

## “AMBUSHED! NAVIGATING LIFE’S UNEXPECTED DETOURS”

**JOSEPH WAS AMBUSHED IN HIS FAMILY:** *“It is my deep, settled conviction that one hundred percent of the responsibility for the sustenance of the marriage relationship belongs to the husband.”* --Dr. Richard Halverson, former chaplain of the U.S. Senate

God never commands the wife to love her husband, but rather God commands the husband to love his wife. This indicates that God has wired the man to be the initiator and his wife to be a responder. This is the paradigm for how God has wired us in our relationship with Him. We only love the Lord because He first loved us.

In **1 Peter 3:7**, God commands the husband to **“understand”** his wife. To have a full mental grasp of her nature requires study, discernment, time, and effort.

### **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

**What would your business look like if you applied the same mental and emotional energy to it that you do to understanding your wife?**

**Since God commands the husband to engage his mind in understanding his wife, do you love God enough to obey Him?**

**Do you love your wife enough to put forth the effort to read about the nature of a woman as compared to a man?**

When Peter describes the wife as the **“weaker vessel,”** he is saying that she is more delicate. She’s more fragile and sensitive.

### **FIVE NEEDS OF EVERY WOMAN (Dr. Willard Harley)**

- 1) **The need for affection and tenderness.**
- 2) **The need for conversation.**
- 3) **The need for honesty and openness.**
- 4) **The need for security.**
- 5) **The need for relational commitment.**

The husband is the thermostat in the marriage and the wife is the thermometer. You control the climate and she will adjust to the temperature you set.

### **JOSEPH WAS AMBUSHED IN HIS FINANCES**

When Potiphar’s wife tried to seduce Joseph, he called it “great wickedness.” Yet, even after maintaining his moral purity and resisting temptation, Joseph lost his job and was sent to prison as a falsely accused rapist. Ironically, the Bible still says, “The Lord was with Joseph.”

### **WHY WAS THE PRESENCE OF GOD WITH JOSEPH IN AN UNUSUAL WAY?**

- Because he was the same person in prison as he was in the palace.
- He was the same person in private as he was in public.
- He was the same person in poverty as he was in prosperity.

**SATAN TARGETED JOSEPH IN THE TWO AREAS WHERE MEN ARE MOST VULNERABLE:** Finances and Females; Money and Morals.

In Scripture, there are 500 verses on prayer, 500 verses on faith, and 2,350 verses on material possessions.

**Luke 16:11** is a key verse when explaining why God makes such a big deal about material possessions: Basically, Jesus is saying, “If you are not willing to trust Me in something so small as material things, then I cannot entrust you with the true riches (spiritual wealth).”

### **The Pervasiveness of Porn:**

- Every second \$3,075.64 is spent on porn.
- Every second 28,258 Internet users view porn.
- Every second 327 Internet users are typing sexually explicit search terms.
- Sex is the top word searched for on the Internet.
- 70% of porn traffic occurs between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.
- 57% of pastors say that addiction to porn is the most sexually damaging issue to their congregation.

Dr. James Dobson says that pornography is just as addictive and destructive as cocaine.

**The Junk Food Analogy:** A bag of potato chips and a soft drink have enough calories to satisfy your appetite and leave you with the sensation of being full. But those foods contain no nutritional value. A steady diet of those things will leave a person overweight and under-nourished. Likewise, the junk food of sex outside of marriage leaves a person with the feelings of true love and intimacy, only to wake up the next morning with feelings of guilt and emptiness.

### **JOSEPH WAS AMBUSHED IN HIS FRIENDSHIPS**

No doubt, as prison inmates, a camaraderie and rapport had developed between Joseph and the butler. Having interpreted the butler’s confusing dream, Joseph asked him to reciprocate the favor by recommending to Pharaoh that he release Joseph. **Genesis 39:23** says, **“Yet, the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.”**

### **THE FRIENDSHIP DEFICIT AMONG MEN:**

Therapists say that only 10% of all men have any real friends. A decade-long study of 5,000 men concluded that *“the data indicates that it is not far from the truth to say that men have no intimate friends. Men do not value friendships.”*

### WHAT TO DO WHEN LIFE TAKES AN UNEXPECTED DETOUR:

- 1) **By faith, affirm that God's timing is always perfect by praising Him for being in control. (See 2 Corinthians 12:1-10.)**
- 2) **Be persistent by continuing to faithfully serve God in the midst of the ambush or detour.** Persistence assumes resistance. When nothing seems to be happening, rest assured that something IS happening.
- 3) **Submit to the human authority which God has placed over you.**

**"Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves" Romans 13:1-2.**

- 4) **Be sensitive to the emotional hurts of others and look for ways to encourage them.**

**"who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God" 2 Corinthians 1:4.**

- 5) **Take the opportunity to make verbal, positive confessions about God by witnessing to others in the midst of your ambush.**

**"But he refused and said to his master's wife, 'Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand" Genesis 39:8.**

**"So Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, 'It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace'" Genesis 41:16.**

While telling these guys that God would give an accurate interpretation to their dream, Joseph's own dream was still unfulfilled. It says that while Joseph's dream was unfulfilled, Joseph himself was fulfilled. While Joseph's dream appeared to be shattered, his confidence in God had not been shattered. Therefore, he teaches that we can be fulfilled in the midst of unfulfilled dreams because it is not the dream that fulfills, but the God of the dream.

- 6) **When life ambushes you, refrain from asking, "Why me, Lord?" and start asking, "What now, Lord?"** The question of "why me?" is not a legitimate question. It assumes that God has not been fair. "Why me?" fights FOR victory and "What now? Fights FROM victory. "Why me?" elicits doubt; "What now?" elicits faith.

Given the chain of events which led to the fulfillment of Joseph's dream, we are reminded that God can take the evil intentions of others and ungodly actions of others and still accomplish His plan in your life. God can take a weakness created by the devil and turn it into a strength for His glory.

God took Joseph from his parents, to the pit, to the prison, and then to the palace.

### LESSONS ABOUT DETOURS AND AMBUSHES

- 1) **God is not controlled by our circumstances, but our circumstances are controlled by God.** By seeing every sparrow that falls to the ground and by having the hairs on your head numbered, we are reminded that God can give infinite attention to an infinite number of details at any one point in time as though you are the only person He has to watch over.
- 2) **As a Christian, God censors and sifts our circumstances through His sovereign hand.**

**"And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of my Father's hand" (John 10:28-29). Also see, Ephesians 1.**

God alone knows how to balance the sunshine with the rain, the wind with the calm, and the laughter with the tears.

- 3) **God processes our detours and ambushes with a higher purpose in mind.**

**"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose" Romans 8:28.**

**"And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance" Romans 5:3.**

**"Knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience" James 1:3.**

So, when you feel ambushed by life, it is not how you feel, but who you know and what you know that makes the difference.

**WHEN YOU THINK OF JOSEPH, TWO WORDS STAND OUT:** Favor & Service - If you want the favor of God upon your life, then you must embrace the attitude of a servant. Jesus came to earth in the form of a bond servant (See **Philippians 2**). In fact, the very identity of Jesus is personified as that of a suffering servant. Therefore, if you are not serving others, then you are not much like Jesus.

**OUR SERVICE TO GOD INVOKES THE FAVOR OF GOD WHEN IT IS MOTIVATED FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.**