

A Study of the life of Joseph (1)
The plan of God and the family of Joseph
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Introduction: There is a great power in the example of one man.

A. The apostle Paul knew that his example was a powerful teacher. **(1 Cor 11:1; Phil 4:9)**

1. How do you feel when a teacher says one thing but practices another?
2. How encouraging is it to see one standing strong when you are battling to stand? **(Phil 1:12-14)** (Ex. Stonewall Jackson, coach on the sidelines)
3. Joseph stood when he was young, middle aged and when he was old!

“A good example is the best sermon.” - Sir Thomas Fuller

“A person who lives right, and is right, has more power in his silence than another has by words.” - Phillips Brooks

B. God used this faithful man Joseph in a plan that would eventually include you and me.

1. Our study of Joseph will emphasize the powerful God that we serve and the ways he uses and blesses those who are a part of His plan.
2. Joseph knew God and as a result everything he did was viewed as being in His sight! **(Gen 39:9)**
3. What does it mean to know God and be a part of His plan?

Discussion:

1. Who has been the greatest influence in your life to follow God? Why?
2. Why is an example more powerful than words?
3. How can we know that God is with us? How does this help us set a good example?

I. The plan of God and the life of Joseph

A. God has a plan to provide for all those who seek Him.

1. After the fall of man the issue of sin became man’s greatest problem.
2. Because of sin man could not have fellowship with God. **(Rom 3:23; 6:23)**
3. Man needed a savior and God had a plan to send Him even before the world was created. **(1 Pt 1:20-21)**

B. The plan was revealed in some detail when God called Abraham many years ago. **(Gen 12:1-3)**

1. The plan to save all nations would eventually come from specific descendants of Abraham.
3. Abraham’s grandson, Jacob, was one of those special descendants.

II. The history and geography of the life of Joseph

A. Jacob and his sons lived a nomadic life taking care of livestock.

1. This caused them to travel to different areas to find land where the livestock could graze.
2. The land of Canaan had areas to sustain this lifestyle. But due to occasional droughts the people had at times to relocate.

B. The land of Canaan was near the land of Egypt.

1. Egypt was the most powerful nation on earth at this time.
2. Pharaoh was an absolute dictator whose wish was executed without question.
3. Egypt was a culture that worshipped many God's (including Pharaoh himself).
4. They used a different language, a different alphabet and many different customs.

III. The home in which Joseph was raised

A. Joseph was the great-grandson of Abraham. **(Mt 1:2; Rom 4:16)**

1. Abraham was a great example of faith. However there was a struggle for his descendants to find that kind of faith.
2. Abraham knew to obey God and did so when he came to the land. However there was much more that he would learn when God "tested" him.

(Heb 11:8-10; 17-19)

B. Rachel came from a home where covetousness and deceit was practiced.

1. Rachel's father, Laban, deceived Jacob and caused him to work 14 years because he wished to marry Rachel.
2. Laban would not keep his word and often cheated Jacob and thus his own daughters out of what was due them. **(Gen 31:4-7, 14-16)**
3. Out of that covetousness came a bitterness when God blessed Jacob.

C. Joseph's brothers as well as Joseph himself were born in a divided family where Rachel and Leah competed for the affection of Jacob.

1. Having children was like a competition where even the maids of Rachel and Leah were used. **(Gen 30:3-13)**
2. How would brothers in this kind of home react to each other? Would the son of Leah have a problem with a son of Rachel?
3. With the death of Rachel Jacob's favoritism would increase.
4. These brothers would later use deceit to commit murder in their wrath.

(Gen 34:13-17, 25-29)

Discussion: Make a list of things found in the home of Jacob that made it more difficult for the children to believe in God. Explain your answers!

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Why is it important that you marry one who will serve God?

IV. Joseph chose to serve God

A. No doubt he listened and learned from his father.

1. He would know about the promises made to Abraham and Isaac.
2. He also learned about his father's struggles and how he came to humble himself before God. **(Gen 32:9-12)**

B. Notice some characteristics of one who served God.

1. He told the truth when his peers would punish him for it. **(Gen 37:2)**

2. He had to bear reproach because of the mistakes of his father. **(Gen 37:3-4)**
3. He did not strike back at his brother or his father because of this.
(Rom 12:17-21)
4. God gave him messages that would create anger in both his brothers and his father. He spoke them anyway. **(Gen 37:5-11)**
5. In spite of all of this he obeyed his father and did as he asked. **(Gen 37:14-17)**

Discussion:

1. What wrong attitudes could Joseph have displayed and blamed it on his family? Would this have excused him?
2. What made Joseph stand out from his brothers? Was this good for Joseph? (THINK!)
3. What should we do when one mistreats us?
4. Is it easy walking by faith?
5. Why does God allow temptation to come in our lives? **(1 Cor 10:12-13)**

V. The fruit of Satan's seeds

- A. Satan is happy when you give in to the works of the flesh. **(Gal 5:19-21)**
 1. What starts out as a small seed of compromise and exceptions grows into a crop of mindless passion that would do anything.
 2. This is why uncontrolled anger in the heart makes you a murderer. **(1 Jn 3:15)**
- B. The assault and enslavement on Joseph. **(Gen 37:18-36)**
 1. How was Joseph described by his brothers? Why?
 2. What was their first plan?
 3. What was the first thing they did to Joseph?
 4. Why did they change their mind the first time?
 5. Why did they change their mind the second time? What was the motive?
 5. How did they explain all of these things to Jacob?
 6. Did they ever tell him the truth before they went to Egypt?

Discussion: Look at the family background of these sons and describe how every step they took against Joseph had its seeds in things they saw and learned in the home.

Wrong Attitudes

Family Background

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Conclusion: Are you willing to build a faith that will serve God no matter what?