitality.

*“Only a passionate love of purity can save a man from impurity.”*

– William Barclay

**O**ver one quarter of the book of Genesis deals with the life of Joseph, the young son of the patriarch Jacob. Joseph always seemed to find himself at the center of attention, whether it was within the boundaries of his own family or the walls of an Egyptian dungeon.

He stood *out* because he stood *up* for what was right in the eyes of God. And people committed to what is right often discover that they are the target of the Enemy of their souls, the Devil. Joseph had weathered the temptations to blame others, to grow bitter and to complain about injustices to him in the past. But perhaps the most severe test of all was the one he faced and won in the comfortable yet dangerous battlefield of his familiar, daily work environment. Emotional entanglements with those we see every day can slowly become the embers of temptation. And the coals of temptation burn mighty hot when they are fanned into the flames of sexual seduction for men and women—both then and now.

**KEY SCRIPTURE:** Genesis 39:1-23 (*see also Genesis 37 for background*)

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### STUDY QUESTIONS...

1. The *setting* of this temptation is especially important. Look over Genesis 39:1-6, and then briefly describe how you imagine life was like for Joseph.
2. The Hebrew word indicating that Potiphar's wife "cast her eyes upon" Joseph in Genesis 39:7, means that she made a conscious effort to stare at him. It also means that she did this day after day. What do you think was going on in both her mind *and* his mind?
3. Let's dissect this temptation step by step. The verses from Genesis 39 on the next page contain information about the relationship between Potiphar's wife and Joseph. Read each slowly, and try to imagine what Potiphar's wife *and* Joseph might have done or not done, and said or not said:

SCRIPTURE	Potiphar's Wife	Joseph
verse 7a		
verses 7b-9		
verse 10a		
verse 10b		
verse 11		
verse 12		

4. Look at 39:8-9. What do you think Joseph was convinced of, above everything else, as he faced this temptation? What impact do you think this had on how the whole thing played out?
  
5. Do you think Joseph had determined ahead of time how he was going to respond to the various "schemes" of Potiphar's wife, or do you think he simply handled them as they arose? Explain.
  
6. Joseph didn't try to reason with her ("talk her out of") about what happened in 39:12. Why not?
  
7. First, read 2 Samuel 11:1-4, then look back over your responses to question 3 and answer the questions below:
  - a. How are the two *situations* similar?

b. How are the two men's *responses* different? (Find as many differences as you can.)

Joseph's response to his situation	David's response to his situation

8. What were the *outcomes* of these two men's different responses to sexual temptation?

a. Joseph's outcome: Genesis 39:11-23 –

b. David's outcome: 2 Samuel 11:5-17 –

9. The following Scripture passages either directly or indirectly deal with the issue of sexual temptation and sexual sin. Read each one in light of what you've studied so far, and then write out a one-sentence "guideline" from each passage for facing sexual temptation.

Verse	Guideline
Job 31:1	
Proverbs 6:25	
Matthew 5:27-30	
1 Corinthians 9:27	
1 Timothy 5:1-2	

10. Look at 1 Corinthians 6:18-20, 7:2-5, and 7:8-9. What do you see here about sexual temptation, and the very *nature* of sex itself?

11. Psalm 101:3, Matthew 5:27-28, Matthew 6:22-23, and 1 Peter 2:11 taken together provide a powerful package of truths about the source, impact, and struggle of sexual temptation. Read these four passages over several times, and write out what you see about sexual temptation's...

a. source –

b. impact –

c. struggle –

12. Take a few minutes and perform a serious and honest audit of your own life. Think of your convictions and behavior as they relate to this whole arena of sexual temptation and sexual sin. Rate yourself from 1 ("not at all," or "never") to 10 ("extremely," or "always") as an expression of where you are right now in your life (both as "tempter" and "temptee").

\_\_\_\_\_ I am careful about what TV shows and movies I watch .

\_\_\_\_\_ I am careful about what I read online.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am careful about what magazines I look at while shopping for groceries.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am make an effort not to use sexual language in the way I talk.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am cautious in my physical expressions of affection.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am modest in the way I dress.

\_\_\_\_\_ I avoid places where temptation is strong.

\_\_\_\_\_ I choose to leave situations when temptation gets strong.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have a healthy sensitivity to my own sexual weaknesses.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have software installed on my devices to help me in this area.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have enlisted the support of a friend to help me stay pure.

13. Pick two areas from your self-evaluation above that you feel need immediate attention. Write out below what the area is, what you need to do, how and when you plan to do it, and who you can share this with to hold you accountable to follow through.

Area 1	Area 2
<i>What I need to do:</i>	<i>What I need to do:</i>

Area 1	Area 2
<i>When</i> I plan to start doing it:	<i>When</i> I plan to start doing it:
<i>How</i> I plan to start doing it:	<i>How</i> I plan to start doing it:
My accountability partner for this is:	My accountability partner for this is:

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**SCRIPTURE MEMORY** (optional)

- Keeping out the bad – Psalm 101:3
- Putting in the good – Philippians 4:8

**OPTIONAL**

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There are a number of other examples in Scripture of people who triumphed in the face of sexual temptation and opportunity. You might find additional insights by studying their lives. Here are a few for starters:

- Uriah (the husband of Bathsheba) – 2 Samuel 11:8-13
- Boaz – Ruth 3:6-13
- Joseph (the husband of Mary) – Matthew 1:24-25
- Job – Job 31:1-12