

**THE ORIGINS OF IT ALL!: A STUDY OF GENESIS
XXXIX.) TO BE CHOSEN TO LEAD
GENESIS 37:2 – 11**

Q: How would you describe what it is like to be a sibling?

Q: What does it mean to be a faithful son or daughter?

A.) FAITHFULNESS PRODUCES FAVOR & ENVY (vv. 2-4)

1.) **The Meaning of Faithfulness (v. 2)**

Q: Has Joseph acted rightly or wrongly here? Why?

– According to man's wisdom that certainly are plenty of reasons to question Joseph's wisdom in this incident:

- a.) He didn't give enough thought to exactly WHO he was dealing with; how these particular individuals would react to such a thing, what they would think and assume. Yes, they were his brothers. But they were all half-brothers born from his father's concubines, while he was the son of his father's chosen and favorite wife. He was 'daddy's boy', the favored son.
- b.) Further, he saw himself as his Father saw him rather than how others saw him. In his father's eyes, he was the rightful heir as the firstborn of his 'true wife.' But to his brothers in the field, he was just the little 'dirt ball' younger than all of them.
- c.) He chose the opinion of one over that of the many. Never mind that the one was their father and Master or that the many were a bunch of siblings who still hadn't even matured.
- d.) He told a truth that exposed what others desired to hide. He was a tattletale and everybody knows that nobody likes a tattletale!

– According to Godly wisdom, however, Joseph absolutely did what was right! He proved obedient and faithful to the instructions of his Father & Master, even though he had to know it would not be popular or well received. No matter the pressure to the contrary, he refused to ignore or dismiss evil that his Father was concerned about.

Q: How might we encounter parallel circumstances in our daily lives?

2.) **Finding Favor (v. 3)**

- Yes, Joseph was his Father's favorite by virtue of being the firstborn son of Rachel.
- But he kept and maintained that favor through his faithful obedience and trustworthiness, to a degree that none of his older brothers demonstrated.
- The coat was a symbol of authority and favor.
- Keep in mind, this was Jacob's gift to Joseph. No matter what he thought, for Joseph to either refuse this or to not wear it proudly would have been shameful to his father.

3.) **Finding Fear (v. 4)**

- Where Joseph, through his birth position and faithfulness, received special attention and privilege from his father, his brothers responded with fear.

Q: Why?

- Not a physical fear of Joseph, but a fear of what his elevated status would mean for them – their place, their inheritance, their respect, their opportunities, their honor, their ability to choose things in their own lives as they wanted them to be.
- Naturally, then, fear turns to hatred and is bottled inside as bitterness. Eventually, it reaches a point to where they can't even bear to look upon or speak to Joseph for all they can think about is all that they envy for themselves!

Q: Why turn against Joseph?

- It was their father, Jacob, who was the real perpetrator here. He is the one who exhibited such public favoritism on Joseph. He's the one who commanded Joseph to check and report on his brothers. Joseph didn't request any of this. No more than it was his doing to be Rachel's first-born son.
- Yet, we read the brothers HATED Joseph. Notice, they weren't simply jealous, they HATED him.
- Sadly, this is an example of the ugliness and injustice of the human sin nature. Those who are envious usually turn their emotion into hatred against the one favored rather than the one who showed favoritism.
- Why? I suppose because it is simply 'easier.' Dad might defend himself and put us in our proper place, but little bro' can't. Even we know it would be disrespectful to upbraid our father, but surely it's understandable if not okay to upbraid our brother.

Q: How might we translate this to our own struggles?

- Sometimes, in God's family, we take out our anger at Him upon one another don't we?
- We're upset because somebody else is chosen to do what we want? Receives a special honor or title? Is obviously being blessed while we struggle? Is living upright while we wallow in the mud?

B.) LEADERSHIP REQUIRES PROVEN FAITHFULNESS (vv. 5-11)

1.) The First Vision (vv. 5-8)

- This first vision, or dream, is presumably from God. Not only did it prove remarkably true, but it proved true in detail. It was by agricultural means, chiefly the storing of wheat, that Joseph would one day attain this level of authority.
- The message communicates that Jacob will one day be in authority above all of his brothers.
- This really shouldn't be surprising, since Joseph according to law and culture is the natural heir to the birthright. The other brothers were born to concubines and thus fall behind those born of wives. Reuben the first born of Leah lost his birthright because of his sin. Joseph, as the firstborn of Rachel would then be next in line.
- Still, just the reminder to this truth that the brothers were trying so hard to ignore and deny was too much. Their hatred increased.

Q: Was it, however, necessary or wise of Joseph to communicate this to his brothers? Why or why not?

- Almost certainly not. The vision was given to him alone and, as such, for his encouragement to draw strength and purpose from. To tell to others, no matter the intent or way in which it is communicated, is both unnecessary and beyond its purpose.

2.) The Second Vision (vv. 9-11)

- This vision goes a step further in representing that not only will Joseph be in a position of authority and privilege over his brothers, but over his parents as well.
- Of course, a significant part of the symbolism gets overlooked amid what is not liked. Here, all of the other 11 brothers are described as 'stars' – symbols of honor and authority. In other words, this second vision revealed that while Joseph would be the one all ultimately bowed to, they would all be given privileged positions of honor and authority.
- But, in that never-enough appetite of the flesh, that was meaningless to the brothers. It didn't matter how much they got, only that Joseph got more.

LESSONS FOR EVERYONE:

1.) Those Chosen To Lead:

- God chooses us, we don't choose ourselves or even one another.
- God looks upon faithfulness and obedience above all else.
- Leadership is incremental. Prove faithful with a little and more will be given.
- Don't be surprised or thwarted by jealous hatred from others.
- Follow and please the Father, not the crowd.

2.) Those Chosen To Follow:

- God chooses our leaders, not us.
- Sometimes, those who may be younger or seem less qualified will be chosen.
- Don't allow jealousy to turn into bitterness and hatred.
- Accept God's call for your own life.