

Bible Studies for Life: November 10

*Joseph and His Brothers: Family Jealousy • Genesis 37:1-4,
18-24, 31-34*

By Bobby McKay



McKay

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Of course, life is more complex than a couple of kids arguing over a candy bar. Still, jealousy remains in adults and can penetrate the purest of hearts. If left unchecked or unconfessed, jealousy can quickly lead to resentment and discontent. The result is pain, bitterness, and even hate.

Genesis 37:1-4

Favoritism raises its ugly head in Scripture. Jacob is familiar with favoritism and the lasting damage that can result. He was the favorite of his mother, Rebekah. Now, in his older years, he has a favorite son, Joseph. By showing preferential treatment toward Joseph, a hostile rivalry was fostered among his sons. Additionally, Jacob gave Joseph the legendary robe of many colors. More than just a garment, the robe signified Jacob's plans to bless Joseph with the abundance of his inheritance. This was more than the brothers could stand. The bitterness and hatred that followed would have appalling consequences.

Genesis 37:18-24

Our life consists of an immeasurable number of choices. To some degree, you could say our choices define us. The gang of brothers viciously mistreated Joseph by abandoning him and giving him over to slavery. We are one decision away from blessing or hurting someone or impacting the rest of our lives. Indeed, we all have regrets, but how tragic it is to have a life marked by a fit of jealousy so evil that it breeds such anger and hatred toward another person. Joseph suffered due to the sin of envy in others. Don't think you or I are above being jealous of someone else; if the enemy sees that as a weak spot in our life, he will take advantage.

In this story, jealousy bred violence, which resulted in deceit and creating lies. As a result, you may think Joseph's life was over. You may also know that God is always in control. No man is so powerful that he can alter what God has in store. That doesn't mean there isn't heartache or pain along the way, but it assures us that what God has purposed cannot be stopped. Jacob concluded he had lost a child to death, and the trauma was overwhelming. All the while, God was working in the lives of Joseph, his brothers, Jacob, and many others.

My prayer for each of us is to seek our hearts and be honest about the sin of jealousy in our lives. If you find it in your life, repent. After that, eat a Snickers! You aren't yourself when you are jealous!

McKay is pastor of New Liberty Baptist Church, Morton.