

THE LIFE OF JOSEPH

Lesson 1 – Genesis 37

The lessons to be found in the account of the life of Joseph are many. They range from lessons in parenting to lessons in the use of high position and power. Joseph goes from favorite son to slave, to prisoner, to a man in a powerful position. No matter the situation you are in, there is a lesson from Joseph because in all of it, whether adversity or prosperity, powerless or powerful, Joseph kept his eyes on the Lord. His is a life of faith.

Begin your study with prayer...

Memory Verse – This week’s memory verse is James 3:14-16.

“But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.”

Background

Our study begins in Genesis 37, and in verse 2 it says *“This is the history of Jacob”*, but the very next sentence begins to tell us of Joseph. Since Jacob is the father of Joseph, it does make sense that we take time to get to know some things about the family of Joseph before we go in to the account of his life.

1. In Genesis 29 we read the details of Jacob coming to the house of Laban, his uncle, in search of a wife.

a. Read Genesis 29:14-22 and summarize what has taken place.

b. In Genesis 29:23-29, what deception do you find and what is the resolution?

c. Write the statement you find in Genesis 29:30 about Rachel below.

2. The brothers of Joseph play a very important part of his life story, so we should take a moment to identify them. It is also important to take heed of the attitudes and feelings involved between Leah and Rachel.

a. Read Genesis 29:32 - Genesis 30:24, then Genesis 35:16-18 and complete the list below with Jacob's twelve sons in order, including the mother's name.

<u>Son#</u>	<u>Scripture</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Son#</u>	<u>Scripture</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Mother</u>
1	Genesis 29:32			7	Genesis 30:9-11		
2	Genesis 29:33			8	Genesis 30:12-13		
3	Genesis 29:34			9	Genesis 30:14-18		
4	Genesis 29:35			10	Genesis 30:19-20		
5	Genesis 30:5-6			11	Genesis 30:22-24		
6	Genesis 30:7-8			12	Genesis 35:16-18		

b. Jacob also had a daughter, who is not included in a genealogy since only the sons were listed. Although she does not play a part in the account we will study of Joseph, it is a good thing to know of this sister, as a certain situation in her life had a big influence on the family. From Genesis 34:1, who is Jacob's daughter?

Read Genesis 37:1-4.

1. Now we turn to the life of Joseph.

a. In Genesis 37:2, how old was Joseph as this account of his life began?

b. What was Joseph doing?

2. According to Genesis 37:2, who was Joseph with?

a. What are the names of Bilhah's sons?

b. What are the names of Zilpah's sons?

c. From the last sentence in Genesis 37:2, what did Joseph bring back to his father?

d. How do you think this would affect Joseph's relationship with these brothers?

3. In Genesis 37:3 we find Jacob being referred to as Israel, the name God gave him in Genesis 32:28 and 35:10, but he will still be referred to as Jacob often. We will also find some family relationships revealed in this verse.

- a. What do you find about the way Jacob felt about Joseph?

- b. What reason is given for this? (*You might refer to the list on page 1.*)

- c. Genesis 37:4 says that “...*his brothers saw that their father loved him more.*” What was the visible sign of favoritism from verse 3?

4. Our first lesson from this account is about favoritism in a family.

- a. What might a parent learn about giving gifts from this example?

- b. There are many other ways to show favoritism. List a few here.

- c. What are some possible results of favoritism in a family?

Note: The *coat of many colors* has been thought to represent a higher position, possibly even referring to the birth right.

5. Reading on in Genesis 37:4, record the response of Joseph’s brothers to their father’s favoritism.

Read Genesis 37:5-11.

In this section we read of two dreams Joseph had and the effect they had on his family.

1. Joseph’s first dream is told in Genesis 37:7.
 - a. Describe the events of Joseph’s dream.

 - b. Explain the correct interpretation Joseph’s brothers had for this dream from verse 8.

 - c. What was their reaction to this from verses 5 and 8?

2. Joseph had another dream.
 - a. Describe the events of this second dream from Genesis 37:9.
 - b. How did Joseph's father react in verse 10?
 - c. How did Joseph's brothers react according to Genesis 37:11?
3. Genesis 37:11 gives further insight into Jacob's thoughts.
 - a. What more is said about Jacob's reaction in verse 11?
 - b. Why would it be important for Jacob to consider these dreams more carefully?

Read Genesis 37:12-18.

1. While his brothers were feeding their father's flock, Jacob sent Joseph to see how they were doing and bring back word to him.
 - a. From Genesis 37:18, what did his brothers do when they *saw him afar off*?
 - b. Define the word *conspire*.
2. This was not a rash thought of the brothers. Thinking back in this lesson, we have seen two emotions that brought the brothers to this point – hatred and envy.
 - a. What does Proverbs 10:12 say about *hatred*?
 - b. How would you define *envy*?
 - c. What does Proverbs 14:30 say about *envy*?
 - d. From James 3:16, what is the result of *envy*?

3. What does Galatians 5:19-21 tell us about the emotions of hatred and envy?

Read Genesis 37:19-30.

1. What was the brother's plan for Joseph in Genesis 37:20?

2. Although Joseph's brothers conspired to kill him, his brother Reuben intervened.

a. According to Genesis 37:21-22, what did Reuben say to his brothers?

b. What are we told about Reuben's intention in verse 22?

3. Before Reuben could return to rescue Joseph, write the action of the other brothers from the following verses.

a. Genesis 37:23 - they...

b. Genesis 37:24 - Then they...

c. Genesis 37:25 - And they...

4. What plan did Judah make in verses 26 and 27 that saved Joseph's life?

a. What reason did he give to "*not let our hand be upon him*"?

b. From Genesis 37:28, how much did they sell Joseph for?

5. Apparently Reuben had gone away, maybe to check the flock, and returned after Joseph was sold and taken away.

a. What was Reuben's reaction when he returned in Genesis 37:29-30?

b. Why do you think he may have had this strong reaction?

Read Genesis 37:31-36.

The brothers had gotten rid of Joseph, but now they had to return home and tell Jacob something to explain the disappearance of his favorite son.

1. From Genesis 37:31-33, describe what the brothers did to deceive Jacob.

2. What was Jacob's reaction in Genesis 37:33-35?

3. The last verse in chapter 37 takes us to the beginning of the next part of Joseph's life. Write out Genesis 37:36 below.

In closing...

1. How could each of the following people have acted differently the events of this chapter and the family relationships?
 - a. Jacob –

 - b. Joseph –

 - c. the brothers -

Memory Verse

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James 3:14-16