

# Life of Joseph; Lessons Learned!



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VIRTUAL

The key to the kingdom is atonement for sins—but atonement includes having a *forgiving* heart and getting rid of *resentment* or *bitterness* that can lie in the deep recesses of our heart. The tough things Joseph had to meet—with the harsh treatment he got from his family—reminds us that resentment, anger, and jealousy will harm *others* and eventually destroy *us*.

If any *resentment, anger, or jealousy* is in or *remains* in our heart, we have to know it and to take steps to correct it—by repenting, asking God to *help* us, and asking Him to *give* us a forgiving heart toward everyone—no matter *what* took place.

Joseph's *example* was so important, that God had his *story* take up more space in Genesis than the *Creation* account; the life of *Abraham*; the global *Flood*, and the *Tower of Babel* combined. Joseph's *life, example, and responses* are *valuable* examples for us today.

Genesis 37:1 “And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan. 2 These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report.”

These four sons had done terribly wicked things—they murdered Shechem and every male in the city to avenge the wrong done to their sister Dinah. It is not surprising that Joseph brings back

an evil report of them. The sons of Bilhah are *Dan* and *Naphtali*; while Zilpah's sons were *Gad* and *Asher*. These brothers were extremely *jealous* of Joseph—possibly from pride since their mothers were handmaids but Joseph's was not. This resentment fuels many wicked acts done *to* Joseph.

Because of their evil deeds and wicked lifestyle, Joseph avoided their company. If they had asked him to join them in drinking or getting drunk—he would have refused; if they tried to have him act immorally—he would have walked away; and if they would have pressured him to disgrace their *father* by joining *them*—he would have *left* their company.

Joseph was not sinless because Romans 3:23 “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;” but the Bible does not mention any *specific* sin. Only a few Bible characters have no mention of particular sins—Daniel, Jonathan, and Enoch—with only a few verses, but Joseph takes up one-fourth of Genesis and still no mention of any *specific* sin.

Even though a young man and having to deal with much pressure and many temptations, God enabled him to live a *righteous* life when surrounded by *unrighteous* people. Joseph stood for what was *right* in the face of serious opposition. Genesis 37:3 “Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours.”

Favoritism in the *family* caused many problems in the *home*. Jacob should have *learned* from his father showing favoritism to his brother Esau—how damaging that can *be* in a family. We should never have favorites because Acts 10:34 “God is no respecter of persons [shows no partiality; no favoritism],” so neither should we!

Nevertheless, Joseph's father gave him this *coat of many colors*—it was a full-length robe with long sleeves—representing authority. Shepherds wore *coarse* garments, but this full-length

robe was meant for a *prince*. The long sleeves enabled the wearer to carry documents or writing materials inside with a drawstring.

This tunic meant that Jacob had appointed Joseph a position of authority over his *older* brothers—he would be their *boss* even though only seventeen and the eleventh of twelve sons. That position was the right of Ruben the first-born, who knew *why* it was not given to him. Ruben had been immoral with Bilhah Genesis 35:22 which forfeited his first-born rights Genesis 49:3-4.

Jacob would recall that *Esau* had forsaken his birthright Hebrews 12:16 “Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.” The first-born, therefore, was not always given birthright privileges. Next in line would be Simeon or Levi, but both of them were involved in the murder of Shechem to avenge Dinah. Judah would then be next in age, but the Bible mentions some serious sin in *his* life.

God would *not* have excluded these older sons *permanently* from their inheritance rights, if there had been a genuine *confession, repentance, and forsaking* of sins, but there is no record of them doing that. There is also the matter of being spiritually *prepared* by God—who would appoint only the *right* individuals to positions of spiritual leadership.

Joseph *could* be considered Jacob's firstborn, since Rachel was his first *chosen* wife. Hagar had Ishmael before Sarah had Isaac, but Ishmael did not receive firstborn rights. Romans 9:13 “As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated” Malachi 1:2-3. Jacob was simply following God's *direction* and *choices* in giving Joseph a position of authority over the older brothers.

Genesis 37:4 “And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably

unto him.” Hatred, anger, and jealousy are grievous sins that must be confessed, repented of, and forsaken with God’s help—they cannot stay in our heart; they must be removed. We have to be honest with God and admit the sins—if there is any resentment in our heart toward anyone for any reason. We must say Luke 18:13 “God be merciful to me a sinner.”

Jesus connected anger, resentment, and hate with murder. Matthew 5:21 “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: 22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.”

It is serious to slander someone by calling them a fool; or worthless; or good-for-nothing. 1 John 4:20 “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” 1 John 2:11 “He who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.” Love for others is evidence we have the love of God in our heart.

Genesis 37:5 “And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. 6 And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: 7 For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf. 8 And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.”

The sheaves predict a famine and of Joseph’s plan that saved Egypt, the Israelites, and the

known world from starvation. Genesis 37:9 “And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.”

10 “And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? 11 And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying.”

Jealousy is being bothered and hurt because someone else has received a blessing; Envy is being upset and desiring what another received. Envy leads to coveting Exodus 20:17 Commandment #10. Any place where people interact, envy and jealousy can arise. Someone will be liked more than we are; promoted ahead of us; or receive a higher wage than we do. Satan is always right there to cause envy, jealousy, and resentment if we are not alert.

Being envious and jealous is serious—Galatians 5:20-21 “As I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” Jealousy and anger are as serious as murder, because they keep us out of the kingdom. Confessing and repenting of those sins is critical. We cannot allow any of those feelings—Hebrews 12:15 “Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.”

Joseph’s brothers did not deal with jealousy in a scriptural way, so it escalated to envy and hatred—putting Joseph in danger as they struck out in violence. Envy and Jealousy start by focusing on self instead of on God—it is all about Him and not about us.

Rachel was so jealous of her sister having children, that she considered taking her own life. Jacob had to say, Genesis 30:2 “Am I in God’s stead?”

Envy leaves God out of the picture, when He is to be the center of our life.

Cain slew his brother, and Saul tried to murder David—all because of jealousy. In this account of Joseph, envy is allowed to grow until the results are disastrous. To have victory over jealousy and envy is to first admit them. Then we thank God for His many blessings and believe He will give us many more as we get rid of jealousy and envy and remain in His will.

Rejoicing with anyone God has blessed is just doing what we should do Luke 17:10. We could never repay God for what He has already given us—and we can have freedom from jealousy by getting on our knees and confessing it in prayer. We need to love others and get our eyes off ourselves.

All wrong attitudes and feelings are to be placed before God in prayer. All those sins of the old sin nature Galatians 5:19-21 are changed to the virtues of the new divine nature—“Fruits of the Spirit”—22-23 “love, joy, peace, longsuffering [patience], kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.”

The Holy Spirit will control our attitudes and our feelings—when we ask for His help. Whatever temptation we face, God can use it to bring change to our attitude. Whatever we are going through, we can learn a valuable lesson from it, if we will give the trial to God.

We can change if we will allow God to do it—as Joseph did. The result will be the same, and our reply can be the same as Joseph’s reply Genesis 50:20 “Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.”



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