

LITTLE BROTHER SYNDROME

GENESIS 37

GOAL:

STUDENTS SHOULD
LEARN THE NEED
FOR HUMILITY
WHEN DEALING
WITH THE WORLD.

LESSON

MATERIALS:

NONE

LESSON OVERVIEW

Too often, the way believers act makes them irrelevant to the world. Just as with Joseph, believers understand their special situation and grow a case of little brother syndrome. We will see the need for humility and for safeguarding against acting “holier than thou.” In this lesson, we will learn

1. Joseph’s Special Situation
2. Joseph’s Actions
3. The Consequences

LESSON PROCEDURE

LET’S MOVE

Begin the session with a game of Frog. Have the students sit in a circle. The first student says, “One frog.” The second says, “Two eyes.” The third says, “Four legs.” The fourth says, “In the puddle.” The fifth says, “Ker-Plop.” It continues around the circle with two frogs, four eyes, eight legs, and so on. See how many frogs the group can name before someone stops. Keep up a fast rhythm.

TO THE LESSON

Joseph is hailed as one of the heroes of the Bible. However, before he attained that level of greatness, he made a few mistakes along the way. As the youngest of eleven brothers, he had a serious case of little brother syndrome. Believers often act the same way.

FROM
DREAM
TO REALITY

I. Read Genesis 37:1-4, and ask the students, *How would you describe Joseph's situation?* Joseph's father, Jacob, had two wives and two concubines. At this point in the story, Jacob had been blessed with 11 sons. Of these 11 sons, only one was born by his favorite wife, Rachel. Joseph was that son.

a. What did Jacob give to Joseph? Jacob gave his son a coat made with many colors. This would have been a coat made with many different pieces of fabric. Dye was not easy to come by. A coat with bright colors would have been highly favored and expensive. Joseph had a special relationship with his father.

b. Read Genesis 37:5-11, and ask the students, *Of what did Joseph's dreams foretell?* Joseph dreamed that his brothers' sheaves, or bales, bowed to his sheaf. He also dreamed that the sun, moon, and stars bowed to him. These represented his father, mother, and brothers. Are these dreams hard to understand? It seems likely that Joseph understood his dreams. He had a special revelation from God. He understood that he would be blessed in a special way by God.

c. As believers, we have a special relationship with God. We are His children. We are promised an inheritance in heaven. We have been assured help on earth. Because we are His children, we also have a special revelation from God. We have been given the Bible, which tells us of what is to come for the saved and the lost. What are some of things believers know about the future?

II. Read Genesis 37:8-10, and ask the students, *How did the brothers react to the first dream? Was it wise of Joseph to discuss the second dream?*

a. The brothers' disgust for the first dream was clear. Joseph, a seventeen year old, should have

FAMILY TREE

JACOB (FATHER)- REUBEN,
SIMEON, LEVI, JUDAH, DAN,
NAPHTALI, GAD, ASHER, IS-
SACHAR, ZEBULUN, JOSEPH,
BENJAMIN (SONS)

FROM
DREAM
TO REALITY

AS BELIEVERS, WE
HAVE A SPECIAL
RELATIONSHIP
WITH GOD.

seen this. It was unwise to discuss the second dream with them. Little brother syndrome made Joseph feel the need to brag. He felt more blessed than his brothers, and felt no need to hide it.

b. We should not expect the world to be proud of our special situation. This does not mean that people will necessarily be unhappy about our happiness, but we should not expect others to be excited for us. Many times, believers can seem “holier than thou” to the world. We must safeguard against acting as if we are better than others. This attitude will not help us reach the world.

c. Read 1 Peter 3:15, and ask the students, *How are we to defend the faith?* This verse tells us to defend the faith. However, we are to defend the faith in meekness and fear. We must be proud of our special relationship with God, but not brag.

III. Read Genesis 37:12-30, and ask the students, *What did the brothers do to Joseph?* The brothers saw Joseph coming from far off. They planned to kill him, but instead chose to make some money. They beat him, threw him in an empty well, and sold him as a slave to a traveling band of merchants.

a. Read Genesis 37:24-25, and ask the students to describe the scene. With Joseph screaming from a pit, the brothers sat down to eat lunch! Joseph’s “holier than thou” attitude made him irrelevant to his brothers.

b. When we approach the world with an elitist attitude, we quickly become irrelevant to the lost. In their minds, lost people put us in a pit. How can we lead the lost to salvation from a social pit? We live quiet, peaceful lives, while they live sinful lives. We attend church, while they party on the weekends. We must not expect Godly behavior from ungodly people. The lost act like the lost because they are lost! When we expect better behavior from them, the mistake is ours.

SET GOD APART IN YOUR
HEARTS, AND BE READY TO AN-
SWER EVERY MAN WHO ASKS
YOU ABOUT YOUR HOPE WITH
MEEKNESS AND FEAR.

1 PETER 3:15 YFV

FROM
DREAM
TO REALITY

JOSEPH'S PIT

IT WAS MOST LIKELY A HOLE
DUG TO CATCH RAIN WATER

c. Read Matthew 28:19, and ask the students, *What is the first duty of believers?* Our first duty is to teach, which literally means “to make followers.” If we want the lost to follow us to Jesus, how should we approach them? We do have a special relationship with God that they do not have. They are promised hell, while we are promised heaven. They are promised eternal heartache while we are promised eternity with God. However, we should treat them in ways that make them want to hear our message.

CONCLUSION

This great hero of the Bible got himself into a bad situation. His fault was in the way he chose to behave. He became irrelevant to his brothers because of his case of little brother syndrome. Rather than glorify God with a humble, loving attitude, he chose to glorify himself and brag on his special situation. As believers, we also find ourselves in a special situation. However, we must seek to glorify God with humble, loving attitudes. We must not be seen as “holier than thou” by the world. Have you looked down on someone in a bad situation? Do you treat the lost with love or with contempt?

FROM
DREAM
TO REALITY

LITTLE BROTHER SYNDROME

GENESIS 37

JOSEPH'S SPECIAL SITUATION

- JOSEPH HAD A SPECIAL _____ WITH HIS FATHER.
- JOSEPH HAD A SPECIAL _____ FROM GOD.

JOSEPH'S ACTIONS

- JOSEPH FELT MORE _____ THAN HIS BROTHERS, AND FELT NO NEED TO _____ IT.
- WE SHOULD NOT EXPECT THE _____ TO BE PROUD OF OUR SPECIAL _____.
- WE MUST BE _____ OF OUR SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, BUT NOT _____.

THE CONSEQUENCES

- IN THEIR MINDS, THE LOST PLACE US IN A _____.
- WE MUST NOT EXPECT _____ BEHAVIOR FROM _____ PEOPLE.
- OUR FIRST DUTY IS TO _____, WHICH LITERALLY MEANS "TO MAKE _____."

FROM
DREAM
TO REALITY