

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF JOSEPH

Key scripture:

- **Gen 37ff... The life of Joseph**

Introduction:

- Holiness is NOT:
 - Old-fashioned or outdated;
 - Uncool
 - For older people
 - Stiff and uptight as we grit our teeth to live by a set of rules, with do's and don'ts
- Holiness has benefits for this life
 - Relationships
 - Respect
 - Leadership
 - Less damage and baggage from unnecessary sin and harmful relationships etc
 - Ps 45:7... "You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy."
- **Personal integrity** is one of the fundamental building blocks for holiness in our lives

- Integrity = honesty, goodness, honour, incorruptibility, principle

1. Biblical Mentors

- a. One of the wonderful aspects of the Bible is that it doesn't just teach principles and concepts. It also presents the very real and honest lives of individuals, who lived the realities of real life;
- b. We can learn from the lives, failures and successes of such people

2. Real life dramas in the life of Joseph

a. **FAMILY**...there was family politics

- i. Jealousy
- ii. Intrigue
- iii. Betrayal
- iv. Lies and cover-ups

b. **"FASHION"**

- i. Joseph was Jacob's favourite, and therefore bought him clothes (instead of multi-coloured coat, think Levi jeans, Zoo York T-shirt, Puma sandals etc) that he didn't buy for his other sons. This led to the obvious jealousies and unhappiness

c. **FAVOUR**... the favour of God was clearly on the life of Joseph, no matter where he was or what he did

- i. Gen 39:2-6
- ii. Gen 39:21-23
- iii. Gen 41:12
- iv. Gen 41:37-41

3. PERSONAL INTEGRITY

- a. One of the key components of Joseph's life that attracted the favour of God was his personal integrity, which was evident in some of the following:

i. HONESTY

- 1. Joseph displayed honesty when and where no-one was watching – as a servant in the home of Potiphar [trustworthy]; in prison...
- 2. The truth is simple and transparent
 - a. I mean what I say – my word is good enough
 - b. My yes is yes, and my no is no
- 3. These ingredients seem to have been lost in the modern times

ii. Ability to live free from bitterness and unforgiveness

1. Joseph could easily have been bitter with his brothers or the cupbearer who forgot about him, and this could have lead to the desire for revenge, or a lot of wasted mental and emotional energy
2. II Cor 2:10-11 → it seems that one of the ways that the enemy gets a foothold into our lives is through unforgiveness (cf Matt 18:32-35)
3. When you look backwards you cannot move forward as effectively or easily – eg trying to walk with flippers on! ☺
4. “You cannot be the victim and the victor at the same time”

iii. Ability to relate with all people

1. Joseph was a Hebrew boy in an Egyptian prison – he therefore had to learn to live with people who would have been very different to himself
2. He seemed to earn respect and had the ability to lead wherever he was
3. Examples from the life of Nelson Mandela from the book *One Step Behind Mandela*.
4. Matt 7:12 “So in everything, **do to others** what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets”
5. Racism
 - a. We need to learn to deal with any bitterness/ unforgiveness from the past;
 - b. We need to get past pre-judgements, stereotypes and convenient generalizations of people who are different to ourselves

iv. Sexual purity – ability to resist temptation (Gen 39:6ff)

1. Joseph had the integrity (inner purity and determination) to withstand the advances of Potiphar’s wife (cf James 4:7)

2. Sexual sin
 - a. **D**istracts
 - b. **D**estroys
 - c. **D**amages
3. We are like fish living in water that is getting increasingly polluted with filth. If we keep on swimming without being discerning, we will eventually die from the pollution. We must not get used to the sexual abnormality that is all around us:
 - a. Pornography... is not harmless; it is harmful and can damage people's normal understanding of sexuality and sex.
 - b. Homosexuality... is on the increase, and we need to be aware of the schemes of the enemy to make it seem normal, acceptable or even desirable.
 - c. The use of Mixit/ Facebook for sexual perversions

4. Applications

a. Make choices...

- i. There are some things that God cannot do for us;
- ii. We sometimes need to make use of our own human (God-given) faculties to make internal decisions, and abide by them (eg self discipline)

b. Make a pledge for purity

- i. To remain unstained by the poison of the world, especially in the area of sexual purity

- C. **Expect supernatural promotion in your life, as per the life of Joseph** (see Gen 41:38ff)