

JOSEPH- PROFILE OF COURAGE

Part 2: Courage in Family Conflict (Ch. 37)

INTRO: Studying the life of Joseph (Joseph Jacobson). He is one of four key characters in Genesis, known as patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph. Joseph is given the most material (chs. 37-50). Joseph's family was dysfunctional, not uncommon to Bible characters. Parents were quick to lie and deceive to get their way, rather than trusting God to keep His promise. His siblings, all other, except younger brother Benjamin, despised him. Mom died giving birth to his younger brother (Joseph 16?). Now Jacob and his 12 sons all live in Canaan. As we'll see against all odds, through no fault of his own, Joseph faces so much heartache. Through it all he stayed courageous and faithful to God. I'm not sure how much he knows of his father's struggles and what he knew about his God.

SERIES QUESTION: "How would your outlook on life change if you had the courage to really believe God was with you in every situation?" Joseph did. We first witness his courage in family conflict (ch. 37). This chapter can be summarized in one word — betrayed!

I. FAVORED AS A SON (37:1-11)

- A. He had *integrity* (v.2)—had a moral compass. What was the "ill report" about? Can't be sure. Living with integrity often intimidates those who don't.
- B. He was shown *partiality* by his father (37:3-4). Rachel's first child who came late in Jacob's life. He was gifted "a long robe with sleeves" from his father. It represented royalty. Result? (v.4). They hated him and couldn't have civil conversation with him.
- C. He had disturbing *dreams* (vv.5-11) – 41:32, 44; 42:6; 44:14; 49:22-26. Seen as divine revelations.
 - 1. Dream One (vv.5-8) –
 - 2. Dream Two (vv. 9-11) – What did his dreams reveal about God? God had a plan and he could trust it.

II. HATED BY HIS BROTHERS (vv.4-28)

- A. He was despised: v.4 hated, v.5 hated him more, v.8 they hated...more, v.11 were jealous of him. What fueled it? Father's partiality, integrity, etc. Hate, Envy, Violence, Deception (WOW!)

- B. *Sent by his father* (vv.12-17) – Map of Canaan. Why? Check on them because he couldn't trust them (Jacob had a past they'd seen). Jacob uses Joseph to spy. They were not in Shechem (50 miles north of Hebron), but in Dothan (20 miles north). Why so far from home? Surely they could find pasture closer to home. Questionable deals they hid from their dad?
- C. *Seen by his brothers* (vv.18-25) – they conspire to kill him. But not for Reuben they would have.
- D. *Sold into slavery* (vv.26-28) – Let's not kill him, let's sell him, says Judah. Joseph is off to Egypt, miles from home and family at 17 years of age. Imagine what goes through his mind: uncertainty, rejection, fear, anticipation, etc. Slavery was a living death! Think he asked God? "Why?" v.25 "sat down to eat" – talk about callous.

III. GRIEVED BY HIS FATHER (vv.29-36)

- A. More *deception* (vv.29-33) – Unfathomable lie
- B. Great *grief* (vv.34-35) – he'd lost Rachel, now Joseph. Jacob again reaps what he sowed. We reap what we sow but self-punishment is not the answer.
- C. (v.36) *God is at work*. He has a plan and he will bring it to pass. He can use the hard times – jump forward (50:22).

LESSONS

1. *Favoritism by parents is damaging*. Partiality creates turmoil. Many damaging emotions: jealousy, envy, hatred, deception, etc. Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Rachel all did it. Isaac the favorite.
2. *Envy and jealousy destroy unity and harmony*. See Pro. 14:30; Mark 7:22; Gal. 5:21; Jam. 3:16. But God is so great He can work His purposes even when people are doing their worst.
3. *No condition is more unfair than slavery*. Human trafficking. Emotional slavery to anger, fear,....
4. *God can turn unimaginable suffering into unbelievable good* (Rom. 8:28)

CONC: Series question: "How would your outlook on life change if you had the courage to really believe God was with you in every situation?"