

# When We Think The Worst Of The First: Dealing With Envy

## Genesis 37

- **Envy Focuses On Another's: Power** (Num 16:3; Ps 106:16), **Possession** (Gen 26:12-14), **Popularity** (1 Sam 18:7-9), **Performance** (Acts 4:14-17), **Profession** (Phil 1:15-16), **Privilege** (Luke 15:25-30; Gen 37:3-4), **Praise** (Gen 4:4-5; Esth 5:12-13)

### I. Feeding Our Envy: Why We Hurt Whom We Envy (1-11)

- A. **Feeling Betrayed By The Self-Righteousness Of A Tattletale (1-2)**
- B. **Feeling Devalued When Another Is Favored (3-4a)**
- C. **Feeling Hatred Towards One Who Thinks He/She Is Superior Than Us (4b-8)**
- D. **Feeling Envious Towards One Who Has Advantages Over Us (9-11)**

### II. Harming With Envy: How We Hurt Whom We Envy (12-36)

- A. The \_\_\_\_\_ Person Conspires With Others Who Will Justify Our Jealousy (12-19)
- B. The \_\_\_\_\_ Person Seeks To Hurt And Eliminate Our Envied Enemy (20-21)
- C. The \_\_\_\_\_ Person Thinks We Can Feel Better About Ourselves By Seeing The Envied Shamed And Suffering (23-24)
- D. The \_\_\_\_\_ Person Feels Entitled To Compensation (25-28)
- E. The Self-\_\_\_\_\_ Person Is Callous To The Emotional Pain We Inflict On Others (29-35)
- F. **The Envied Victim Is Comforted By God Always Being With Us (36; cf. Acts 7:9; Jer 23:23-24; Ex 33:14; Jn 14:23; Prov 15:29)**

### III. Freed From Envy: How To Have Victory Over Envy

- A. **Decide To Put Away Envy (Prov 3:31; 1 Pet 2:1)**
- B. **Stop Comparing Yourself To Others (Gal 5:26; Lk 15:31-32)**
- C. **Change From Walking In The Flesh To Walking In The Spirit (Gal 5:19-23; 1 Cor 3:3-4)**
- D. **Choose To Love The Person You Envy (1 Cor 13:4)**
- E. **Find Your Contentment And Completeness In Christ (Phil 4:12-13)**

#### Conclusion:

1. Like Joseph, God wants to save us from the pit and power of sin.
2. Envy focuses on what we don't have. Faith focuses on what we have in Christ.
3. Who do you envy right now? Will you turn your discontent to faith? Will you transform your hurtful hatred to a passion for their spiritual success?

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- A. **The Envious Person Conspires With Others Who Will Justify Our Jealousy (12-19)**
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## Genesis 37

### Introduction:

#### 1. Envy

- Ie/ Kermit the Frog made famous the song "It's Not Easy Being Green". Though he sang about frogdom, we can easily apply it to our struggle with envy.
- We are green with envy
- Shakespeare called jealousy the "green sickness"
- We think the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence only to one day find out that it is green on the otherside because there's a lot of manure to fertilize it.
- **Envy – Coveting what you don't possess in frustration of not measuring up**

**Proverbs 14:30** "A sound heart is life to the body, But **envy** is rottenness to the bones"

**Proverbs 23:17** "Do not let your heart **envy** sinners, But be zealous for the fear of the LORD all the day"

- **Jealousy – Coveting what you do possess in fear of losing it**

**Proverbs 27:4** "Wrath is cruel and anger a torrent, But who is able to stand before **jealousy?**"

**Song of Solomon 8:6** "**Jealousy** as cruel as the grave; Its flames are flames of fire, A most vehement flame.

- **Traits Of Envious People:** (Les Carter, *Mind Over Emotions*, p. 52)
  - Work extremely hard to present themselves right and good
  - Find it easy to examine others with a critical eye
  - Have hidden feelings of inferiority
  - Readily complain about not getting fair treatment or good breaks
  - Have an insatiable desire for success
  - Need much overt recognition of their achievements
  - Enjoy the feeling of being in control
  - Tend to be status-conscious
  - Are impressed by titles
  - Cringe at the idea of examining their own weaknesses
  - Find it hard to pay compliments
  - Have difficulty giving generously
  - Tend to hold grudges
  - Keep score of their own good deeds and of the good deeds of others
  - Prefer to avoid successful people
  - Are willing to pass along negative rumors about a successful person

- Often put on a false front in order to appear impressive
- Have frequent fantasies of what it would be like at the top
- Prone to hold “pet peeves”
- **Envy Focuses On Another’s**
  - **Power** (Num 16:3; Ps 106:16)
  - **Possession** (Gen 26:12-14)
  - **Popularity** (1 Sam 18:7-9)
  - **Performance** (Acts 4:14-17)
  - **Profession** (Phil 1:15-16)
  - **Privilege** (Luke 15:25-30; Gen 37:3-4)
  - **Praise** (Gen 4:4-5; Esth 5:12-13)

#### **A. Envy Focuses On Another’s Power**

**Numbers 16:3** They gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, “You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?”

**Psalm 106:16** When they envied Moses in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the LORD

Ie/ Every Democrat will be envious of the power of the Republican party when the Republicans are in the White House and control congress. The Republicans also are envious when the Democrats control the government.

Ie/ Who would be “The Man” of the championship team: Shaq or Kobe?

#### **B. Envy Focuses On Another’s Possession**

**Genesis 26:12-14** <sup>12</sup> Then Isaac sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year a hundredfold; and the LORD blessed him. <sup>13</sup> The man began to prosper, and continued prospering until he became very prosperous; <sup>14</sup> for he had possessions of flocks and possessions of herds and a great number of servants. So the Philistines envied him.

Ie/ The walk into the church’s parking lot will make one envy – see the new car, the new clothes and the new hairstyle

#### **C. Envy Focuses On Another’s Popularity**

**1 Samuel 18:7-9** <sup>7</sup> So the women sang as they danced, and said: “Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.” <sup>8</sup> Then Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him; and he said, “They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed only thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?” <sup>9</sup> So Saul eyed David from that day forward.

#### **D. Envy Focuses On Another's Performance**

**Acts 4:14-17** <sup>14</sup> And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. <sup>15</sup> But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, <sup>16</sup> saying, "What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them is evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. <sup>17</sup> But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name."

- The Sanhedrin, the religious rulers of the Jews, became envious of the miraculous performances of Peter & John.
- Ie/ You envy the advancement of the new employee over you
- Ie/ You share your SAT score with someone hoping their score is lower than yours
- Ie/ You envy the person that beat you out for the sports team, student body officer or scholarship
- Ie/ Pastors share about the size of their church attendance, budget and property

#### **E. Envy Focuses On Another's Profession**

**Philippians 1:15-16** <sup>15</sup> Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: <sup>16</sup> The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains

#### **F. Envy Focuses On Another's Privilege**

**Luke 15:25-30** <sup>25</sup> "Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. <sup>26</sup> So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. <sup>27</sup> And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.' <sup>28</sup> "But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. <sup>29</sup> So he answered and said to his father, 'Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. <sup>30</sup> But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.'

**Genesis 37:3-4,11** <sup>3</sup> Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of many colors. <sup>4</sup> But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him...<sup>11</sup> And his brothers envied him.

#### **G. Envy Focuses On Another's Praise**

**Genesis 4:4-5** <sup>4</sup> Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, <sup>5</sup> but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.

**Esther 5:12-13** <sup>12</sup> Moreover Haman said, "Besides, Queen Esther invited no one but me to come in with the king to the banquet that she prepared; and tomorrow I am again invited by her, along with the king. <sup>13</sup> Yet all this avails me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate."

## 2. Joseph In The Bible

- 14 chapters designated to both Abraham & Joseph, yet there is 25% more content on Joseph than Abraham
- Joseph is the most written about person in the OT but not mentioned prominently in the NT
- He is mentioned 4x in the NT
  - John 4:5 – Jacob gave Joseph land near Sychar (Samaria)
  - Acts 7:9-14 – Stephen recounts Israel's history to the Sanhedrin
  - Hebrews 11:21-22 – Hall of Faith of OT Heroes
  - Rev 7:8 – 12K from the tribe of Joseph

**Hebrews 11:22** By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones.

- Joseph's Life In Three Periods
  - Birth to 17 years old (30:24 – 37:2) – birth, family struggles, favoritism
  - 17 to 30 years old (37:2 – 41:45) – slavery, slander, prison
  - 30 – 100 years old (41:46 – 50:26) – success, forgiveness, blessings
- Joseph is a Type of Christ
  - **Type** - a prophetic symbol
    - Type (picture)
    - Antitype (explanation or counterpart)
    - A "type" is an illustration rooted in history foreshadowing something in the future.
  - A Greater Son
  - An overcomer of temptation
  - From lowliness to prominence
    - Franz Delitzsch pointed out that Joseph is a "type of the pathway ... of Christ, from lowliness to exaltation, from slavery to liberty, from suffering to glory" (*Commentary on Genesis*)

## Joseph - A Type of Christ

Barnes' Bible Charts

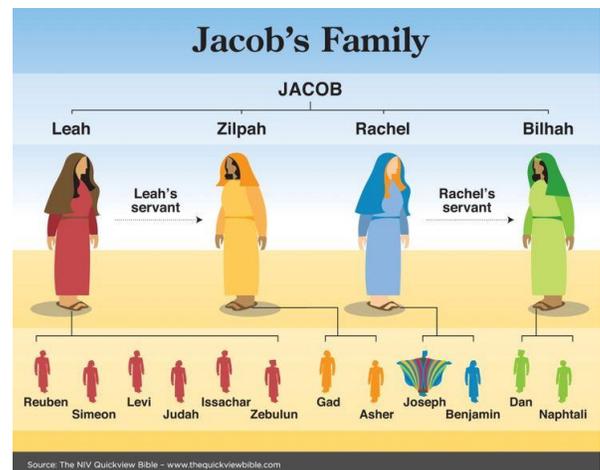
JOSEPH	CHARACTERISTIC OR ATTRIBUTE	CHRIST
Genesis 37:4	Both were despised	John 1:11
Genesis 37:36	Both went into Egypt	Matthew 2:13-15
Joshua 24:32	Both returned from Egypt	Matthew 2:19-23
Genesis 39:20	Both were arrested	John 18:12
Genesis 39:14-19	Both were falsely accused	Mark 14:57-58
Genesis 39:7-12	Both resisted temptation & sin	Matthew 4:1-11
Genesis 39:31-35	Both were separated from their fathers	John 20:21
Genesis 41:40	Both had great power & authority	Matthew 28:18
Genesis 37:28	Both were sold	Matthew 26:15
Genesis 42:24	Both showed great love	John 15:13
Genesis 45:5-7	Both helped preserve life	Matthew 1:21
Genesis 45:3	Both were found alive	Luke 24:46
Genesis 45:1-15	Both were reunited with brethren	John 19:19-29
Genesis 45:6-7	Both showed compassion	2 Corinthians 8:9
Genesis 45:15	Both showed pardon	Luke 3:34
Genesis 39:21	God was with both	Matthew 17:5

### I. Feeding Our Envy: Why We Hurt Whom We Envy (1-11)

#### A. Feeling Betrayed By The Self-Righteousness Of A Tattletale (1-2)

1 Jacob lived in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan. 2 These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was pasturing the flock with his brothers. He was a boy with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father.

- Joseph was the first son Jacob had with his most beloved wife, Rachel
- But his 10 older brothers didn't like the fact that he was favored
- Even as a 17 year old, Joseph used his favored position to be a tattletale on his other brothers
- Joseph was shepherding with his older half brothers of Bilhah and Zilpah – Gad, Asher, Dan and Naphtali



- Genesis doesn't mention that Joseph was wicked in being a Tattletale
- Genesis doesn't really mention the sins of Joseph as it did with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob
- He may have had good reason to report something wrong his brothers were doing
- The point is that everyone hates a tattletale, the whistleblower, the leak, the informant, the snitch.

#### B. Feeling Devalued When Another Is Favored (3-4a)

3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a robe of many colors. 4a But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers,

## **Favoritism in the Home**

- How does a child feel when he sees a sibling favored over him or her?
- That's one of the ways we can anger our kids

**Ephesians 6:4** <sup>4</sup>And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

- When one is favored – the other struggles with lack of acceptance
- ie/ Luke 15 – prodigal son returns – party thrown – older brother gets jealous

## **Favoritism in the Church**

**James 2:4** “Have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts”

- “Envy Went To Church” by Elva McAllaster  
(quoted in David Jeremiah’s Slaying The Giants In Your Life, p. 194)

Envy went to church this morning.  
Being legion, he sat in every other pew.  
Envy fingered wool and silk fabrics,  
Hung price tags on suits and neckties.

Envy paced through the parking lot  
Scrutinizing chrome and paint  
Envy marched through to the chancel with the choir  
During the processional...

Envy prodded plain-jane wives,  
And bright wives married to milquetoast dullards,  
And kind men married to knife-tongued shrews.  
Envy thumped at widows and widowers,  
Jabbed and kicked college girls without escorts,  
Lighted invisible fires inside khaki jackets.

Envy conferred also this morning  
With all of his brothers.  
He liked his Sunday scores today  
But not enough;

Some of his intended clients  
Had sipped an antidote marked Grace  
And wore a holy flower named Love.

### **C. Feeling Hatred Towards One Who Thinks He/She Is Superior Than Us (4b-8)**

4b they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him. 5 Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they hated him even more. 6 He said to them, “Hear this dream

that I have dreamed: 7 Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and behold, my sheaf arose and stood upright. And behold, your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf." 8 His brothers said to him, "Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to rule over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

- We don't know if Joseph was intentionally and self-righteously condescending when sharing those dreams
- He could have just been sharing it as a fact
- These dreams are prophetic
- The fact that in the future, the older brothers would be subservient to Joseph made them hate him even more
  
- Who do we think the worst in the position of first?
  - Valedictorian, the PAL athletic winner, the rising star?

#### **D. Feeling Envious Towards One Who Has Advantages Over Us (9-11)**

9 Then he dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers and said, "Behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me." 10 But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you?" 11 And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind.

## **II. Harming With Envy: How We Hurt Whom We Envy (12-36; cf. Jas 3:16)**

**James 3:16** For where *envy* and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.

#### **A. The Envious Person Conspires With Others Who Will Justify Our Jealousy (12-19)**

12 Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem. 13 And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." And he said to him, "Here I am." 14 So he said to him, "Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock, and bring me word." So he sent him from the Valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem. 15 And a man found him wandering in the fields. And the man asked him, "What are you seeking?" 16 "I am seeking my brothers," he said. "Tell me, please, where they are pasturing the flock." 17 And the man said, "They have gone away, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan. 18 They saw him from afar, and before he came near to them they conspired against him to kill him. 19 They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer.

- Jacob is concerned about his sons near Shechem
- Shechem was a place of great trouble for Jacob's family (Shechem & Dinah)
  
- Jacob warns Simeon and Levi of trouble in Shechem

**Genesis 34:30** Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have brought trouble on me by making me stink to the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites and the Perizzites. My

numbers are few, and if they gather themselves against me and attack me, I shall be destroyed, both I and my household."

- So Jacob sends Joseph to find his brothers to check on his brother's well being
- V. 14 – "Well" or "well-being" is Heb. *Salom*
- V. 4 – his brothers hated him and weren't able to speak well of him (well = *salom*)
- Joseph is concerned for the well-being of his brothers who cared less about his well-being
  
- He talks to a witness who had overheard that the brothers are in Dothan
- Dothan is 20 miles north of Shechem
  
- The brothers see Joseph from a distance (that gaudy coat was easy to spot)

***18 They saw him from afar, and before he came near to them they conspired against him to kill him. 19 They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer.***

- Work becomes like the TV show Survivor where alliances are formed to attack a competing party but you never know who to really trust in your alliance because everyone is cut throat
  
- Even in the **church, cliques** form
- We compare with the more popular, the more favored and we gossip and breed hate

**1 Corinthians 3:3-4** For you are still carnal. For where there are **envy**, strife, and divisions among you are you not carnal and behaving like mere men. For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal?

## **B. The Angry Person Seeks To Hurt And Eliminate Our Envied Enemy (20-21)**

20 Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits. Then we will say that a fierce animal has devoured him, and we will see what will become of his dreams." 21 But when Reuben heard it, he rescued him out of their hands, saying, "Let us not take his life." 22 And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but do not lay a hand on him"—that he might rescue him out of their hand to restore him to his father.

**Genesis 4:8** Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

**Job 5:2** For wrath kills a foolish man, and envy slays a simple one.

- Sinful anger strikes out to inflict pain and harm
- Ie/ The church shooting in Texas last week was a result of hate – so was Las Vegas, so was the ISIS terrorist who drove through a bike bath in New York City
- Maybe our anger would not result in bullets or knives
- Ie/ There was an incident where we had to talk someone down from using a knife on someone

**Matthew 5:21-22** 21 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' 22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire.

- Q: Are you **quick tempered**? How fast do you respond with a punch or a hurtful word?
- Q: Are you **passive-aggressive**? How deliberately and subtly do you plan your attack or revenge?
- Maria: "You all killed him! ... Not with bullets and knives. With hate! Well I can kill too. Because now I have hate!" (**West Side Story**)
- **Reuben**, the oldest brother, steps in to de-escalate his brother's intended violence – from murder to false imprisonment, kidnapping and slave-trading
  - Reuben is not known for his restraint – he had immoral relationship with Bilhah (35:22), but God used Reuben here to protect Joseph
  - Perhaps Reuben was trying to make up for his illicit relationship with his father's concubine

### C. **The Entitled Person Thinks We Can Feel Better About Ourselves By Seeing The Envied Shamed And Suffering (23-24)**

23 So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the robe of many colors that he wore. 24 And they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it.

- The act of stripping the robe depicts their great envy towards Joseph
- They could have thrown him in the pit with the jacket to keep him warm at night
- But they removed it because it symbolized what they were envious of

**Proverbs 14:30** A sound heart is life to the body, But **envy** is rottenness to the bones

- We envy because we feel entitled to something that someone else has
- We have perceived rights that think we should all be equal or that everything should be fair
- The reality is life's not fair
- If we really want fairness, we would all go to hell for our sins
- Because God chooses to show mercy on some is Amazing Grace
- Best cure for envy and jealousy is a good dose of God's grace and mercy

**Ephesians 1:7** In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace

**Romans 3:24** Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

## **D. The Discontented Person Feels Entitled To Compensation (25-28)**

25 Then they sat down to eat. And looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing gum, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. 26 Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? 27 Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers listened to him. 28 Then Midianite traders passed by. And they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. They took Joseph to Egypt.

- Judah adds to the plan: There's no money in murder
- Let's sell him to the descendant of Ishmael
- Midianite slave traders

### **The Hypocrisy of the Envious:**

- v. 24 – they throw Joseph in a pit with no water (it wasn't a well or a place he could be sustained for very long)
- v. 25 – they sat down, pulled out their Star Wars lunch bag and started eating
- V. 27 – "he is our brother, our own flesh"
- V. 28 – how hypocritical that they sell out their own flesh, family
- Entitlement really blinds us to reality

### **The Betrayal of the Envious**

- V. 28 – 20 shekel of silver
- This is an eerie reminder of another betrayal with silver – when Judas sold out Jesus

## **E. The Self-Pitied Person Is Callous To The Emotional Pain We Inflict On Others (29-35)**

29 When Reuben returned to the pit and saw that Joseph was not in the pit, he tore his clothes 30 and returned to his brothers and said, "The boy his gone, and I, where shall I go?" 31 Then they took Joseph's robe and slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. 32 And they sent the robe of many colors and brought it to their father and said, "This we have found; please identify whether it is your son's robe or not." 33 And he identified it and said, "It is my son's robe. A fierce animal has devoured him. Joseph is without doubt torn to pieces." 34 Then Jacob tore his garments and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days. 35 All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, "No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning." Thus his father wept for him.

- Remember it's Judah that sells Joseph
- Reuben returns to find Joseph gone and is initially distressed
- But they were all involved in presenting the coat to their father with blood on it – pretending the animal blood was Joseph's

- Jacob wept. The boys stuck their script.
- Only Reuben conveyed any regret. But not the rest of the brothers.
- Who else is our **envy** hurting?
- Does our jealousy at school affect our parents? Our friends?
- Who else is a victim of our envy?
- Joseph was not the only victim. Jacob was too.
- Our actions have wide-spread consequences.

**F. The Envied Victim Is Comforted By God Always Being With Us (36; cf. Acts 7:9; Jer 23:23-24; Ex 33:14; Jn 14:23; Prov 15:29)**

36 Meanwhile the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard.

- V. 36 is a key transitional verse
- Transitions the brothers' unfaithfulness to Joseph's faithfulness
- ... the brothers' deceptive plan to God's Sovereign plan
- Leading to a big point that the faithful will endure persecution
- Alan P. Ross: "... those who faithfully serve their master often must endure grievous persecution but cannot be prevented from fulfilling their God-given destiny." (*Creation & Blessing*, p. 609)

**Acts 7:9** And the patriarchs, jealous of Joseph, sold him into Egypt; but God was with him

**Jeremiah 23:23-24** <sup>23</sup> "Am I a God near at hand," says the LORD, "And not a God afar off? <sup>24</sup> Can anyone hide himself in secret places, so I shall not see him?" says the LORD; "Do I not fill heaven and earth?" says the LORD.

- God's presence is everywhere
- Yet the Bible often speaks of God being with us or being apart from us
- How is this possible if God is always present?
- The Bible uses the concept of "presence" as a figure of speech meaning "present to bless"

**Exodus 33:14** And He said, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

**John 14:23** Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.

- God is said to be "far away" in the sense that God is withholding His blessing or exercising judgment
- This concept parallels God presence with blessing to God's absence with not blessing

**Proverbs 15:29** The LORD is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous.

<b>III. Freed From Envy: How To Have Victory Over Envy</b>
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**A. Decide To Put Away Envy (Prov 3:31; 1 Pet 2:1)**

**Proverbs 3:31** Do not envy the oppressor, and choose none of his ways

**1 Peter 2:1** Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking

**B. Stop Comparing Yourself To Others (Gal 5:26; Lk 15:31-32)**

**Galatians 5:26** Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, *envying* one another.

**Luke 15:31-32** <sup>31</sup> "And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. <sup>32</sup> It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.'

**C. Change From Walking In The Flesh To Walking In The Spirit (Gal 5:19-23; 1 Cor 3:3-4)**

**Galatians 5:19-23** 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

**1 Corinthians 3:3-4** <sup>3</sup> For you are still carnal. For where there are *envy*, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? <sup>4</sup> For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal?

**D. Choose To Love The Person You Envy (1 Cor 13:4)**

**1 Corinthians 13:4** Love suffers long and is kind; love does not *envy*; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up.

**E. Find Your Contentment And Completeness In Christ (Phil 4:12-13)**

**Philippians 4:12-13** <sup>12</sup> I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. <sup>13</sup> I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

**Conclusion:**

1. Like Joseph, God wants to save us from the pit and power of sin.
2. Envy focuses on what we don't have. Faith focuses on what we have in Christ.
3. Who do you envy right now? Will you turn your discontent to faith? Will you transform your hurtful hatred to a passion for their spiritual success?