

The Life of Joseph

Week 1 - Walking with God in a Dysfunctional Family

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WHAT WE BELIEVE

1. Read Genesis 37. What word is used to describe how Joseph's brothers felt about him in verses 4,5, and 8? Why did they feel that way about Joseph?
2. Where did Joseph travel from and to in his search for his brothers?
3. What were Joseph's brothers planning to do to Joseph when they saw him coming in the distance? Who changed their plans and how did he change them?
4. What did Joseph's brothers ultimately do with Joseph? Was Reuben in on the plot? What was Reuben's reaction?

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CATECHISM CORNER

Heidelberg Catechism

Lord's Day 40

Q&A 106

Q. Does this (the sixth) commandment refer only to murder?

A. By forbidding murder God teaches us that he hates the root of murder: envy, hatred, anger, vindictiveness (1). In God's sight all such are disguised forms of murder (2).

1. Prov. 14:30; Rom. 1:29; 12:19; Gal. 5:19-21; 1 John 2:9-11
2. 1 John 3:15

Q&A 107

Q. Is it enough then that we do not murder our neighbor in any such way?

A. No. By condemning envy, hatred, and anger God wants us to love our neighbors as ourselves (1), to be patient, peace-loving, gentle, merciful, and friendly toward them (2), to protect them from harm as much as we can, and to do good even to our enemies (3).

1. Matt. 7:12; 22:39; Rom. 12:10
2. Matt. 5:3-12; Luke 6:36; Rom. 12:10, 18; Gal. 6:1-2; Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:12; 1 Pet. 3:8
3. Ex. 23:4-5; Matt. 5

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GOD SPEAKS TO US

1. Joseph's brothers were jealous of the attention he got from his father. What makes you jealous of others? What can you do to fight unwarranted jealousy?

2. Joseph's brothers, men who were supposed to love and look out for their little brother, betrayed him. Have you ever been betrayed? How did you handle it? In retrospect, would you handle that betrayal the same way?

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GOD SPEAKS TO OUR FAMILY

1. Jacob openly loved Joseph more than his other sons. How has favoritism (or perceived favoritism) shown up in your own family? What damage have you seen it cause? What practical steps can you take to foster equal value and affection for each family member?

2. Jacob grew up in a dysfunctional family and then continued to be the patriarch of a dysfunctional family. In your family, what dysfunctional patterns (e.g., favoritism, unchecked anger, avoiding conflict) have been passed down? How can your Life Group help you break the chains of inherited dysfunction?

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CROSS REFERENCES

Genesis 37:1 - Genesis 10:19, 17:8, 28:4

Genesis 37:2 - Genesis 35:25-26

Genesis 37:7 - Genesis 42:6-9, 43:26, 44:14

Genesis 37:14 - Genesis 13:18, 35:27

Genesis 37:18 - Psalm 31:13, 37:12, 37:32

Genesis 37:21 - Genesis 44:22

Genesis 37:23 - Matthew 27:28

Genesis 37:25 - Genesis 39:1

Genesis 37:27 - Genesis 42:21

Genesis 37:28 - Genesis 45:4, Acts 7:9

Genesis 37:31 - Revelation 19:13

Genesis 37:33 - Genesis 42:13, 38

Joseph's Journey

Jacob and his family were nomads. They went wherever their flocks needed to go in order to

feed. Joseph and his brothers had the responsibility of caring for the flock over long distances through dangerous, bandit filled countryside. Joseph's journey from Hebron to Shechem was about 40 miles. After arriving in Shechem, Joseph discovered his brothers had gone on to Dothan, which was another 15 miles north. Joseph made this journey by himself, with no car, GPS, cellphone, or gas stations, at the age of 17.

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GOD SPEAKS IN WORSHIP

1. What family metaphors does the Bible use to frame our relationship with God?
2. How is the church like a family to you? How could it be more of a family to you?

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THE GOSPEL CALL

1. Reading our text, we find an incredibly dysfunctional family. There's favoritism, hatred, a murder plot, and Joseph gets sold into slavery by his own brothers. These people are God's chosen people, and they're horrible. Can a text like this be useful in evangelism? Why or why not?
2. Joseph's dreams foreshadow the truth - Joseph's family will bow down before him. This truth greatly offended Joseph's brothers. Can we always avoid offending people when sharing the gospel? How can we mitigate the offense we cause when sharing our faith?