

# INTENDED FOR GOOD

## 1. DREAMS & DISILLUSIONMENTS

HVC, 6/7/20

Genesis 37,39

What did **you** want to be when you grew up?

How close are you to *your* dreams?

What is your biggest disappointment?

**Genesis 37:2-4 (NIV84)**

*This is the account of Jacob. Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks with his brothers ... and he brought their father a bad report about them.*

*Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made a richly ornamented robe for him. When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.*

Who has “tattled” on you or given you a “bad report”?

How would *you* have felt if you were one of the brothers?

Where do you wrestle with jealousy or envy? What would help?

What do you think about favoritism within a family?

What do you make of the fact that the chosen family was so dysfunctional? How does that make you feel?

**Genesis 37:5,7,9 (NIV84)**

*Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more... “We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly **my** sheaf rose and stood upright, while **your** sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it”...Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. “Listen,” he said, “I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.”*

What do you think motivated Joseph to tell his dream to his brothers?

What significance does it have that the story essentially begins with dreams?

What is the same about the two dreams? Different?

**Genesis 37:10-11 (NIV84)**

*When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, “What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?”*

*His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.*

Why did Jacob feel the need to rebuke Joseph?

Have you – or someone you know - ever had a dream that you felt was “more” than just a dream? What happened?

**Genesis 37:18-20, 23-25 (NIV84)**

*But they saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him. “Here comes that dreamer!” they said to each other. “Come now, let’s kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. **Then** we’ll see what comes of his **dreams**.”*

*So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe — the richly ornamented robe he was wearing — and they took him and threw him into the **cistern**. Now the cistern was empty; there was no water in it. As they sat down to eat their meal, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. Their camels were loaded with spices, balm and myrrh, and they were on their way to take them down to Egypt.*

What motivated such an extreme plan?

What is the significance of Joseph’s robe?

How do you account for the indifference of the brothers? The caravan showing up at just the right time?

**Genesis 37:31-33, 35 (NIV84)**

*Then they got Joseph’s robe, slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. They took the ornamented robe back to their father and said, “We found this. Examine it to see whether it is your son’s robe.” He recognized it and said, “It is my son’s robe!*

*Some ferocious animal has devoured him. Joseph has surely been torn to pieces”...All his sons and daughters came to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. “No,” he said, “in mourning will I go down to the grave to my son.” So his father wept for him.*

What about Joseph’s “demise” would make it especially painful for Jacob?

If you were the brothers, how would you have tried to “comfort” your dad? What do you think this was like for the brothers?

How well did their strategy of getting rid of Joseph work?

**Genesis 37:36 (NIV84)**

*Meanwhile, the Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt to **Potiphar**, one of Pharaoh’s officials, the **captain** of the guard.*

What can you imagine is going through Joseph’s mind at this point?

Discuss the different losses Joseph has experienced.

How would *most* people react to these circumstances?

How would *you* have reacted?

**Genesis 39:3 (NIV84)**

*When his master saw that the LORD was **with** him and that the LORD gave him success in everything he did...*

How do you think the Lord was “with” Joseph?

What do you suppose Joseph’s dreams mean to him *now*?

**Genesis 39:6-9 (NIV84)**

***So he left in Joseph’s care everything he had; with Joseph in charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate. Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, and after a while his master’s wife took notice of Joseph and said, “Come to bed with me!”***

***But he refused. “With me in charge,” he told her, “my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?”***

How does that success set Joseph up for his next trial?

Which trial do you think was worse ... being rejected by your family and sold into slavery, or being sexually harassed at work?

What do you think accounts for Joseph’s ability to withstand this temptation?

**Genesis 39:10 (NIV84)**

***And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.***

What makes this trial even harder? How might Joseph have rationalized “giving in”?

Are there repeated temptations in your life where you need Joseph’s endurance?

**Genesis 39:12 (NIV)**

***She caught him by his cloak and said, “Come to bed with me!” But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house.***

Why does this seem to unthinkable to people in our day?

What dilemma does this create for Potiphar’s wife?

**Genesis 39:17,19-20 (NIV84)**

***Then she told him (Potiphar) this story: “That Hebrew slave you brought us came to me to make sport of me. When his master heard the story his wife told him, saying, “This is how your slave treated me,” he burned with anger.***

***Joseph’s master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king’s prisoners were confined.***

Do you think Potiphar believed his wife’s story? Why/not?

What has Joseph got to be thinking now?

How would you have reacted if you were told God wanted you in jail for purposes of His own?

Why do you think God allowed this to happen to Joseph?

What was God's ultimate plan for this family?

Does the Joseph story give you hope that God can use the hardest parts of your life for his purposes?

Is there anything you need to trust him with now?

**Pray** that you would have Joseph's tenacity and character as you face temptation, even when there seems to be no hope.