



A LIFE OF MANY COLORS



1

THE INTERWOVEN STORY OF JOSEPH & GOD

YES, NO & MAYBE

1 Most of the people in this room were more spoiled than I was as a child.

2 One of my siblings was given more things from our parents than me.

3 Kids should get a job, and get out of the house as soon as possible.

4 God sometimes leads you into bad situations so that you'll experience pain.

5 God wants you to share His visions, even if it will cause divisions in your family.

DIG DEEPER:

READ: Genesis 37:2-4 (NIV)

2 *This is the account of Jacob's family line. Joseph, a young man of **seventeen**, was tending the flocks with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives, and he brought their father a **bad report about them**.*

3 *Now Israel **loved Joseph more** than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an **ornate robe** for him. 4 When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.*

○ (Vs. 2) **Seventeen** - In these days, 17 was not seen as a age of childhood. It would be viewed similarly to a 30-to-40-something living in his parents' basement and playing video games today. He was being raised in a coddling environment that created arrested development of his mind and character.

◇ He did not tend the large flocks far away with his legitimate brothers, instead he was kept close to home with the smaller flock that was tended by the sons of Jacob's concubines, Bilhah & Zilpah.

○ (Vs. 2) **A bad report** - The narrator does not tell us whether the report was true or false, although the words used (*dibbatam ra'ah*) elsewhere refers to gossip, plotting, and misinformation (Prov. 10:18; Ps. 31:13; Num. 14:37).

Ø Why do you think God wants us to know that the "hero" of our story started out as an immature, pampered gossiping manipulator? Why would that be important for us to know individually?

○ (Vs. 3) **Ornate robe** - It is called "an outer garment of ends," which extends, like a gown, to the hands and the ankles. The Septuagint renders it "a coat of many colors." The common tunic extended only to the knees, and was without arms. Already this preference, which seemed to indicate that Jacob intended to give him the right of the first-born, aroused the hatred of his brethren.

Ø Why didn't God send Jacob a vision instructing him that his favoritism was ripping the children of Israel apart? Why is God often silent in these matters?



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READ: Genesis 37:5-11 (NIV)

○ (Vs. 5-11) **Joseph's dreams** - First of sheaves of grain bowing down to his, and then sun, moon, and stars bowing down to him. Whether done by design or naivete, the effect remains the same. Introducing this claim to dominance into an already alienated family will only raise the tension still further. **And they hated him all the more.**

Ø Why do you think God gave Joseph these dreams, knowing that it would widen the rift between Joseph and his brothers?

READ: Genesis 37:12-36 (NIV)

○ (Vs. 15-17) **A man found him** - In Jewish tradition, from the Rabbins and one of the Targums tell us that this man, who directed Joseph in the field, was the angel Gabriel in the form of a man.

Ø This would mean that God wanted Joseph to find his brothers who would ultimately sell him into slavery. Do you agree with this view of God?

○ (Vs. 28) **The price** - Twenty pieces of silver, cf. Leviticus 27:5. It was the current slave price in the early second millennium. By Moses' day, this remains the price for a 15-25 year old, with 30 pieces being the price of an adult. (Parallel: Judas was paid 30 pieces to sell Jesus into bondage.)

○ (Vs. 31-33) **The returned coat** - Jacob had deceived his father Isaac by putting around his neck and hands the skin of a kid; he is himself now deceived by Joseph's coat dipped in the blood of a kid.

Ø People say, "The sins of your past come back to haunt you." Do you think that's true?

Ø Does God cause us to be thrown into the "pits" of life? Why/why not?

Ø In your opinion, did God **guide** the scenes of this story, **react** to the scenes, or remain **"hands off"** with a family who doesn't seem to call on Him at all?

MY PRAYERS THIS WEEK:

1. How are my family dynamics arresting my spiritual development?
2. What have been the "pits" of my life, and who put me there?
3. What new aspect of God's character do I understand better this week?

