

Calvary Chapel  Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

Kindergarten

Sunday Morning

Study 11

Joseph: Part 1

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The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective To introduce the character of Joseph and demonstrate his faithfulness to God in difficult circumstances.

Key Verses

Genesis 37—Main Teaching Passage
Exodus 20:17

Memory Verse - Genesis 50:20 (November Memory Verse)

"But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good."

Hook

Ask the students to raise their hands if they have any brothers or sisters.

Ask the students if they ever fight with their brothers and sisters.

Ask, "What kinds of things do you fight over?"

And finally, "Do you think God wants you to fight with your brothers and sisters?"

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

Over the next three weeks we are going to tell the story of Joseph. This week we will look at his brother's jealousy and him being sold into slavery. The following two weeks, we will see the results and the reunion.

Jacob had over the course of time been given 11 sons. His youngest son, Joseph, was loved by his father more than the others and was given special gifts. On top of their jealousy towards him, Joseph's brother got angry when Joseph dreamed that his brothers would one day bow down before him and honor him.

This was the final straw for the brothers, who concocted a plan to kill Joseph by leading him out into the wilderness and claiming that he was attacked by wild animals. They lured him into a pit, but instead of killing him they decided to sell him as a slave, and Joseph was taken to Egypt.

In Egypt, Joseph was sold to a man named Potiphar and quickly became his most trusted servant. Sadly, false accusations were made against Joseph and he was sent to prison for something that he did not do. *Note that we will not be dealing directly with Potiphar's wife in our account of the story.

LOOK

The Bible tells us, "It is good when brothers dwell in unity" (Psalm 133:1). What could possibly happen to make brothers so angry at each other that they would try and kill one another? The answer in this Bible story is jealousy. Jealousy is when you get angry, bitter, or resentful at someone else's good fortune. In other words, something good happens to someone else, and you get upset because that good thing didn't happen to you.

Imagine you are walking along with your best friend and out of nowhere someone comes over and says, "I felt like being really generous today, so I bought you this ice cream," and then hands it to your friend. You might get upset because you didn't get an ice cream as well. Instead of being happy for your friend, who just got free ice cream (and if you are lucky, there are two spoons and he will share it with you), you got upset because something good happened, but it didn't happen to you.

This is what happened to Joseph's brothers. Joseph was given a present from their father, but they didn't get one too. Instead of being happy for their brother, they got so mad that they tried to kill him, and eventually sold him as a slave to Egypt.

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK (Continued)

There is another story that we have already studied where a man kills his brother, the story of Cain and Abel. In that story, the reason that Cain killed his brother Abel was also jealousy. God accepted Abel's sacrifice but rejected Cain's. Cain became jealous, so he killed his brother.

In Exodus 20, God warns us very carefully not to covet. Coveting is where we desire someone else's stuff so much (maybe even their success) that we sin. God tells us that every good and perfect gift comes from above, that everything that we have comes from Him. We have no right to get upset if someone else has something that we don't.

Did you know that God gets jealous? God gets jealous for you and me. He doesn't get jealous in a sinful way, He just loves us so much, that it hurts him very badly when we say that we love other things more than Him. God's jealousy means He will do whatever it takes to show you just how much He loves you.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

Review the lesson by asking what made the brothers so jealous that they sold Joseph into slavery. How can we be careful to avoid jealousy in our own lives?

Pray: Thank the Lord for His incredible love for us. Praise Him for showing us that great love by sending Jesus to the world. Ask Him to help us to overcome our jealousies and covetousness.

Parent Question: Why did Joseph's brothers sell him into slavery?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Genesis 37 by David Guzik

Genesis 37 - Joseph Is Sold Into Slavery

A. Joseph's dreams.

1. (1-4) Jacob favors Joseph.

Now Jacob dwelt in the land where his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan. This is the history of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brothers. And the lad was with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to his father. Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of many colors. But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.

a. **Joseph, being seventeen years old:** Thus begins one of the remarkable life stories of the Bible and all literature. "He was loved and hated, favored and abused, tempted and trusted, exalted and abased. Yet at no point in the one-hundred-and-ten-year life of Joseph did he ever seem to get his eyes off God or cease to trust him. Adversity did not harden his character. Prosperity did not ruin him. He was the same in private as in public. He was a truly great man." (Boice)

i. Enoch shows the *walk* of faith, Noah shows the *perseverance* of faith, Abraham shows the *obedience* of faith, Isaac shows the *power* of faith, and Jacob shows the *discipline* of faith. Along these lines we could say that Joseph shows the *triumph* of faith. Joseph never complained and he never compromised.

ii. Joseph is also a remarkably powerful picture of Jesus.

b. **Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children:** These chapters stand out for the insight they give us into an obviously troubled family. From the beginning, we get the impression Joseph was sort of a pampered favorite of Jacob, who didn't mind tattling on his older brothers at all.

c. **Also he made him a tunic of many colors:** Jacob's favoritism of Joseph was plain to all, including Joseph and his brothers. As an outward display of this, he gave Joseph a **tunic of many colors**. This signified a position of favor, princely standing, and birthright. It was a dramatic way of saying he was the son to receive the birthright.

i. The real idea behind the ancient Hebrew phrase for **tunic of many colors** is that it was a tunic extending all the way down to the wrists and ankles, as opposed to a shorter one. This was not what a workingman wore. It was a garment of privilege and status.

d. **They hated him and could not speak peaceably to him:** Jacob's favoritism of Joseph was an obvious source of conflict in the family. The brothers naturally **hated him** because the father favored him.

2. (5-8) Joseph's first dream.

Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more. So he said to them, "Please hear this dream which I have dreamed: There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf." And his brothers said to him, "Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

a. **Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more:** At best, Joseph showed a great lack of tact. Surely he knew how much his brothers hated to hear this dream, which set him above his brothers.

b. **Shall you indeed reign over us?** The brothers understood perfectly the meaning of the dream: one day Joseph would **reign over** them and **have dominion over** them.

i. Also relevant to this dream was the fact that it involved **sheaves** of wheat. Joseph's ultimate position of status over his brethren would be connected with food.

3. (9-11) Joseph's second dream.

Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me." So he told it to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?" And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

a. **Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers:** If Joseph was unwise in telling the first dream (knowing how irritating it was to his brothers) he was even more wrong sharing this second dream, especially because it set him not only above his brothers, but also set him above his father and mother.

i. Joseph seems to have been afflicted with the sort of pride often apparent among the favored and blessed. He was so focused on how great his dreams were for *him*, he didn't begin to consider how the dreams would sound in the ears of *others*.

ii. At this point, Joseph was a *contrast* to Jesus. Jesus wants us to be as He was on this earth: an *others-centered* person. Joseph seems to have fallen short in this area.

iii. Though Joseph was wrong to tell these dreams, they certainly did come true. One may receive a wonderful message from God that He does not intend them to publish to others. Joseph showed a lack of wisdom here, perhaps rooted in pride.

b. **Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?** This portion of Genesis possibly isn't in strict chronological order. Back in Genesis 35:16-20, Joseph's mother Rachel died. This portion of Genesis seems to backtrack somewhat.

i. Probably, the transition point is in Genesis 37:2: *This is the genealogy of Jacob*. This likely ends the record preserved by Jacob himself (who recounted the death of Rachel), and the next line begins the record preserved by Joseph himself. These same kinds of transitions are found in Genesis 5:1, 6:9, and 25:19.

c. **The sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me:** The idea of the stars, moon, and sun representing the family of Israel is repeated in Revelation 12:1. That passage speaks of Jesus coming from the nation of Israel.

B. Joseph's brothers sell him into slavery.

1. (12-17) Jacob sends Joseph to find his brothers keeping the sheep.

Then his brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers feeding the flock in Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." So he said to him, "Here I am." Then he said to him, "Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me." So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron, and he went to Shechem. Now a certain man found him, and there he was, wandering in the field. And the man asked him, saying, "What are you seeking?" So he said, "I am seeking my brothers. Please tell me where they are feeding their flocks." And the man said, "They have departed from here, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan.

a. **To feed their father's flock in Shechem:** There seems nothing strange about this errand, except Joseph's brothers were in **Shechem**, a place where this family was influenced and harmed by worldly influences.

2. (18-22) Joseph's brothers plot to kill him.

Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him. Then they said to one another, "Look, this dreamer is coming! Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, 'Some wild beast has devoured him.' We shall see what will become of his dreams!" But Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, "Let us not kill him." And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit which is in the wilderness, and do not lay a hand on him"; that he might deliver him out of their hands, and bring him back to his father.

a. **Look, this dreamer is coming!** It isn't hard to see how unwise it was for Joseph to tell his dreams in the way he did. It only made his brothers hate him. They derisively called him **this dreamer**.

b. **We shall see what will become of his dreams!** They decided to defeat Joseph's offending dreams by attacking him. Without intending to, they put Joseph's dreams to the ultimate test. If the dreams really were from God, they could not be defeated by the hatred of the brothers.

c. **But Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands: Reuben** - who at another time committed incest with his father's concubine - took a small measure of leadership as the eldest, figuring he could save Joseph from death and rescue him later.

i. Reuben could have simply rose up and said, "This is wrong! We can't do this!" He didn't because though he wanted to do right by Joseph without alienating his brothers and his desire to be nice to everyone failed to prevent a great evil. The good Reuben wanted to do (**bring him back to his father**) would not happen.

3. (23-28) Joseph is cast into an empty cistern and sold into slavery.

So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the tunic of many colors that was on him. Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit was empty; there was no water in it. And they sat down to eat a meal. Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry them down to Egypt. So Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh." And his brothers listened. Then Midianite traders passed by; so the brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

a. **They stripped Joseph of his tunic, the tunic of many colors that was on him:** The **tunic of many col-**

ors was the sign of the father's special favor. The brothers must have had a perverse pleasure as they ripped it off Joseph, and it must have been particularly painful for Joseph to have it torn off him.

i. Each believer in Jesus Christ is given special assurance of the Father's favor. Certainly, many spiritual enemies want to rip from the believer the assurance of the Father's favor.

b. **And they sat down to eat a meal:** The heartless character of these brothers was clear - they could eat a meal with Joseph nearby in the pit. They could sit down and enjoy food while their hearts were bent on murdering their brother.

i. Later, Genesis 42:21 described the conviction of sin they ignored at that moment. In that passage the brothers said: *We are truly guilty concerning our brother, for we saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with us, and we would not hear; therefore this distress has come upon us.* When Joseph was cast into the pit, he pled with his brothers, and they ignored his cries as they ate their meal.

ii. "A physicist could compute the exact time required for his cries to go twenty-five yards to the eardrums of the brothers. But it took twenty-two years for that cry to go from the eardrums to their hearts." (Barnhouse)

iii. This was a shocking demonstration of the depravity of the human heart - but it isn't the last demonstration. For example, in 1995 Susan Smith deliberately drowned her own children and lied to the country about the children being kidnapped. We usually think someone who committed such an act would be overwhelmed by remorse, but her ability to put on a false face about such a horrific crime shows how deceitful our hearts are.

c. **The brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver:** The account is so shocking as to be numbing. We don't know if we should think more highly of Joseph's brothers because they decided to spare his life or less highly of them because they figured they could get rid of him and make a little money at the same time. Apparently they considered that their brother was only worth **twenty shekels of silver**.

i. It was **Judah** who said, "After all, he's our brother, so let's only sell him into slavery instead of killing him." **Judah** was the son of Jacob who would become the ancestor of the Messiah.

4. (29-35) They cover their sin and lie to Jacob concerning Joseph's fate.

Then Reuben returned to the pit, and indeed Joseph was not in the pit; and he tore his clothes. And he returned to his brothers and said, "The lad is no more; and I, where shall I go?" So they took Joseph's tunic, killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the tunic in the blood. Then they sent the tunic of many colors, and they brought it to their father and said, "We have found this. Do you know whether it is your son's tunic or not?" And he recognized it and said, "It is my son's tunic. A wild beast has devoured him. Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces." Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and he said, "For I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning." Thus his father wept for him.

a. **Then Reuben returned to the pit, and indeed Joseph was not in the pit; and he tore his clothes:** Reuben tore his clothes as an expression of utter horror and mourning because his weak stand for righteousness accomplished nothing. Joseph might as well be dead, because his father who loved him so would never see him again.

b. **We have found this. Do you know whether it is your son's tunic or not?** This showed the cruelty of the sons of Israel was not directed only towards the favored son, but also towards the father who favored him. This was both a heartless way to bring the news and an unconscionable lie.

c. **Jacob tore his clothes:** This was an expression of utter horror and mourning because his loved son was gone. His grief was understandable, but his failure to see the truth of eternal life was not.

i. This is also a powerful illustration of the principle that if we *believe* something to be so, it may as well be. Joseph was not dead, but as long as Jacob believed he was, as far as Jacob was concerned, Joseph *was* dead. In the same way, the Christian has in truth been set free from sin, but if Satan can persuade us we are under the tyranny of sin, we may as well be.

5. (36) Joseph ends up in the court of a high Egyptian official.

Now the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard.

a. **Now the Midianites had sold him in Egypt:** Egypt was a large and thriving kingdom for at least a thousand years before Joseph came. The Egyptians were wealthy and had massive natural resources. They were educated and had no real enemies at the time. When Joseph came to Egypt, some of the pyramids already looked old and the Sphinx was already carved.

i. Yet in God's eyes, the most impressive thing about Egypt was that Joseph was now there. "Though stripped of his coat, he had not been stripped of his character." (Meyer)

b. **Sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard:** Even in the midst of this horror, God did not depart from Joseph. In some ways the story will get worse - and when it does, God will still be with Joseph. God is working not only for Joseph himself, but also for the larger purposes of God's redemptive plan.

i. We can thank God for His great plan.

- If Joseph's brothers never sell him to the Midianites, then Joseph never goes to Egypt.
- If Joseph never goes to Egypt, he never is sold to Potiphar.
- If he is never sold to Potiphar, Potiphar's wife never falsely accuses him of rape.
- If Potiphar's wife never falsely accuses him of rape, then he is never put in prison.
- If he is never put in prison, he never meets the baker and butler of Pharaoh.
- If he never meets the baker and butler of Pharaoh, he never interprets their dreams.
- If he never interprets their dreams, he never gets to interpret Pharaoh's dreams.
- If he never gets to interpret Pharaoh's dreams, he never is made prime minister.
- If he is never made prime minister, he never wisely administrates for the severe famine coming upon the region.
- If he never wisely administrates for the severe famine coming upon the region, then his family back in Canaan perishes from the famine.
- If his family back in Canaan perishes from the famine, the Messiah can't come forth from a dead family.
- If the Messiah can't come forth, then Jesus never came.
- If Jesus never came, you are dead in your sins and without hope in this world.

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