



Part 5: Wicked Games

INTRODUCTION — Initiating Women & Responding Men

Genesis 2:18

LOOK TO THE BOOK – TAMAR: The Strong Rescuer

Genesis 38

Judah's Transformation... Genesis 37:26-27 VS Genesis 44:18-34

Tamar the righteous...

- **Ruth 4:11-12** – Named as part of a wedding blessing for Ruth and Boaz
- **2 Samuel 13:1; 14:27** – David and Absalom name their daughters after her
- **Matthew 1:3** – Highlighted in the lineage of Jesus

TAKE OUTS – I'll Have That To Go Please

TAKE OUT #1: Love as Sacrifice

The law of levirate marriage required great sacrifice to enact, and Onan was not willing to love like God calls us to. Ironically, like the nameless relative in Ruth 4, Onan lost his life by trying to preserve it. God routinely calls his people to make sacrifices for one another. Giving up one's rights for the blessing of another is our calling as God's image-bearers.

Luke 9:23-25; 1 Corinthians 15:31

TAKE OUT #2: Rejecting Gender Stereotypes

Our culture often divides character traits into masculine and feminine in ways that are foreign to a biblical understanding of our humanity. Unfortunately, this is often made worse, not better, by church sub-culture. We assume women are to be quite, gentle, and submissive, while men are to be strong, assertive leaders. But Scripture calls both men and women to practice submission, quietness, gentleness, modesty, and self-control as well as to be ambassadors and warriors for Christ.

1 Peter 3:3-4; 1 Thessalonians 4:11; 1 Timothy 2:2; 3:3; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 6:10-18

TAKE OUT #3: Why We Judge

We harshly judge others for different reasons. Sometimes it is ignorance overruling empathy – unaware of how we would act in the same situation. Sometimes it is jealousy – hating the fact that others are getting away with what we know we can't. And sometimes, like Judah, it is projection – condemning in others what we hate about ourselves. Jesus gives us a creative and healing way to deal with our own sin first, and then to help others with theirs. How does Tamar help Judah go through the plank eye process and what are the results in Judah's life?

Matthew 7:1-5

CONCLUSION – Calling All Tamars

Genesis 2:18

RECOMMENDED READING...

- *Lost Women of the Bible*, by Carolyn Custis James
- *Finally Feminist*, by John G. Stackhouse

HOME CHURCH QUESTIONS...

WARMING UP...

1. Take time to review this week's message. Talk about what most challenged, puzzled, or encouraged you.
2. Have you ever been "set straight" or corrected or just pleasantly surprised by someone you thought was "less righteous" than you? Talk about it.

LOOK TO THE BOOK...

3. Read through **Genesis 38** again. A) What verse or idea stands out to you the most? Why? B) The sin of Onan has been used by the church to condemn masturbation on the one hand and birth control of any sort on the other. Why are these inappropriate uses of this passage? What transferable lessons does this raise for how we use Scripture in general? C) The passage describes God's extreme justice, taking the lives of two wicked men. Do you ever wish God would act more justly today? Why or why not? D) In verse 23, Judah is concerned both with his image and his morality (albeit trivial morality compared to his bigger issues). How did Jesus approach issues of image and ethics? Are there times when you find yourself acting more like Judah than Jesus?
4. List as many double standards and disadvantages this passage alludes to regarding the treatment and status of women in ancient times. Are there any parallels for these items in our culture today?

SO WHAT?...

5. Review TAKE OUT #1: A) To what extent have you embraced the way of Christ as a way of sacrifice for others? Like Onan, do you sometimes just pretend to live the life of love without truly expecting to lose out in order to bless another? Talk about it.
6. Review TAKE OUT #2: A) Are there ways that you tend to divide the fruit of the Spirit into masculine and feminine characteristics? What about other pictures of a Christ-follower, such as ambassador or warrior? B) What are some examples of ways that the church might grow more healthy as we better align our understanding of gender roles with Scripture?
7. Review TAKE OUT #3: A) What situations most tempt you to judge harshly? B) How does Tamar help Judah go through the plank eye process of Jesus? C) What are the results in Judah's life? D) What difference would this process make in your life if you submitted to it regularly?

Bruxy Cavey @ THE MEETING HOUSE – Sunday, August 2, 2009