

# The Joseph Experience – Path of Pride 02

Intro: For this study, the Holy Spirit will open your eyes to see that Joseph caused his own downfall and destruction. He was not the innocent little lad that we were taught about as kids.

Last week, we took an in-depth look at Joseph's teenage attitude problem. Did anyone do their homework on Attitude City? Don't worry, we won't ask for details.

This week's study, we're going to study the effects of Joseph's bad attitude, and why it's *dangerous* to keep one. Let's jump back into the story where we left off.

## Genesis 37 NKJV

**<sup>12</sup>Then his brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. <sup>13</sup>And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers feeding the flock in Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." So he said to him, "Here I am." <sup>14</sup>Then he said to him, "Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me." So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron, and he went to Shechem.**

Once again, we can see that Joseph was in charge of *helping his father with the business*. He wasn't working with his brothers, and his father tasked him with the job of some type of overseeing. I'm not sure why his father would send him to gather information in a heated situation.

According to *Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*, the **trek from Valley of Hebron to Shechem was 60 miles**, a quick Google search with no references state it's only 50 miles. Ancient people probably walked about 25 miles a day, donkeys can walk about the same, 25 miles a day.

Joseph eventually finds his brothers, after a man overheard them saying they were going to **Dothan**. According to *Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*, Dothan was another 12-mile journey. Joseph appears to be on a 3-day journey.

**<sup>18</sup>Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him.**

This is why walking in love and being a peacemaker is of the utmost importance. Our attitudes, as Christians, should cause people to see us and think peace, joy, gentleness, and other good fruit. As for Joseph, living in the Old Testament, they should have at least thought, here comes a blessing.

**<sup>19</sup>Then they said to one another, "Look, this dreamer is coming! <sup>20</sup>Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, 'Some wild beast has devoured him.' We shall see what will become of his dreams!"**

I could imagine his brothers laughing as they decided this. But as we studied in depth last week, *the dreams just pushed the brothers over the edge*. It wasn't the dreams alone that caused hatred. Remember, the first dream indicated Joseph would control their food, because their grain bowed to his grain, and the second dream indicated Joseph would be the ultimate authority over the family, the chosen family of God, the moon and the stars bowed to the sun (ultimate authority in the ancient world).

**<sup>21</sup>But Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, "Let us not kill him." <sup>22</sup>And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit which is in the wilderness, and do not lay a hand on him"—that he might deliver him out of their hands, and bring him back to his father.**

Reuben, being the oldest, was acting as the wise leader of the brothers, despite their father favoring Joseph, he was still carrying out his ancient roll as first born.

**<sup>23</sup>...Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the tunic of many colors that was on him. <sup>24</sup>Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit was empty; there was no water in it.**

**Arrogance blinds people to the truth** and we can see that happening here. On one side, we see these brothers plotting to kill Joseph; and on the other side, we see Joseph prancing around in his coat of authority to tattletale. It makes you wonder how Joseph could be so blind to feel completely safe walking up to them. The answer is *pride*. Pride *really* convinced him his brothers had to honor him.

**Proverbs 16:18** NKJV

**Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.**

Merriam-Webster defines **haughty** as *having or showing an attitude of superiority and contempt for people or things perceived to be inferior*. Joseph was doing both, prideful and haughty. People who often experience destructions and falls because of their attitude, can't ever seem to see it coming. **Pride blinds people to the truth and it prevents them from correcting the situation before it gets worse!** It's like living with horse blinders.

<sup>25</sup>**And they sat down to eat a meal.**

They were happy, huh?

<sup>(25)</sup> **Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry them down to Egypt.**

The word for **spices** was commonly used to refer to highly prized spices for religious rituals, medicine, and as luxury items. **Gilead's balm** was famous for healing balm that was used throughout the middle east. It was known to *actually be effective*. **Myrrh** was expensive, because it's made from harvested tree bark. If the person harvests too soon, they can damage the tree. Basically, what the Bible is telling us is that **these traders carried goods for the wealthy** and were on their way down to Egypt, a very wealthy land. For our purpose, this information tells us that these traders saw some type of **high-priced value on Joseph** as a slave. They weren't buying a farmer, goat herder, or a builder but an **educated teenager**.

<sup>26</sup>**So Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood?**

<sup>27</sup>**Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh." And his brothers listened.**

This sin comes back to Judah's mind later. Remember this part for later in the study, that *he* was the one who decided to make the sale.

<sup>28</sup>**Then Midianite traders passed by; so the brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.**

Midianites could have been Ishmaelites too. **Genesis 25:1-2** tells us Abraham took another wife after Sarah died and fathered 6 more children, one being Medan. Medan, father of the Midianites, and Ishmael were half-brothers, which means the next generation were all cousins.

<sup>29</sup>**Then Reuben returned to the pit, and indeed Joseph was not in the pit; and he tore his clothes. <sup>30</sup>And he returned to his brothers and said, "The lad is no more; and I, where shall I go?"**

Reuben was obviously very upset, and wanted to go get him. He was doing the right thing, his duty as first born, but he didn't love Joseph or else he would have tried to find out what became of him, at least at a later date.

<sup>31</sup>**So they took Joseph's tunic, killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the tunic in the blood.**

Apparently, the traders were far enough away that Reuben couldn't catch up with them, so he settled on the lie. We read that *they sat down to a meal*. Joseph, traveling 3 days (2 days to Shechem, and the last 12 miles on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day to Dothan), most likely arrived sometime after noon, and the meal the brothers sat down to eat was dinner. That information, the city and miles, tells us that the sun was going down, and it would have been too dark for Reuben to try and catch up with the camels anyway. Ancient people typically ate at sunset. Reuben may have been tending to the animals while the brothers sat down to eat and then decided to sell Joseph.

Rueben probably returned to the pit in the *dark of night* to hide what he was doing, but Joseph was gone. I think this situation put Rueben in a bad place, where his brothers may have killed him too if he told the truth. Remember what we read in verse 12?

**<sup>12</sup>Then his brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem.**

If the truth came out about Joseph, his brothers would have lost everything, because everything belonged to their father. In the ancient world, if they were making their own way, they would leave their family. Ancient families stayed together to help each other.

**<sup>32</sup>Then they sent the tunic of many colors, and they brought it to their father and said, “We have found this. Do you know whether it is your son's tunic or not?”**

Interesting lie, “*Do you know...?*” Think about that! How could they **NOT** know what Joseph was wearing? He had been wearing it for at least several days, according to the events in the Bible. They were *so angry* with him they denied knowing what he had been wearing! But the wording of their lie was believed by their father, which is even more shocking, which tells us that **Joseph was actually in the tent being educated** and not physically working with his brothers, so they could concoct this type of story. From this information, we know Joseph didn't have the same muscle tone as the brothers had and he was still a teenager, which made him significantly weaker. It was probably very easy for them to overpower him and toss him into the pit.

**<sup>33</sup>And he recognized it and said, “It is my son's tunic. A wild beast has devoured him. Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces.” <sup>34</sup>Then Jacob tore his clothes ...mourned for his son many days. <sup>35</sup>..he refused to be comforted, and he said, “For I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning.” ...**

Jacob didn't bear any responsibility for correcting Joseph's attitude problem. That's why God wants parents to correct their children. Allowing them to have attitude problems sets them up for some type of failure in life.

**<sup>36</sup>Now the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard.**

As we read earlier, Joseph was taken by traders of wealthy goods; and he was sold to a prominent man in Egypt. We can see God was still blessing and preserving Joseph best He could in the circumstance.

**It's important to remember, the dreams God gave Joseph didn't cause the problem, the attitude behind them did.**

Once the Holy Spirit brings revelation, we don't see the teaching most of learned in Sunday School that *precious sweet Joseph in his special coat just shared his dream that God gave him, his brothers became jealous and sold him as a slave*. Because we learned it that way as kids, we view the story as an adult in the same light, until the Holy Spirit turns the real lights on! It's incredibly important to see that **God didn't do this to Joseph**, because we naturally think, “*What is God going to do to me,*” or “*God allowed this to happen for a greater purpose,*” which isn't fair to the Lord. How we view Him affects our spiritual walk. That's why **the Holy Spirit is highlighting to us that pride and a haughty spirit that brought in strife created this problem.**

Most of us have seen or met a prideful and haughty person somewhere, such as at work. Often times producers enjoy putting someone like that on “*reality tv*” in a group for entertainment value. Whether it's just someone in your life or on tv, it's still the same. They annoy everyone with their attitude until that person ends up hurt very badly, kicked out of a group, or fired. No one seems to care, and some rejoice by saying, “*Good, they deserved it.*”

**Proverbs 11:2** NKJV

**When pride comes, then comes shame; but with the humble is wisdom.**

Pride will embarrass you every time, and often times the prideful person can't even understand the shame or problems they're causing to themselves. The second part of this verse tells us that wisdom comes from humility. While a prideful person might be intelligent, they lack true wisdom. That's why pride makes you blind, it's intelligence without wisdom. Always remember, ***arrogance bucks up against wisdom.***

**Proverbs 16:5** NKJV

Everyone proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; though they join forces, none will go unpunished.

Abomination means extreme disgust and hatred; abhorrent. Pride causes a punishment to come, because...

**James 4:6** NKJV

... “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

**1 Peter 5:5** NKJV

... “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

Those are the Greek translations of the Hebrew scripture in

**Proverbs 3:34** NKJV

**Surely He scorns the scornful, But gives grace to the humble.**

The Bible says the same thing 3 times. That means we *really* need to listen and memorize the Hebrew or Greek version. We all want grace, and according to this scripture, **you are promised grace by just being humble.**

It's very important for us to self-monitor for pride and avoid it at all costs. We can easily do that by asking ourselves the question, **“What area am I knowledgeable in and how do I react when someone who doesn't know as much as I do is teaching/talking?”** Guys and football, do you know how to handle the ball better than the professional players because you played in high school? Women, how do you handle it when someone that doesn't have children tells you how to correct your kids when you *know* your kids are wrong? We all have our pride buttons somewhere. People that can't cook or bake critique our food. Someone that can't change batteries in a tv remote insulting a mechanic because he can't figure out what's wrong with the car. The important part is that we're growing. **We're not what we used to be, we're not there yet, but we are actively on our way. Decreasing in pride and increasing in humility is how we get more grace.**

The big lesson we can learn from Joseph this week is **no matter what plans God has for you in life, they can be delayed by pride or a haughty spirit**. Some people never even get to those plans, because they spend a lifetime delaying in Attitude City and refusing to come out. **Right behind pride and/or a haughty spirit is strife. Behind strife is sickness. Strife always carries some level of stress.** You can go home and read about stress from all the top hospitals in the world. They all have the same thing in common, a long list of illnesses, such as skin problems, multiple digestive issues, cardiovascular changes, endocrine gland (hormones) disfunction, negative effects in your brain and more. That being said...

Before we end this week, let's take a quick look at **strife** in the Old Testament and the New Testament so we know what to avoid, why to avoid it, and how to help other people.

**Proverbs 6:17-19** NKJV

<sup>16</sup> **These six things the Lord hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: <sup>17</sup> A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, <sup>18</sup> A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil, <sup>19</sup> A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren.**

No one wants to be an abomination to the Lord! **Strife is sowing discord among brethren**. The first thing listed here is a proud look, not even the *act* of pride, but just the look of pride. Right behind the look of pride is a path of destruction, because most people don't want to be beneath a prideful person, and it causes people to fight back. That's the strife that's standing behind pride and a haughty spirit. If the situation is bad enough, it makes people cheer on someone's fall and destruction. **We read 6 of these 7 things the Lord hates in the Joseph story**, they almost had *shedding innocent blood*. It's important to recognize that God didn't plan this path for Joseph. God resists this type of behavior. **It's important we fully understand God didn't ordain this plan for Joseph**, because our faith in Him rests on the stories in the Bible. If you believe God has captivity and prison for you, how well are you going to believe God only has good plans and peace for you

(Jeremiah 29:11)? God is love, and He has good plans for you! We just need to work *with* God not against His plan. If His plan isn't coming about in your life, or someone that you love, then taking a step back to check for pride or forgetting to give God all the glory.

**James 3:16** NKJV

<sup>16</sup> **For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.**

In the Joseph story, we read about the brothers' **envy** and **self-seeking** behavior. They had an *Attitude City* of their own. The next chapter is about Judah "*stepping away from his brothers*" and creating a wild story of his own, **confusion** and **evil works** are definitely a part of that man's life.

If you're curious about *why* and *how* it works this way, we read it above 3 times, "**God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.**" Envy and self-seeking are part of the **prideful attitude**. When God resists a person, they're open to evil works. Their life can end up looking like a playground for devils.

Have you ever watched some type of reality tv show with people that are prideful, envious, and self-seeking? I hope not! They say and do the craziest things! That behavior is **James 4:6** and **James 13:16** in action.

Is it important that we monitor our life for accidental pride, strife, envy and self-seeking behavior? Yes!  
Is it important that we monitor the behavior of our children and grandchildren, if we see it rear its ugly head in their life? Yes!

Should we be settling the example to give God all the glory to those around us? Yes!

Thank you for going through this study with me today. I hope everyone is blessed by this study and sees God in a more loving light than you have before. Next week, will be new information concerning what happened o Joseph at Potiphar's house, and eye-opening revelations from God. Please remember to bring a notebook.

### Homework

- Check yourself and your family, in a loving way of course, for pride, envy and self-seeking behavior
- Memorize **James 4:6**, **1 Peter 5:5**, or **Proverbs 3:34**  
    "*God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.*"
- Think about what you're knowledgeable about/good at and ask yourself how often you have given God glory for that knowledge or talent.
- Ask the Lord to show you how to be humbler concerning his gifts, so you can receive more grace!

### (Prayer Points

- Thank You Lord for Your revelation knowledge concerning The Joseph Story
- Reveal to us throughout this week if we have any areas of pride in our lives and how to change it
- Teach us how to be humbler, so that we can receive more and more of Your grace and wisdom
- Please give us all the ability to discern Attitude City on others so that we don't get sucked into their Cities of Strife, Gossip, Confusion, and other Dreadful Places.
- Lord, Thank You that Your Hand is upon us to protect us and help us move forward to our spiritual Promised Land

In Jesus name, Amen)