

Bible Studies in Genesis

Tell him he's dreaming

READ Genesis 37

1. Discuss any questions you have about this passage ...
2. Reflect on the favouritism Jacob showed (verses 3-4, see also Genesis 29:30) ...
 - a. What does this reveal about this great man of the Bible? What might we learn from that?
 - b. Given what you know about the way families and rights worked in those days, did Joseph have any right to expect his father's favouritism? [see Deuteronomy 21:15-16]
 - c. What issues does this favouritism cause:
 - i. In Jacob's family?
 - ii. In your experience?
 - d. What should we learn in this regard? [see 2 Chronicles 19:6-7; Proverbs 24:23; Job 34:19; Ephesians 6:4; James 2:8-9]
3. Reflect on Joseph's brothers' hatred for him ...
 - a. Why did they hate him so much? What were the contributing factors (verses 3-4, 8, 11)?
 - b. Were they justified in what they felt?
 - c. What did it cause them to do (verses 18-28)?
 - d. Can you think of other similar incidents of sibling rivalry and jealousy in the Bible?
 - e. Have you ever witnessed or experienced this kind of bitterness yourself?
 - f. How should we respond if we ever feel this way? [see Exodus 20:17; Proverbs 10:12; 14:30; Ecclesiastes 4:4; Job 5:2; Romans 12:21; 1 Corinthians 3:3; 13:4; 1 Peter 2:1-2; James 3:14-16; 4:2-3, 11]
4. Reflect on Joseph's dreams ...
 - a. Should Joseph have kept his dreams to himself?
 - b. If you know what happens at the end of the story, what is the significance of the first dream involving sheaves (presumably of corn, or at least some form of food grain)?
 - c. Do you think dreams are sent to tell us things? When, or on what basis, should we read meaning into our dreams?
 - d. How do we know Joseph's dreams were from God?
5. Reflect on what happened next ...
 - a. Why did Joseph's brothers do what they did?
 - b. What hope is there now for Joseph's dreams ever coming true?
 - c. If you know how this story ends, is this a story about the power of dreams, or is there another lesson we should learn from this?
 - d. What might we learn from this that would apply when we find ourselves – as Joseph did – in painful and frustrating circumstances? [see Nehemiah 8:10; Isaiah 41:10; Psalm 27:1-3; 9:9-10; Romans 8:31-39; 2 Corinthians 4:7-10; Philippians 4:4-13; 1 Peter 5:10; Hebrews 4:16]