



## Sample Content

**Location:** Thoughts From Members

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### An Eternal Love Story

I was reading through Joseph's account and spent more time than I ever have reading and wrestling with chapter 38, about Judah and Tamar. With it being right in the middle of Joseph's story, I started to compare Judah and Joseph. Of course, I had always heard of Joseph as the righteous one, the picture of Jesus. His life seemed to exemplify the ideal ruler, he was wise, disciplined, and able to maintain his integrity through suffering. He had provided for his family in their time of need, demonstrating wisdom and leadership. And yet, when Israel blessed them, he elevated Judah and gave him the kingship. Of course, it is through Judah and Tamar, that David and ultimately Jesus, are born. Joseph's leadership was remarkable – wise, disciplined, and righteous. Why then does Judah receive the kingship? What sets apart the kind of leadership that truly reflects God's kingdom?

Judah's story is crazy. It starts with him selling Joseph into slavery, then leaving his brothers and marrying a Canaanite woman. Then his sons act evil before God and they are killed by God, and Judah seems to blame Tamar, his daughter-in-law for it. He then tells her to go back to her father's house and wait for his other son, though he never intended to give him to her. Tamar waits for Judah along the roadside after his wife died and he thinks she is a prostitute.

To act as collateral, Tamar requests several items important to Judah's identity. When she is found pregnant while "acting the harlot," Judah says she should be killed, but she presents the items and says, "Recognize these." (Genesis 38:25). This happens to be the same thing Judah said when presenting Joseph's bloody robe to Jacob, and he is forced to face his own unrighteousness. In response, he repents and says, "She is more righteous than I." (Genesis 38:26) which would have been ridiculous and humiliating for a patriarch. This marks his transformation, and later in Genesis 44:33, Judah offers himself in the place of Benjamin.

So, Joseph remains righteous, but Judah undergoes a transformation where he learns to see the worth of others before God, including the dignity of Tamar, which leads him to sacrifice his own honor and ultimately his own life for the good of others. It is interesting to me that Joseph's provision, though significant, was also temporary.

Exodus 1:8 – "Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph."

Ironically, the very system Joseph built to save lives later allowed Pharaoh to consolidate power, setting the stage for Israel's enslavement. So then, we have a representation of temporary and eternal leadership, as the self-sacrifice of Judah endures and is seen and perfected in Jesus.

It then led me to consider marriage and the role of the man in the marriage.

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her (Ephesians 5:25). Joseph provided for his family as a ruler, but Judah learned to lay himself down for others. That's the kind of leadership that Christ models, and the kind of leadership a husband is called to in marriage. Just as Judah moved from self-interest to self-sacrifice, a husband is meant to lead not by control, but by giving himself completely for the good of his wife and family. A husband who sees his wife as someone to serve him is living like the old Judah, but a husband that sees his wife as someone he must give himself for is modeling Christ. Thus, two contrasting kinds of leadership in marriage:

### **Temporary Leadership (Like Joseph)**

Provides material needs

Leads with strategy and order

Ensures survival

Respected for competence

### **Eternal Leadership (Like Judah & Jesus)**

Lays down his life for his wife

Leads with sacrificial love

Ensures flourishing

Loved for self-giving

Marriage thrives when built on eternal love, not just functional leadership. This is why Christ is not just a ruler, but a husband to His people—and why godly marriage is built on sacrifice, not control. Just as Judah's transformation pointed forward to Christ's self-giving love, a husband's leadership in marriage should reflect that same sacrificial devotion.