

## LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF JOSEPH

### 1. The Dangers of Favoritism

*(Leader's Notes)*



Do you enjoy reading biographies? Many people do! Reading what others have accomplished, despite the difficulties they faced, can be inspiring and challenging. The Bible is full of biographies like this. One of these is the life of Joseph.

Joseph was born around 1915 years before Jesus, and in many ways foreshadowed him. Just as Joseph's brothers rejected him, so Jesus faced rejection from his brothers, and just as God used Joseph to save his family, so Jesus brought salvation to all mankind.

#### Scripture Reading: Genesis 37:1-11

- ✧ What mistake did Jacob make as a father? V2, 3  
*(Jacob loved Joseph more than his other sons. In other words, Joseph was his favorite.)*
  
- ✧ Why is favoritism wrong according to God's Word? See Acts 10:34, Ephesians 6:9, 1 Timothy 5:21, James 2:8-9  
*(Although these verses are not speaking about the relationship between parents and children, we can see that God himself does not show favoritism. He is our role model and so we shouldn't show favoritism either. In fact we are told it is sin in James 2.)*
  
- ✧ What effect did this favoritism have on Joseph's brothers? What other events took place that added to this situation? V5-11  
*(It caused the brothers to hate Joseph. This increased when their father made a special robe for Joseph and he shared his dreams with them.)*
  
- ✧ Not only did Jacob's favoritism affect his brothers, it probably wasn't good for Joseph either! What affect do you think it could have had on him, and why?  
*(This favoritism possibly contributed to him becoming a 'tell-tale', where he would report to his father what his brothers were doing. This made him become boastful and over-confident in himself.)*

Discuss

Many parents have made the same mistake by favoring one child in the family – it may have been the son, or the 'baby' of the family. As you were growing up did you feel your parents showed favoritism?  
What affect did this have on you or your brothers and sisters? Discuss.

Discuss

One day you may become a parent too, or perhaps you already are! We need to be careful not to fall into the same trap. Why do you think it is sometimes easier to love one child more than another? How can a parent avoid doing that? Discuss.

## **Conclusion**

When you look at the conflicts that took place in Joseph's family and the problems they faced, you may wonder how God could use them. And yet he did! As we go through this story we can see how God changed their lives and used them to accomplish his purposes. Perhaps when we look at our own family not all the memories are good, but be encouraged by the life of Joseph. Just as God worked in and through his life, he is at work in us too, and can use the things we have gone through to change us, and ultimately fulfil his plans for our lives.