

## **Heal a Family – Build a Nation**

### ***Lesson #3 – Genesis 37:29-36***

**Based on the sermons by Jim Johnson  
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**Introduction:** Jacob favored his son Joseph and inflamed the jealousies of Joseph's brothers. The brothers responded by assaulting Joseph and selling him off as a slave.

#### ***Questions:***

*From what we know from this story already, do you think the brothers got what they were hoping for by getting rid of Joseph?*

*Do you think this action brought relief or additional anguish to the brothers?*

*Do you think they gained any greater portion of their father's affections by this action?*

#### **The aftermath of the brother's decision: Consequence #1**

Rueben, the oldest son of Jacob originally suggested putting Joseph in the pit rather than murdering him. He regretted his actions and returned to free Joseph only to discover he'd already been sold into slavery. Rueben's temporary relief from being rid of Joseph was overridden by his conscience. His pain grew into mourning and deep anguish when he was too late to save Joseph.

**Consequence #2:** The brothers took Joseph's coat and dipped it in animal blood. They had to face their father and tell him Joseph was killed by a wild beast. They soon realized they had betrayed the very person whose affections they most longed for. Instead of ridding themselves of a problem, they only added to their misery.

**Consequence #3:** The brothers watched as their father grieved deeply. Jacob was so overcome he vowed never to stop mourning Joseph until the day he died. Jacob became fixated on Joseph's memory. The favoritism Jacob demonstrated toward Joseph was no forever locked into their existence as Jacob's sons.

#### ***Questions:***

*How does taking matters into our own hands often prove to be relationally damaging?*

*What happens when we make assumptions about people and outcomes?*

*What are some ways we can deal with still open relational "loops?"  
(i.e. issues from our past that are not yet resolved.)*

*How do we forgive ourselves for relational mistakes in the past that are beyond our ability to mend? (through death, divorce, or indifference from a parent?)*

**Consequence #4:** Joseph ends up in Egypt, and in time comes to know Potiphar who is connected to Pharaoh. God's sovereign plan for Joseph is about to rise to a new level. He interprets a dream for Pharaoh and is elevated to a place of honor and authority in Egypt. What his brothers despised about him is now coming to pass. Their denial of his calling by God has put them in a position to be under Joseph's authority in very real terms. Joseph would eventually come to be in absolute authority over the lives of his brothers.

***Questions:***

*What is the result of one sin compounding another in this story?*

*What would have been a better course of action for these brothers?*

*What do you think needed to happen for Jacob to realize the ramifications of his favoritism toward Joseph on his other sons?*

*Can you recall a time when you tried to solve a problem with a sinful solution?*

**Application:** Before there can be healing in the family the pretence has to come off, the facade has to be lifted, the masks must be removed. We need to quit pretending, get honest with God and each other, and mostly get honest with ourselves about who we are and how we relate to others. We need to tear off the facade that keeps us from honestly speaking with each other and dealing with the issues.