

# FINDING PURPOSE IN UNCERTAINTY

## LESSON 1 | Falling From Favor | Genesis 37

### Meet Joseph.

The favorite son and dreamer whose brothers sold him into slavery. How does it feel when you've been broken and you're wondering how God will use the situation? Learn how Joseph handled life's uncertainties in this lesson.

***Jacob loved Joseph more than any of his other children because Joseph had been born to him in his old age. So one day Jacob had a special gift made for Joseph — a beautiful robe. But his brothers hated Joseph because their father loved him more than the rest of them. They couldn't say a kind word to him. GENESIS 37:3-4***

Welcome to our first week of "Finding Purpose in Uncertainty." In Genesis, we meet the three patriarchs of the faith: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Joseph, the eleventh son and firstborn of Jacob's beloved wife Rachel, is introduced in Genesis 37. He was born in Joseph's old age and was more loved than all of Joseph's other sons. Though he is not considered a patriarch, Joseph's obedience to God resulted in the saving of his entire family.

Joseph's name means "May he [God] add." (Genesis 30:24) His father Jacob's name literally means "deceiver." Deception is a continual issue in the family. Jacob has a second name as well, Israel, which means "God strives." We see glimpses of the meaning of both names in the story. Chuck Swindoll wrote an intriguing paragraph on Joseph that says,

"I have gone into all of this background so you will begin to see and understand the deception, the intrigue, the anger, the rebellion, the rivalry and out-of-control jealousy that were rampant within the ranks of Jacob's boys — all characteristics that have been displayed by their father. This was the home into which young Joseph was born, and it was a pretty pathetic environment in which to raise a boy." (Joseph: A Man of Integrity and Forgiveness, 9)

Genesis 37 begins in Canaan, the land the Lord had promised Israel.

- 1 | What new insight did you learn from Pastor Dale's sermon on Genesis 37?
- 2 | **Read Genesis 37.** We meet Joseph at the beginning of this chapter. How old is he and what is his job?
- 3 | **Read Genesis 29:16-31.** What do you learn about Jacob's wives?
- 4 | **Read Genesis 30:22-24.** How does this impact Joseph's story?
- 5 | Joseph's father, Jacob, gave him a special gift at the beginning of chapter 37. What is the gift and why did he give it to him?
- 6 | Summarize Joseph's dreams.
- 7 | List several reasons why Joseph's brothers hated him.
- 8 | Do you feel Joseph showed wisdom in revealing his dreams to his brothers? Why or why not?



9 | What do we learn in the following verses about wise behavior?

- Proverbs 13:10
- Galatians 5:26

10 | What did the Brothers do when Joseph came to them (vv. 18, 23-24)?

11 | Two brothers attempted to save Joseph from death (vv. 21-22 and 26-27). Who were they? What were their plans?

12 | What do you think compelled the brothers to sell Joseph to the Midianites?

13 | Describe the brothers' behavior toward their father after they sold Joseph.

14 | The brothers' treatment of Joseph could be described as bullying. Have you had the experience of being bullied by someone you wouldn't expect? Explain.

15 | When you have been bullied or are in a difficult situation, how do you keep your mind on Christ?



- 16 | Joseph has long been seen as a parallel to Christ. As you look back over chapter 37, what parallels do you see between the two? For example,
- Genesis 37:3 and Matthew 3:17
  - Genesis 37:4, 19-20 and John 1:11; 7:5
  - Matthew 37:28 and Matthew 26:15
  - Can you find others?
- 17 | **Read Genesis 38:1-30**, “Judah and Tamar.”
- In this strange chapter, we see further evidence of dysfunction in Joseph’s family. Judah, Joseph’s brother, disobeys God’s instructions, and Tamar shows a strong determination to be part of Judah’s family.*
- 18 | **Read Deuteronomy 25:5-10** on brother-in-law marriages. Why would this law be important for widows in ancient Israel?
- 19 | What is the duty of Judah’s sons, and even Judah himself, to Tamar? Why is it wrong for Judah to refuse his son’s marriage to Tamar?
- 20 | In which verse do you find Judah’s repentance? What does he say?
- 21 | How can you exercise wisdom and humility in a current situation you are facing?
- 22 | Joseph’s early life might be characterized as someone who had dreams but lacked a sense of purpose. How are your dreams working out for you? Can you see how God has worked in your life in unexpected ways for His glory and your good?

