

09 VaYeshev Genesis 37:1-40:23

By Moshe Schwab

While Praying:

- * Be appropriate in how you do things.
- * Allow God to help you live a clean life. Do things His way no matter how you feel
- * Seek what is right and good even if it is difficult.
- * Do not be at rest with evil. Allow God to expand into more of your life.

This portion begins by telling us about Ya'akov's (Jacob) love for Yosef (Joseph) and the long-sleeved coat he made for him when he was 17. Yosef reported on his brothers and also his brothers became jealous of their father's favoritism. Yosef also had a couple dreams where his brothers prostrated themselves to him and they hated Yosef even more because of that.

Ya'akov sends Yosef to see how his brothers are doing and when his brothers saw him in the distance, they plotted to kill him; instead they throw him in a cistern. A caravan was coming at the time so they sold Yosef to them and the caravan went on toward Egypt. His brothers took his coat and put goats' blood on it and told their father he must have been killed by a wild animal. Then the portion talks some about Y'hudah and his children. Tamar was not given proper treatment by Y'hudah's family and she entices Y'hudah to sleep with her and she has a child by him.

In the meantime, Yosef becomes a servant of Potifar, a captain of Pharaoh's guard. God favored everything that Yosef did and he was appointed to manage Potifar's household. Potifar's wife tried to seduce Yosef, but he would not comply so she pulled off his garment and when he fled, she accused him of trying to sleep with her. Yosef ends up in prison, but God again gives favor to Yosef and he is put in charge of the prisoners. Pharaoh became angry with his baker and cup bearer and put them in prison. They had dreams that Yosef interpreted for them. He told the cupbearer that his position would be restored and the baker that he would be killed. Yosef asked that the cupbearer remember him. Yosef's predictions turned out as expected, but the cupbearer forgot about Joseph's interpretation of his dream.

In this tragic portion we see the destructive nature of sibling rivalry and jealousy. We also see a lack of trust by Yosef's (Joseph) family in God's leading through Yosef's dreams. But we also see how God favored and protected his prophet Yosef. This should remind us that God can protect His people and give them favor even in difficult situations, and that the prophetic can be instrumental in helping God's people.

First of all, it is important that we find out how God wants us to serve Him. There are 3 lists of spiritual gifts in the New Testament portion (Romans 12:5-8, Ephesians 4:11-13, 1 Corinthians 12:7-11). Just as in Shaul's other lists, we should think of them as partial lists that represent a number of spiritual gifts. In the Old Testament portion there is even gifting in design and making things for the Mishkan (the Tent of Meeting in the desert).

There are a lot of large ministries that have developed over the years in order to serve the body of believers, but we too should have some type of way that we serve. Mine is teaching and prayer, but I also support larger ministries and do other things. Foster care was one of the ways we served until we adopted a child and we now have a ministry to help her. My wife now writes letters of encouragement to foster parents whose foster children have returned to their home. Please be sure that as a spiritual encourager, I fully support how God is leading you and I would enjoy hearing what you are doing and will pray for what you are doing.

Now on to what I thought God wanted me to also talk about. We need to be appropriate in how we do things. This is a pretty broad statement, but let me give you an example. When we go to a wedding it is

appropriate to wear nice clothes and smile and give the husband and wife a hearty congratulations. Shaul (Paul) says in 1 Timothy 1:9 NKJV, "That the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation."

Why do you think that Shaul says that? What we wear, speaks of who we are. Since we are good people, we should wear clothes that tell others we are good people. There are so many things being appropriate can apply to. The Bible tells us to be kind (Ephesians 4:32) to others and part of doing that is to act appropriately in situations or be considerate. Being kind comes from the commandment in the Torah where it says to love your neighbor (Leviticus 19:18). God expects His people to be different than those who only think of themselves, so one of our goals should be to learn how to act in a kind considerate way.

Allow God to help you live a clean life. Do things His way no matter how you feel. Living a clean life means to follow God and keep His commandments. We live a clean life by committing our lives to sexual purity, by committing to be a genuinely kind and caring person, etcetera; and we are to do this with the help of the Holy Spirit.

This is another one of those scriptures that can be greatly expanded on. Shaul gives Timothy a short list of things to do in 1 Timothy 4:12 NKJV, "Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity." We are to watch what we say and how we say it. We are to have good conduct and have a caring and loving attitude towards others. In spirit here may just mean our personal spirit; we should have a good attitude about life and how we live. Also, we are to be pure in thought and in action and always want to do what is right; of course, purity includes pure sexual attitudes.

Shaul gives many short lists, and here is another one in Titus 2:6-7 NKJV, "Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility." We are to be serious about living right and develop a lifestyle of doing what is right (doing what is right and good refers to keeping God's commandments). We should have strong beliefs in God and biblical truth. We are to be honest, respectful, and not be a person who lives a sinful life.

Seek what is right and good even if it is difficult and no matter how you feel. I remember finding about \$400 once. The Torah says we should try to return something of value (a person's ox it says). I take that to the minutest degree because I want to do what is right, even if it is just a pen. So, when I found the about \$400, my first thought was to find out who lost it; I was able to return it. At times we are stressed and find it difficult to treat others with kindness, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't. After all, why add more problems to your level of stress because you treated someone wrong?

Do not be at okay with evil or sin in your life. Proverbs 8:13 NKJV says, "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate." We are to have a deep respect for God and His commandments and to hate evil so that we don't do what is wrong. Someone who is proud does things their own way instead of God's way. A person who is arrogant and thinks their own way are okay with doing evil. God does not like those who are okay with evil or those who have obstinate or willful speech. As we do things God's way, we allow God to expand into our lives more. We develop ourselves in doing things His way and bring His presence more in our lives so that our thoughts become clean and we do what is right and good.

Although large ministries play an important part in helping others, we also should find ways to serve. Also, do what is right and appropriate. Be clean spiritually and follow God's commandments. Shaul said

that, "The wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience;" Colossian 3:6 NKJV. So, do what is right. Sometimes we could be tempted to not do what is right. Do what is right no matter what. Do not be okay with sin or evil in your life. Do things God's way and allow His ways and presence to increase in your life.