

Joseph

Introduction

Joseph's life encompasses Genesis chapters 37, and 39-50.

What stands out to you about Joseph's life?

Joseph was the second youngest son in a family where his father and older brothers were not good examples for him in many ways. Yet, he never used his upbringing as an excuse for how he lived his life, but, instead, overcame his upbringing. Are there some ways that you have had to overcome your upbringing?

Jacob's sons in order of their birth:

By Leah: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah.

By Bilhah, maidservant of Rachel: Dan and Naphtali.

By Zilpah, maidservant of Leah: Gad and Asher.

By Leah: Issachar and Zebulun.

By Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin.

Genesis 37

1. Verses 1-2. "This is the account of Jacob." For the full account, also see Genesis 25, & 27-35.

Joseph made a bad report about Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher to his father. Was this the right thing to do or not?

2. Verses 3-4. Israel/Jacob loved Joseph more than his other sons. What effect did this have? Was this true in your family?

Note on the “richly ornamented robe”. This was a white tunic that came down to the ankles with long sleeves that had rows of color at its bottom and on the end of the sleeves. It signified that Joseph had been chosen by Jacob to be his main heir and receive a double portion. The normal robe his other brothers would have worn had short sleeves and came to the waist, because it was the most practical to wear for working in.

Joseph’s brothers reacted wrongly, hating him and not speaking to him. He was rejected and became an outsider in his own family. How do you think you would have felt as Joseph? Did anything like this happen in your family?

3. Verses 5-11. Should Joseph have shared his first dream with his brothers, and his second dream with them and his father? What do you think his motives were?

4. Verses 12-36. When Joseph quickly agreed to his father’s request to check on his brothers, what did this demonstrate about him? What do you think you would have done?

We see the damage that jealousy causes (see verse 11), as Joseph's brothers plot to murder him. Do you have any problem with jealousy?

Judah suggests that they sell Joseph into slavery instead of killing him. However, a lesser evil is still an evil. Do you sometimes justify an action as only a little sin or the lesser of two evils?

Joseph's brothers do not say what happened to him to their father, but deceived him into thinking Joseph was dead. Jacob, the deceiver, who did not repent of it, passed it on to his sons. The consequence was that he lived unnecessarily in mourning for years until he discovered Joseph was alive. Are there any family sins that you have seen passed on in your family? What damage did they do? What can we do to stop them?