

The Joseph Experience – Attitude City 01

Intro: If you have ever felt like you entered a Joseph Experience and want to navigate out of the situation, this Bible study will help you guide your way out of **Attitude City** and head on towards the Promise Land.

This new series is about **The Joseph Experience**. We'll be studying what the Joseph Experience is exactly, what paves the path, what can keep a person in it, and most importantly how to navigate out. Bring a notebook because we will be going over the **Joseph story in depth**. The Holy Spirit has some insight for us, and you won't want to forget it.

This week we're going to study Joseph's *bad* attitude problem when he was seventeen, **Attitude City**. You may not be seventeen, daddy's favorite child, or extremely wealthy; but you can still pave the path for a spiritual **Joseph Experience** in your life.

Before we jump into studying the Word, I want to say the Lord **never** sits up in Heaven cooking up plans to give us Joseph Experiences, Job Experiences, Jacob Experiences, and so on. We are the ones that accidentally pave these paths (Jeremiah 29:11). God is love. God is good. That's exactly what this study is about.

We'll read most of the verses in this story, for time's sake I may skip over some. Let's jump right in...

Genesis 37 NKJV

²...This is the history of Jacob.

Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brothers. And the lad was with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to his father.

These brothers were the sons of the maids. In Genesis 30, Rachel and Leah were contending with each other over Jacob. Both Rachel and Leah gave their maids to Jacob as his wives, which made *all* the children *legitimate* in the ancient person's mind. Bilhah was Rachel's maid that had Dan and Naphtali. Zilpah was Leah's maid that had Gad and Asher.

I **assume Joseph knew these were originally the maid's children** that his father married. It leaves us to wonder, *did Joseph view these brothers differently than the other brothers?* Maybe that's why they were mentioned by their mothers' names and not their own.

Let's take a side journey for a moment. It's very important to realize that Jacob, Joseph's father, was a **very** wealthy man at this point. We read about Jacob's wealth when he left Leban and again when he met Esau on the road. We are in *no way* talking about a poor family!

From the scriptures we just read; Joseph, the favorite, was tattling on his brothers. Whatever bad report he brought back was a pivotal moment. It's truly difficult to imagine what awful things the brothers were doing... fight night with the goats, goat tipping, or a kid tossing contest. But whatever it was, we have to realize **Joseph is seventeen years old, and well past the age where this is acceptable behavior**. What could he have done instead of bringing a bad report to their father? "*Hey guys, we're great-grandchildren of Abraham, we shouldn't be having 3-legged goat races.*" Peptalk kind of thing and bring back a good report. Whatever behavior he tattled on obviously caused some type of serious problem.

³Now 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.

The tunic of many colors is very important information in the ancient world. The word tunic, **kthoneth**, in Hebrew means **robe** or **garment** as well. It's the same word used for what God made Adam and Eve; and also the same word for what the priests wore. Using a lot of colors in ancient times was something **reserved for the wealthy**, such as Kings. It was a status symbol and also signified some type of **authority**. His father didn't *just* make him a pretty shirt, he made him a wealthy status symbol of being the honored/favored son.

4But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.

This had to be very painful for the 10 other brothers that were older than Joseph. The first born was supposed to be first in line for the inheritance in ancient times, and he would have become the leader of the family. As we read on, we'll see the first born acting as the leader. If you've read Genesis before, you know birth order was even the custom of Leah and Rachel (the oldest had to be married first). In all honesty, we're seeing the same favoritism and problems with Leah and Rachel being passed down to the children.

Genesis 29:31 NKJV

When the Lord saw that Leah was unloved

We can even go back farther to Jacob and talk about how he was favored by his mother who helped him swindle the blessing of the Lord from his father, Isaac, who favored Esau. The **lesson we can learn here is favoritism can hurt children** and move down through generations. This is also another reason why God's love had to come, Jesus, and we needed to be spiritually born into a love covenant and have God's love placed inside of us. Back to the story...

Joseph was clearly a spoiled rich kid, daddy's favorite! This situation, Joseph tattling and still the honored favorite, upsets the other brothers. Moving on to the next scripture, it's important for us to note this part about his brothers, they *"could not speak peaceably to him."*

5Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more.

I often hear of this scripture, *"Joseph was just sharing what God told him, and his jealous brothers became angry at him."* Absolutely not!

Let's recap: a spoiled rich teenager, daddy's favorite, approached his brothers wearing the symbol of authority and honor of a wealthy first born son, full-well *knowing* they couldn't even speak to each other without a fight, and basically said, *"God showed me you will all bow to me and serve me."* **What is the extent of this 17-year-old's bad attitude problem?** We have to remember this is a MUCH bigger insult to the ancient world than it is to a modern westerner, an American. We have a very different lifestyle. The other brothers feel hurt and insulted, while they're starting to realize the inheritance and blessing will be on the 10th born that they couldn't even tolerate. You have to remember, everything they own came as a result of their father, and it looks like it's going to be under Joseph's control. The **first born was Reuben**, and according to ancient middle eastern mindsets he was the heir, and the other brothers should be looking up to him. In the end, he did get a tasty sandwich named after him and now everyone knows his name.

Joseph goes on to tell the dream.

6So he said to them, "Please hear this dream which I have dreamed: 7There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf."

The Lord gave Joseph this dream, but it certainly wasn't meant for Joseph to run and tattle it to his brothers, or to place himself above his brothers. The Lord was trying to prepare Joseph, and train Joseph as a businessman. The Holy Spirit highlighted this important point for us.

Genesis 25:27 NKJV

So the boys grew. And Esau (Jacob's brother) was a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob (Joseph's father) was a mild man, dwelling in tents.

Jacob, his father, was **dwelling in tents**. In ancient culture that means Jacob was educated. He was reading, writing, and handling the business end of things for Isaac, his father. We read in verse 2 about Joseph bringing back a bad **report** of his brothers to his father. That was not a random tattle-telling, he's *"the little boss-man"* and he made tattling part of his job. When men are goofing off at work, and the boss comes around and catches them, what happens? They get mad at the boss. Imagine if the boss is your little arrogant spoiled brother, even worse! This is no different! The Holy Spirit was highlighting this point for us, **Jacob was**

educating Joseph in the tents, so we can better understand the point of the dream. With that in mind, we see a different picture of why the Lord gave Joseph this dream. Let's be honest, haven't you wondered *why God would give him dreams to upset his brothers?*

⁸And his brothers said to him, "Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

Notice Jacob went to his *brothers* to tell them the dream, instead of his father, who was training him. That was the point of the dream, he needed to carry on in his education and perhaps make peace with his brothers. So let's see what Joseph did about the situation getting worse...

⁹Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me."

¹⁰So he told it to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?" ¹¹And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

Joseph dreams another dream and immediately tells it to his brothers *first*. Interesting, huh? **He tells the people that hate him *first***. Then what does he do? He tells his father *right in front* of his brothers. That's *twice* he told the second dream of them bowing down to him to his brothers. The Bible isn't redundant, **Joseph did it twice!** Why would he do that? He was probably enjoying the upset reaction of letting everyone know he's first, while wearing his special robe.

This **second dream was more difficult** for the family than the first. God using the sun, moon, and stars spoke of **great authority** to the ancient middle eastern thinker. Every ancient culture that I have read about has a sun god belief of some sorts, and the god of the sun is always the main god. (Israel also fell into sun god worship, Baal) The sun, to the ancient mindset, was the ultimate in authority. This dream was about Jacob being an ultimate authority over the chosen family of God in all the Earth. Jacob, his father, was even taken back by this dream, because he responds with, "*Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow to the earth before you?*"

You might be wondering, like I did at times, why didn't the brothers just ignore Joseph and his dream? That's a great question the Holy Spirit answered. Jacob, their father, and all the brothers were **waiting for God to make Himself known to Reuben**, the oldest. When God showed up to Joseph, the youngest spoiled brat, it was a huge confusing upset. As we continue on in the story, we'll see this more and more.

At this point, their father understands God is going to do something *big* with Joseph. He obviously doesn't like his authority usurped, but he knows *something* is going to happen through Joseph, that's why he kept the matter in mind. Jacob was probably trying to figure out what. But at this point in the story, we can clearly see **Joseph's bad attitude is causing the problem**. Just because this is the Bible and a prophetic vision, I think readers get tripped up and think, "*Oh, he was just sharing what God gave him.*" **But sometimes people hurt others with their Christian faith and Christian attitude and justify it with "The Bible says... Your doctrine says... You believe wrong..." and so on...** This is where the Joseph attitude is often overlooked in the church.

What does the Joseph attitude look like?

"I don't drink alcohol, I'M A CHRISTIAN!" That's another way to say, "*I'm morally better than you.*"

How could we respond to an offer for alcohol in love?

"No thank you?" When asked why, it opens the door to share your faith in love without putting anyone down. When someone puts themselves above you, you don't care to hear what they have to say. The Joseph attitude here doesn't walk in love, because the *focus* of the attitude is the concern for how the Christians, themselves, are viewed, as opposed to the focus being loving the person offering alcohol and looking for an opportunity to share Jesus in love. That's one example of many times I've heard Christians **hurtfully claim the moral high ground**.

Another Joseph attitude example, a Christian lady went to a Christian concert and a non-Christian band was opening. This Christian lady decided that she didn't like the words to the songs the opening band was singing, so she began SHOUTING words to Christian songs over the lyrics of the non-Christian band. She boasted on the internet how the people who showed up for the opening band were mad at her, but she didn't care! *She was proud and amused with herself and so were the others commenting.* They all paid the same amount of money to be at that concert. I am sure they were mad. What do you think those unsaved people went home and reported on the internet about "Christians?" Loving? Considerate? Kind? Peaceful? Probably not. Again, **the Joseph attitude, is using the things of God in arrogance and hurting other people in the process.** What do you think this *Christian* should have done if she didn't like the words to the music? Not bought the ticket. Left the area during the opening band's music. Brought some ear plugs or headphones of some sort. Ignored the music and played games on her phone.

A couple more examples, because we see a lot of this behavior in the body of Christ. If we want revival in our nation, city, and especially our church, we need to be ready to love first. **It can be confusing to know how to respond to people at the moment.** Like the Navy Seals say, "*You'll fall back on your highest level of training.*" That's what these Bible studies are about, training (2 Timothy 3:16).

A very modern-day example, this is a big one we see on the internet often, a transgender with multiple hair colors being told by an arrogant Christian that they will burn in hell for their sins, because they're just "*telling the truth*" no matter how upset the unsaved person has become with this information. How can we respond to this?

My advice is to tell them, like you would anyone else, "*Jesus loves you.*" It's not our job to convict anyone of sin. We wouldn't go up to a stranger and ask if they were secretly looking at porn so we could tell them they're going to hell over that sin, would we? Sometimes *Christians can easily see a sin to fight, point it out, and say hellfire.* Treat them like anyone else. **Talk to them about the love Jesus has for them, because often times people get into these wild gender-changing and crazing coloring themselves, because of abuse and they lack love and attention in their life;** something is missing, and they are trying to fill in the gap.

If you think about it, these people having no shame would make excellent evangelists. If a man has no shame in dressing like a woman with pink hair and rainbows on his face, and you lead him to Christ, he will have no shame in sharing Jesus. **Remember, it's NOT in our job description in the Bible to convict or clean up anyone else's life**, except if you have children in your care or someone is committed to your care, such as your wild and crazy sister that needs to sleep on your couch for a while. **Our job description to others is sharing the gospel and love.** If you're in the office of pastor or another authority, that's different, but to the world we share the gospel in love and love.

The last example is from a minister. **Remember everyone can get tempted and sucked into a Joseph Attitude City situation.**

My problem was increasing in knowledge in the Word, archeology, ancient culture, and revelation knowledge that led me to arrogance and judgmental behavior. I found myself saying in my heart, "*You're a pastor and you're playing on your phone during prayer.*" Truth is, it's none of my business. I also found myself saying in my heart of other ministers, "*Wow! You need to study more.*" I was blind as to what I was doing. One day, I remember showing up to a prayer meeting that was led by 3 people in their 70s, all wonderful people of God. I sat there filled with arrogance saying to myself how they were all vying to be in charge, get the most attention, and have the best advice from God. I couldn't see how wicked it was for me to judge these precious people of God out of my flesh. Several times I remember arrogantly saying of a particular pastor, that occasionally had a guest speaker I wanted to hear, "*Look at you, showing off and making praise and worship a YouTube show with Star Bucks demon cups in the foyer and sanctuary. I wonder how much of your preaching is a show.*" Truth is, it's none of my concern what that pastor was doing and if I didn't like it, I needed to leave or not show up at all. In the end, **I was in awe of how blind I was to my own attitude problem.** It's not that I said anything out loud against them, well most of them... I made some complaints about the Star Bucks pastor and his camera crew, but God judges our heart, and I know that! I spent the greater part of a year crying out to God asking what's wrong and why has my prayer life been unfruitful. My arrogant world all came crashing down when I got covid, and depression kept trying to come over me. I finally stopped and asked God why things kept

getting worse instead of better, that's when He showed me that my attitude brought in strife.

Think about that, **an entire year, because this minister took up residence in Joseph's Attitude City.** There are people who spent 20, 30, 40, 50+ years in Attitude City. No one could help this person, because they didn't voice their attitude problem, and seemed Godly. That's where the Holy Spirit needs to reveal this information to us, if we or someone we love took up residence there. It's an interesting point what this minister said God revealed to them, **"my attitude brought in strife."** That's exactly what happened to **Joseph, his attitude brought strife in his family.** Strife, which we will talk about in the study to come, will stop the Hand of God in your life. That may sound harsh, but you'll see exactly why and how it opens the door to other sins, confusion, and sickness.

Now that we're aware of Attitude City, we can use the Word to avoid taking up residence there.

Ephesians 5:21 NKJV

submitting to one another in the fear of God.

The context of this passage is walking in wisdom. *It's good for us all to be submitted to someone's wise counsel as a leader.* That doesn't mean that the minister or group leader you're submitted to is perfect, **it means that you're making a wise decision to avoid arrogance.** This is a slightly amusing story from a minister that was just starting out that illustrates this point very well:

I just felt in my spirit that the Lord wanted me at a particular church in a women's group. I didn't *really* want to be there. Their teaching was very elementary and misguided. **I concluded that The Lord called me there so that they could benefit from my deep wisdom and knowledge of scripture.** I was pretty proud of myself that I could bring them up to a higher place. It wasn't long, like the next meeting, I kept feeling led by the Lord to SHUT UP! I realized, the Lord wanted me to be submitted to the leader and other attendees to learn how to better speak to people in God's loving way. While I may have had more extensive knowledge of studying scripture and life experiences with the Word, they had much more extensive knowledge of love. I needed to learn love from them and to view them as just as valuable as me.

We all need to be submitted to a leader or leaders. We see scripture where Abraham was submitted to Melchizedek all the way over to Paul immediately presenting/submitting himself to the apostles. Being quiet and submitted helps keep us from being arrogant and helps us maintain a good attitude.

1 Corinthians 8:1 NKJV

.... We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.

Yes, we all have knowledge. We all have gifts. What we should always remember is where did this knowledge come from? Did someone read 30 books, take some tests, declare themselves an expert, and now they're better than everyone else? Did God give someone a gift (such as an instrument or throwing a ball), then they acquired knowledge from their gift, and in-turn has become better than everyone else? Did a person figure something out or invent something that the Lord has revealed to them, they earned money, and now they're better than other people? *What I'm trying to point out is that sometimes people, both Christian and non-Christian, are busy patting themselves on the back when they really need to be giving God the glory.* I think on judgement day we, as people, might find out we patted ourselves on the back for a skill or information, but accidentally missed it was God... because we *didn't* pray and ask for it.

That's exactly why knowledge puffs up, it takes the revealing work of the Lord but claims it for itself.

According to the Holy Spirit through Paul, the way to stop arrogance from knowledge is through love, God kind of love. If everyone that moved ahead because of their gift from God, looked at everyone else and said in their heart, *"We're all gifted and I'm just using mine."* That would stop arrogance in its tracks. It's also **remembering God's love towards us that will stop arrogance.** That's an important lesson we all need reminded of as well. God knows what we enjoy, and it pleases Him to *teach* us, *reveal* things to us, and *help* us. Every time someone hit a ball and it went farther, they came up with a really good song, cooked the most amazing dinner that's going to go viral, or whatever stopped and **gave the glory to God where it belongs**, arrogance would have no place, and increased knowledge won't puff them up.

Identifying an attitude problem and repenting is the quickest way out of a Joseph Experience.

1 John 1:9 NKJV

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

That means we will be restored when we confess our sin and have a willingness to change. We don't have to beg or do any type of penitence (putting on a sorry show). But you may have to ask some people to forgive you... Just smile and say, "*someone is gonna be blessed tonight!*" We know it's nobody in here! We're training to help others in love.

But when you do minister to someone else, suggest that *they* take communion over repentance. It's like renewing wedding vows if a husband and wife have been separated. If *the person* you're ministering to felt separated from God, communion is rehearsing our salvation and covenant.

We'll continue studying more of this story in detail next week. **Please bring something to take notes!** Next week, we're going to continue reading Joseph's story in the light and teaching of the Holy Spirit. Then we'll take a quick look at what paving paths of pride does in people's lives. The Holy Spirit's leading and guiding has given us some **new information** on the story. If you know someone that enjoys the Joseph story, invite them to church! We'll see how far the Lord wants us to go on this journey, all the way up to Joseph's death or not.

Homework

- Ask the Holy Spirit if you have a house in Attitude City or you're squatting there and are about to soon own one
- Ask the Lord if there is someone living in Attitude City that you should minister to them in love

(Prayer Points

- Lord bless us with Your eyes to see people the way You see them
- Open our ears to hear people the way You hear their words
- Teach us the depths of your love, and Holy Spirit please remind us to choose love above ourself
- Lord, season our tongues with salt so that we may know how to answer everyone in Your loving way.

In Jesus name, Amen)