

09 THE FAVORITE SON

KEY TEXT: GENESIS 37:3-8,18-28

CENTRAL truth

People may play favorites, but God doesn't. Not learning from the parental favoritism he experienced, Jacob made that same sin a reality within his own family. The unfair doting he'd shown to his eleventh son, Joseph, made ten of his other sons jealous. Favoritism and jealousy pollute the human heart and do not reflect the character of God.

key question

In what way do we see jealousy grow within this passage? What makes jealousy so dangerous

As Joseph's brothers saw the way their father loved Joseph more than them, seeds of jealousy grew in their hearts. Their jealousy gripped them so much that they plotted to sell Joseph into slavery. When jealousy is not repented of, it leads to pain and heartbreak. It is a rejection of God's provision and declares that we have a better pulse on our needs and desires than He does.

keep in mind

- Joseph's family was plagued by the dysfunction of favoritism and jealousy. As you teach, keep in mind that the students you are serving come from various backgrounds and family situations. Lean into the **Be Vulnerable** note that invites you to reflect on your own story as an encouragement to them.
- Some students may be familiar with biblical references regarding God's jealousy for His people. As you discuss the dangers of jealousy in today's Scripture, this may present a conflict for them. Point out that God's jealousy is rooted in His love and covenantal commitment to His people, whereas Joseph's brothers' jealousy was rooted in their envy and resentment. It will be helpful for those you lead to stress the differences here.

application

Sin can make us blind to the needs of others. What needs of your friends or family have you been ignoring?

the win

FOR THE STUDENT: Lead students to understand that God does not show favoritism. He invites us all into His eternal family through Jesus—regardless of the dynamics at play in our families.

FOR THE LEADER: Take the opportunity to share your own stories of experiencing jealousy or favoritism, and use these stories to remind students of God's character and faithfulness.

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