



**The Oaks
Baptist Church**
Grand Prairie, Texas

Lesson Leaders:

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

Prejudice distorts what it sees, deceives when it talks, and destroys when it acts

POEM FOR THE WEEK:

It matters not what race or gender, Rich or poor, or great or small, The God who made us is not partial He sent Christ to die for all. —D. De Haan

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:

Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all
(Col 3:11 NKJV)

(from "Our Daily Bread", Feb 06, 2011)

Series: Love For One Another

UNIT: Struggles with Love

NEXT WEEK

Obedient Love

(Gen 41:25-33, 37-40, 50-52)

Biased Love Genesis 37:2-11, 23-24, 28

Lesson Background and Introduction

Today's tragic episode impresses on us what favoritism can do and has done in families. Jacob's showing favoritism to Joseph created hatred in his older sons that festered and was mixed with envy, finally erupting in violence. Biased love toward one son resulted in the others starving for their father's favor and taking out their neglect on the object of his affection. Still, God's sovereign plan and purpose moved forward under his guiding hand. God had told Joseph's great-grandfather Abraham that his family would sojourn in Egypt for 400 years (Genesis 15:13). Joseph was being sent ahead as a kind of point man for his family. Though Joseph saw only slavery ahead of him, God saw the fulfillment of Joseph's dreams and the blessing he would be to his brothers (45:4-11). In God's providential work through Joseph, we are reminded that God is never thwarted by the evil intentions of human beings. Though we struggle to see God at work in our trials today, he remains the unseen mover in our lives just as he was in Joseph's life. With Paul, we remain confident that, "God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28). Truly nothing can separate us from God's love or prevent him from fulfilling the plans he has for us (8:35-39), even our imperfect families.

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

Family Issues - Children usually learn about loving relationships within their families. However, this is not always the case. Joseph, Jacob's (Israel's) son, suffered much during his growing up years at the hand of his stepbrothers because of his father's preferential treatment. Jacob fathered 12 sons and one daughter, and he adored the two sons his wife Rachel bore him—Joseph and Benjamin—and noticeably awarded them special treatment, especially Joseph. Sadly, the father's favoritism caused the other boys to be extremely jealous and headed the family down a destructive path. Joseph's siblings also saw him as a tattler. When he worked in the fields with his brothers, he reported their bad behaviors to his father. Scripture uses the word "hatred" to describe the deep bitterness and envy the brothers held against Joseph.

Unwise Family Decisions - When Joseph turned 17, Jacob publicly presented Joseph with a multicolored, long-sleeved tunic, a "coat of many colors," showing him to be the favorite. Then, to add insult to injury, Joseph told his family of two of his mysterious dreams where he acquired a high position, and the rest of his family bowed down to him.

Family Violence - While they were herding sheep one day, Joseph's brothers seized an opportunity to get rid of him. Jacob had sent Joseph to check on them, and when Joseph found them, the brothers tore off his tunic and threw him in a pit. Joseph pleaded with his brothers, but his cries went unheard. Eventually, a band of Ishmaelite traders passed by carrying spices to Egypt. The brothers decided to sell Joseph to the men for 20 pieces of silver.

Important Lessons - Jacob's inclination to love Joseph over his other children opened the door to jealousy, which tore his family apart. This is a valuable lesson to learn: a parent or caregiver who shows preferential treatment of one child over another is asking for trouble.

(Adapted from the Echoes Commentary)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Started with Dreams (Gen 37:2-11)

Issues with favoritism (2-4)

- Don't show partiality (Job 13:10)
- Be humble instead of boasting (Luke 18:11-14)
- All Christians are one in Jesus (Gal 3:27-28)
- God has no distinction between Christians (Rom 10:12)
- There is no partiality with God (Rom 2:11)

Dreams of ruling (5-9)

- When dreaming of ruling, remember that it means being judged more strictly (James 3:1)
- When dreaming of ruling, one should always ensure one can serve as well (Rom 2:18-21)
- When dreaming of ruling, remember that when much is given, much is demanded (Luke 12:47-48)
- When dreaming of ruling, remember to be faithful (1 Cor 4:2)
- When dreaming of ruling, remember the accountability that goes with it (Heb 13:17)
- When dreaming of ruling, remember that the true Master is in heaven (Eph 6:9)
- God is against those who lead others astray because of dreams (Jeremiah 23:32)

Rebuked by father (10)

- Rebuke of discipline (Heb 12:7-11)
- Rebuke that does not lead to death (Ps 118:18)
- Rebuke to learn lessons (Ps 119:71)
- Rebuke to show relationship (Luke 15:25-32)

Brothers envied (11)

- Envy is manifested in being jealous of others blessings (Matt 20:9-16)
- Envy blinds us to reality (1 John 2:11)
- Envy makes a man unclean (Mark 7:20-23)
- Envy is rot to the bones (Prov 14:30)

Resulted in Slavery (Gen 37:23-24, 28)

God's plan is carried out even during evil

- God's plans are the only ones that will happen (Prov 16:9)
- God controls all things that happen and therefore no evil plans will eternally succeed (Job 5:12-13)
- God's plans are eternal and can never be overpowered or stopped (Ps 33:10-11)
- God knows the intent of every plan and controls the outcome (Prov 16:1-2)

Deception starts with 'what's in it for me'

- Selfish ambition comes from Satan and always causes disorder and evil actions (James 3:13-16)
- Pursuit of things that promote our interest only is not sound judgment (Prov 18:1)
- Deception is one of the acts of the sinful nature (Gal 5:19-21)
- Regardless of the motive, if God's work gets done that is the important thing (Phil 1:15-18)

What led to the deception

- Jealousy (Acts 7:9)
- Envy (Proverbs 14:30)
- Lack of family ties

A believer should always take care of family (1 Tim 5:8)

The law was made for those who would harm their own families (1 Tim 1:9-11)

Circumstances

Many times it is our own malicious planning that gets us into deceitful circumstances (Prov 26:24-27)

Depending on our own strength starts our deception (Hos 10:13)

Fear of punishment

The primary root of fear is punishment (1 John 4:18)

The wicked will always be in fear of punishment for their deeds (Job 15:20-21)

Many times the pre-conception of what will happen causes lack of action because of fear (Luke 19:21)

Hopefully there will always be a voice of reason

- Sometimes through speaking up (Acts 5:33-40)
- Sometimes through action (Acts 21:31-32)

Deception creates the need for additional sins

- Lies (Luke 22:55-58)
- Hurting of others (Matt 18:23-34)