

## Approve the Things That Are Excellent

*I pray that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless for the Day of the Messiah. (Phil. 1:9-10)*

Scripture details for us real men with real issues so we can carefully observe them, their behavior, and obtain wisdom. When it comes to knowledge and discernment so we can approve excellence, two Biblical heroes jump out from Scripture: David and Yosef. David had *total* control over all of his circumstances in later life (he was after all the king of Israel) but used very poor judgment. Yosef on the other hand, did not have *any* control of his situation, yet demonstrated godly wisdom in dealing with the cards he had been dealt. I believe we can find great insights by considering the moral struggles of these two men in Scripture. When they were both young, these two boys were evil giant slayers. The Bible is silent when it comes to details about Yosef's old age. However, we have no Scriptural evidence that Yosef ever deviated from the moral godly standards he developed while he was still a youth. When it comes to morals, not much has changed in the last twenty years of my preaching – there are still many people with failures in this one area. I am compelled to continue urging our people in KS to make every effort to obtain and secure complete victory in all matters concerning morality

### Two Responses to a Moral Trap

*In the spring, at the time when kings go out to war, David sent out Yo'av, his servants who were with him and all Isra'el. They ravaged the people of 'Amon and laid siege to Rabbah. But David stayed in Jerusalem. Once, after his afternoon nap, David got up from his bed and went strolling on the roof of the king's palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing, who was very beautiful. David made inquiries about the woman and was told that she was Bat-Sheva the daughter of Eli'am, the wife of Uriyah the Hitti. David sent messengers to get her, and she came to him, and he went to bed with her (for she had been purified from her uncleanness... (2 Sam 11:1-4)*

- David was at the wrong place both mentally and physically.
- He was *alone* with *no accountability* – he was bored.
- He pursued his passion – pursued passion leads to lust which leads to death “*But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death*” (James 1:14-15, KJV). “*There is a way which seems right to a person, but at its end are the ways of death*” (Prov. 14:12; 16:25).
- He acts on what he sees – *visual stimulus*.

It has been said: “*an idle mind is the devil's workshop.*” David is not a young puppy at this stage in his life. He is older, more mature, a great king, and a great leader. But you see; no one is exempt. Not you and not I. We must *all* guard our *hearts* in order to guard our *lives*. The words of Proverbs certainly speak to all of us:

*“For I was at the window of my house, glancing out through the lattice, when I saw among the young men there, among those who don't think for themselves, a young fellow devoid of all sense. He crosses the street near her corner and continues on toward her house. Dusk turns into evening, and finally night, dark and black. Then a woman approaches him, dressed as a prostitute, wily of heart. She's the coarse, impulsive type, whose feet don't stay at home; rather, she stalks the streets and squares, lurking at every street corner. She grabs him, gives him a kiss, and, brazen-faced, she says to him, 'I had to offer peace sacrifices, and I fulfilled my vows today. This is why I came out to meet you, to look for you; now I've found you. I've spread quilts on my couch made of colored Egyptian linen. I've perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon. Come on, let's make love till morning; we'll enjoy making love...' With all her sweet talk she convinces him, enticing him with her seductive words. At once he follows her like an ox on its way to be slaughtered; like a fool to be punished in the stocks; or like a bird rushing into a trap, not knowing its life is at stake till an arrow pierces its liver. So now, children, listen to me; pay attention to what I am saying. Don't let your heart turn to her ways; don't stray onto her paths. For many are those she has struck down dead, numerous those she has killed. Her house is the way to Sh'ol; it leads down to the halls of death.” ...Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way.” (Prov. 7:8-27; 23:19)*

*"Yosef was brought down to Egypt, and Potifar, an officer of Pharaoh's and captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Yishma'elim who had brought him there. ADONAI was with Yosef, and he became wealthy while he was in the household of his master the Egyptian. His master saw how ADONAI was with him, that ADONAI prospered everything he did. Yosef pleased him as he served him, and his master appointed him manager of his household; he entrusted all his possessions to Yosef. From the time he appointed him manager of his household and all his possessions, ADONAI blessed the Egyptian's household for Yosef's sake; ADONAI's blessing was on all he owned, whether in the house or in the field. So he left all his possessions in Yosef's care; and because he had him, he paid no attention to his affairs, except for the food he ate. Now Yosef was well-built and handsome as well. In time, the day came when his master's wife took a look at Yosef and said, "Sleep with me!" But he refused, saying to his master's wife, "Look, because my master has me, he doesn't know what's going on in this house. He has put all his possessions in my charge. In this house I am his equal; he hasn't withheld anything from me except yourself, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" But she kept pressing him, day after day. Nevertheless, he didn't listen to her; he refused to sleep with her or even be with her. However, one day, when he went into the house to do his work, and none of the men living in the house was there indoors, she grabbed him by his robe and said, "Sleep with me!" But he fled, leaving his robe in her hand, and got himself outside." (Gen. 39:1-12)*

- *Yosef had a clear, firm, non-negotiable decision: he won the battle in his mind before it happens*
- *He was determined to maintain his trust with God and Potifar.*
- *He ran from sin: he had the courage to be a coward when it came to morality issues! "So, flee the passions of youth (youthful lusts, KJV); and, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart, pursue righteousness, faithfulness, love and peace. But stay away from stupid and ignorant controversies - you know that they lead to fights, and a slave of the Lord shouldn't fight. On the contrary, he should be kind to everyone, a good teacher, and not resentful when mistreated." (2 Tim. 2:22-24)*

We all seek after the "heart of God" in our lives. I can assure you that there was a much better way than the way David chose. Yes, God forgave David; yes David's lineage is the Messiah's lineage; yes David accomplished much for G-d. No, David's family and children nor *Uriyah* should have had to pay for *this sin*. And a thousand times no, the story did not "have to" be this way. When it comes to moral behavior, *Yosef* forever has shown us the way to avoid the "passions of youth" or as the KJV states it, "flee youthful lusts." From the moment David chose to sin with *Bat-Sheva* until he died, he had *no peace*. Instead, he had what I call a miserable existence. What a waste! How much more happiness would *the man after God's own heart* have had, if only...

*"Natan said to David, "You are the man. 'Here is what ADONAI, the God of Isra'el says: 'I anointed you king over Isra'el. I rescued you from the power of Sha'ul. I gave you your master's house and your master's wives to embrace. I gave you the house of Isra'el and the house of Y'hudah. And if that had been too little, I would have added to you a lot more.' 'So why have you shown such contempt for the word of ADONAI and done what I see as evil? You murdered Uriyah the Hitti with the sword and taken his wife as your own wife; you put him to death with the sword of the people of 'Amon. Now therefore, the sword will never leave your house - because you have shown contempt for me and taken the wife of Uriyah the Hitti as your own wife.' Here is what ADONAI says: 'I will generate evil against you out of your own household. I will take your wives before your very eyes and give them to your neighbor; he will go to bed with your wives, and everyone will know about it. For you did it secretly, but I will do this before all Isra'el in broad daylight.'" (2 Sam. 12:7-12)*

*There is nothing covered up that will not be uncovered, or hidden that will not become known. What you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered behind closed doors will be proclaimed on the housetops. (Luke 12:2-3)*

*"Yosef continued living in Egypt, he and his father's household. Yosef lived 110 years. Yosef lived to see Efrayim's great-grandchildren, and the children of M'nasheh's son Makhir were born on Yosef's knees." (Gen. 50:22-23) {He went beyond his children's, children's children...}*