



Sermon Series: Navigating Family Conflict

To be used with Session 5: Joseph and His Brothers: Family Jealousy

Sermon Title Possibilities: Faithfulness in Family Repentance

Scripture: Genesis 37:1-4, 18-24, 31-34

Connection with Unit Theme: This sermon complements the Bible study “Navigating Family Conflict.” It reminds us of the fact that unchecked animosity can lead to greater harm within the family. This message is about a family that had a context of pain. The pain led to plots, and the plots led to all types of pain. It is essential that deal with feeling of jealousy, envy, animosity, and strife within our families.

Introduction: The life of Joseph warrants the attention of the Bible reader by virtue of the amount space the Holy Spirit gives it in Scripture. The life of Joseph takes up fourteen chapters in the book of Genesis. Joseph’s story uses more space than the stories of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This suggests that we should pay careful attention to the material and men around the life of Joseph. In this message, I want to encourage us to be faithful in repentance in our families by highlighting **the family context, the family conspiracy, and the family calamity.**

1. The Family Context (v. 1-4)

There is a lot of history in these four verses. For instance, verse one mentions Jacob and his father. Now, Isaac—Jacob’s father—was the son of Abraham. Abraham showed preference to Isaac over his other son Ishmael. Isaac showed preference to Esau—Jacob’s twin and Rebekah showed preference to Jacob. Now, in our text, we see that Jacob showed preference to Joseph—one of his twelve sons. The Bible says, “Now Israel loved Joseph more than his other sons because Joseph was a son born to him in his old age, and he made a long-sleeved robe for him.” Jacob loved and lavished Joseph more than the other brothers. This is a family of preferences. Whenever we show preferences in our families, we are creating negative feelings that lead to division in the family. I think that Paul’s exhortation to endeavor to keep the bond of peace in God’s family is good counsel for our families (Eph. 4:3). If any of us are guilty of showing preference in our families, may the Lord help us to repent today.

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2. The Family Conspiracy (v. 18-24)

At this point in the story, Joseph's father had sent him to search for his brothers. Before Joseph arrived, they saw him coming, and the text says in verse 18, "they plotted to kill him." Well, not only did they plot to kill him, but they also plotted to cover it up and deceive their father. Plotting is in their blood. Abraham plotted to present Sarah as his sister, Isaac did the same thing, and Jacob and Rebekah plotted to steal Isaac's blessing. This is a family of plotting. A few exhortations are appropriate at this point. Proverbs 3:29 says, "Don't plan any harm against your neighbor, for he trusts you and lives near you." Let's repent of the thought of causing harm to our family members. Proverbs 3:30 says, "Don't accuse anyone without cause, when he has done you no harm." Joseph's brothers hated him because of the father's favoritism and him sharing his dreams, but Joseph hadn't done anything to them. Let's examine our feeling of disdain towards our family members and repent of our accusations of them. There is a word about their, and our violence towards family members. Proverbs 3:31-32 says, "Don't envy a violent man or choose any of his ways; for the devious are detestable to the LORD, but he is a friend to the upright." May the Lord help us to repent of all the bad feelings and actions we have towards our family members.

3. The Family Calamity (v. 31-34)

When Joseph's brothers showed their father the bloody coat, Jacob wept unconsolably. Abraham was hurt bad when Sarah demanded that Ishmael and his mother be excommunicated from their house. Esau wept bitterly when Jacob stole his blessing. Now, Jacob is bereft enough to die, and the brothers will have to live with this lie until Joseph forgives them. This is a family of *pain*. Listen, preferences and plotting always lead to pain. Unfortunately, the pain of death has brought wedges in families through the years. The challenge for us today is to repent of the pain we caused and of the times we've allowed pain to separate us from members in our families.

Conclusion: The family context was one of preferences. The family conspiracy was one plotting, and the family calamity was one of pain. Let us examine ourselves and our families to discern the areas in which we need to repent. Then, let us fix what is broken and heal what is hurting. This renewal begins with repentance.

Author Bio

Reginald D. Taylor is a graduate of Crichton College, Union University, Capital Seminary, and is currently pursuing the Ph.D. degree at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is the senior Pastor of The Rock Church and Assistant Professor/Director of Urban Theological Studies at MCUTS @ Union University in Memphis TN. He and his wife Dr. Tarra R. Taylor has one son—Reginald D. Taylor II—and three grandchildren Micah, Yara, and Aviyah.

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