

Characters in the story of Joseph: Pride, Prejudice and Passivity Genesis 37v1-11

Summary of Genesis 37v1-11, and then the summary of the rest of the story

Two themes of Joseph:

God's **Power for good**, redemptive power (Genesis 50v20-21) (looking at this later in series)

Romans 8.28: God intends to turn bad stuff in our lives into good (tapestry example)

Prosperity because of the Presence of God (Genesis 39v2)

God wants us to succeed, but he can't prosper him if he is proud

Peter 5.5-6: Humble ourselves and God may lift us up in due time.

Joseph was proud: Jacob's favouritism, Joseph telling stories, overseer's coat, gift of prophecy/int
Can come about in us when we take the credit for things that God has done (exam example?)

What does Pride do?

Blinds us to others so that we see only self;

Joseph & his brothers, self-centered oz guy, negative self-centeredness

Makes us stubborn & resistant;

Makes us independent from God: God resists the proud because pride makes us resist God.

In order for God to use & prosper us he must address our pride: speed bumps

We must be careful not to become proud

Jesus modelled humility (Phil 2v5-11)

Joseph's brothers were prejudiced: Joseph's brothers pre-judged Joseph

How do we become prejudiced? Many ways but sometimes it is because of:

Previous hurt or grievances;

Insecurity: They lived in an insecure world, Joseph getting inheritance/double portion,

Jacob's favour meant they weren't important,

Joseph comes along with his overseer's coat and makes them feel worse.

Family line was secure but they believed in their own fear rather than God's promises.

What defines your security – who & what are you listening to?

Insignificance: closely connected to security - significance is often to do with status:

What was their place in this world now? Pecking order & position was disrupted

Do you feel as though you're just a cog in a machine? Voice counts for nothing?

Can you see bitterness in your life?

The truth is you are special, not insignificant & can choose to be secure by placing our security & trust in God & his promises.

Jesus modelled equality in John 4 with the Samaritan woman

Joseph's dad, Jacob, was a passive parent:

1. Genesis 34v30: kids kill Canaanite men, disproportionate response to their sister's rape.

Jacob's response: tells them off, worried only for his family's welfare and not the Canaanites.

2. Makes Joseph his favourite son and Joseph tells tales on his brothers but he still doesn't do anything

3. Joseph has prophetic dreams, shares them in a hurtful & divisive way – father “keeps it in mind”

Pride & boasting from Joseph, Favouritism, lack of discipline when he hears reports of what his children are up to, and when serious things like murder & genocide take place there is zero discipline & zero challenge.

Normal dysfunctional family: Pride, favouritism and murder. God turns it into a testimony of his goodness & provision – so there must be hope for all our families!

What makes for a **passive parent:**

Preoccupation

Marriage before Ministry (Putting God first does not mean putting ministry before your family!)

Lack of challenge: we're not called to be best friends with our kids (Gilmour Girls) we're called to raise up good and Godly people even if they don't like us.

Not just a message for parents. **Passivity in friendships:** Live in a permissive, non-confrontational culture

Our society has taught us to become either defensive or to walk away.

Don't want to challenge or confront our friends because we're afraid that we will lose the friendship

Christian friends are saying or doing that is unhelpful for them, unruly, etc – often we stay silent Jesus modelled challenge – and tells us to talk to them, and if they don't listen then take someone else along with you and talk to them – there's a lot to be said for exactly how you go about it (not pious, judgemental, but always in love), then take some more, then bring it to the church: gang up on them if they refuse – counter-cultural.

It's great to have prayer partnerships and small groups and accountability groups – but don't just share the stuff you're wrestling with but challenge each other and hold one another accountable – permission.

Non-Christians: not pious/moralistic, and not “it says in the bible” they're not evangelical Christians! Benders to alcoholics, addictions and life-controlling habits.

But also: **Eternal destination:** Are we going to hold our friends' hands all the way to hell? At least they liked us. We don't want to make our friends feel like they are our projects. But because we love them we have to follow God's lead in the timing & method to get it right so that we're co-labouring with God in it – I think people trust me when they know I love them, want the best for them and they know I'm on their side. Communicate to long-term friends in that context: speak truth in love!

Passivity in pastoral problems:

I haven't done much in terms of learning **counselling techniques** (joke) – tends to be therapeutic and rarely confrontational (space for both?). **Jesus said “bear one another's burdens”** but then goes on to say “pluck out your eye if it causes you to sin” (cut yourself off from the sight of the temptation, and the means to do it)

Challenge in the churches I've been in: people go to another church or become a real pain! Requires real maturity to respond in a Godly manner – to strip away the attitude/manner – ask God to help you process a challenge. If you've been challenged by someone & didn't fight or flight – then well done!!

We live in a world that is not prepared to challenge – relationships have become about staying on the good side of people rather than confronting.

To finish: Eli and sons – how passivity fared for them (1 Samuel)

So the themes of the story of Joseph are Prosperity because of the presence of God, and God's power for good. God used Joseph's pride, his brothers' prejudice and his dad's passivity to bring good & prosper Joseph & his family – in the same way God wants to take our bad stuff and the bad things that happen to us and weave them into something good & beautiful and glorifying to him.

And these motifs (of prosperity because of the presence of God, and God's power for good) have to overcome people like us: People of pride, people of prejudice, and people of passivity.