

# What to Do When You Don't Know What to Do / Week 3

*The Lord was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. When his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord gave him success in everything he did, 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. 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. 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 (Genesis 39:2-6 NIV).*

*Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, and after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, "Come to bed with me!" (Genesis 39:6-7 NIV).*

*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. 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?" And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her (Genesis 39:8-10 NIV).*

What would you do if you found a \$20 dollar bill on the ground outside a grocery store while being in a rush to leave? What do you think would go through your mind? Maybe something like this:

- *Just ignore it and leave it. Whoever dropped it will come back to look for it.*
- *NO! Ignore thought #1. Just take it. God gave you a special 20-dollar bill from Heaven!*
- *You need to take this inside and give it to a manager. Surely someone will come back and look for it.*
- *Better me than someone else! It's the parking lot. It's not like someone dropped it by the register. If it were that big of a deal to them, they wouldn't have lost it to begin with. And, if I take it back in, the employee will probably just keep it, right? Is anybody really going to give back cash?*

With all these options, the question blaring through my mind would be, "What should I actually do?"

Some people would confidently say: "Take it to a manager. That's the right thing." Others would say: "Take the money. This is not a moral issue. Finders, keepers!" And some people are constantly skeptical might try to figure out in their mind if this is some late-night prank show where they film you and then out you for being selfish.

Here's what I'm getting at: **Knowing what to do isn't simple in the moment.**

And that's what we're talking about in this series: *What To Do When You Don't Know What To Do*. Today, we're going to look at the dilemma of what to do when we don't know what is right and what is wrong.

It'd be nice if "doing the right thing" was always clear and obvious, right? But we all know that isn't the case.

## **Sometimes the right thing isn't obvious.**

**Sometimes the right thing costs us something.** If you decide to return the 20-dollar bill to the customer service desk, it would cost you something. Specifically, \$20. On top of that, the time spent going back into the store and having the conversation. Sometimes what's right, feels complicated. And even when we do know what's right, sometimes it's difficult to actually do it.

So, with that in mind, let's pick back up with 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 wild. Like sold-into-slavery-by-your-own-brothers-wild. And what we're going to look at today can be a game changer for all of us—it'll help us know what to do when we don't know what to do!

We left off last week with Joseph sold into slavery, and we pick up this week with what happened afterward. We're told Joseph was given to work in the house of an officer of Pharaoh—and Pharaoh was like a king, emperor, and president all rolled into one. Whatever Pharaoh said, that's what happened. Period. So, you can imagine working for one of Pharaoh's important officials was kind of stressful. Depending on the situation, it could either go really well, or it could be really bad. And there was no telling what situation Joseph was going to walk into.

But, like we mentioned last week, the author was quick to point out that God was with Joseph, and he had favor with the official, whose name was Potiphar. That means that Potiphar was a fan of Joseph's. Now let's pick up the story.

*The Lord was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. When his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord gave him success in everything he did, 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. 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. 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 (Genesis 39:2-6 NIV).*

Things weren't so bad for Joseph because Potiphar trusted him. And things weren't bad for Potiphar because with Joseph in charge he was thriving. But then things took a weird turn.

*Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, and after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, "Come to bed with me!" (Genesis 39:6-7 NIV).*

This tells us two things...

1. Apparently, Joseph wasn't a bad looking guy.
2. His boss' wife noticed!

Now, this was where things got complicated. Because Joseph was a servant, he was required to obey not only Potiphar—but also his wife. And if he refused her commands, there was nothing holding her back from punishing him. He could be kicked out of their household—which was a better place than others—or even cost him his life. But if he did what she asked, that would create a whole other set of problems. She was married to his boss! Both options came with problems. It wasn't easy or clear.

## **So, what did Joseph do when he didn't know what to do?**

Listen to what the next part of the story says:

*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. 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?” And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her (Genesis 39:8-10 NIV).*

Basically, **out of respect for Potiphar—and out of an even BIGGER respect for God—Joseph simply did the next right thing.** Joseph didn’t make a decision based on how things might turn out for him, like losing his job or even his life. He made a decision based on what was right. And what was right, in that moment, was turning down Potiphar’s wife.

- It was complicated.
- It was challenging.
- *But it was the right thing to do.*

It wasn’t exactly like his life was perfect as a result of making this right choice. In fact, things got worse. Potiphar’s wife falsely accused Joseph of rape. Potiphar believed his wife, and had Joseph thrown into prison. Not exactly the happy ending you’re hoping for when you do the right thing. But Joseph didn’t make his decision based on what it might mean for him. **He did what was right with God and trusted God with the outcome.**

The outcome for Joseph in this situation wasn’t great. But there’s a word I want you to know that changes everything when it comes to the “doing what’s right” dilemma. And that word is *integrity*. Maybe you’ve heard that word before. **Integrity means being the kind of person who does what’s right—regardless of the outcome and regardless of who is around.**

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

**We don’t get to decide how things turn out, but we get to decide what kind of person we want to be.** And being a person of integrity will lead to a life with less regret, more respect, and a better idea of what to do in every situation.

Chances are we’ll never find ourselves in the kind of situation Joseph was in, but we will find ourselves in all kinds of situations where we will have to decide what to do without knowing how it will play out. It could go better than we thought, or it could go worse. But **when we make our decisions with integrity based on what is right, we are living lives we can be proud of.** So, here’s one thing we can remember...

## WHEN YOU DON’T KNOW WHAT TO DO, DO THE NEXT RIGHT THING.

Try this:

1. **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?
2. **Determine what kind of person you want to be.** I’m not talking five years from now. What kind of person do you want to be 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 deal: 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 want to be, *right now*. That's why learning to live with integrity—living in a way on the outside that matches what we think and believe on the inside—is the most direct route to being who want to be. But that doesn't always make it easy to do. So, the next two steps were created with you, taking the final step to do what you need to do, in mind.

- 1. Tell somebody the next right thing you're going to do.**
- 2. Invite them to pray for you and then ask you this week if you did it!**

That's how we live lives of integrity. **Knowing the next right thing, and then doing the next right thing.** And inviting someone else to come alongside us. Doing the next right thing doesn't have to be a lonely venture. Invite someone into your story. There is strength that shows up when you allow someone to show up with you.

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## *DISCUSSION QUESTIONS*

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1. What would you do if...You found a \$1 bill on the ground? Or \$100?
2. Who is someone you know who shows "integrity"? How do they show it?
3. What are some things that keep us from doing the right thing?
4. How can doing the next right thing cost you something?
5. Why should we care about "doing the right thing"?
6. How does choosing to do the right thing affect the people around you?
7. What does it look like to be a teen with integrity?