

# *Sermon Questions for Life Groups*

## **A Family at War – Genesis 37**

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**Sunday, November 15, 2015**

*These questions are generated by several authors for Life Group discussions  
or family or personal devotions*

1. What do you learn about fatherhood from the attitudes and actions of Jacob?
2. How have you felt when you were favoured (Joseph) or not favoured (the 10 brothers)?
3. What three things specially aroused the envy and hatred of Joseph's brothers against him? To what other sins did their envy lead them? (Consider James 3:16)
4. Was Joseph unwise in telling the first dream (knowing how irritating it was to his brothers) and then even more wrong sharing his second dream? What do we know about Joseph to help us understand his motivation?
5. Do you think that Joseph's brothers took his dreams seriously? What indication is there in the story that shows they did? And what about Jacob? What do you think he thought about the dreams? How would his past experience of being given dreams affect how he viewed Joseph's dreams?
6. How do you deal with the sense of unworthiness/rejection? Does your theology help you in this kind of a situation?
7. Joseph's meeting with a stranger is given considerable prominence in the story. Why? What if this "chance encounter" had never happened? What "chance encounters" or experiences have you had that have changed your course in life? What other acts of providence do you see in this story?
8. Joseph was taken down to Egypt, which allowed him to escape death and to fulfill God's will (Genesis 39:1). We can also see this in the story of Jesus (Matthew [2:13](#)). What other similarities can you see between the stories of Jesus and Joseph? Are there any other biblical stories that have a similar outcome?

9. This story teaches us that our life is about glorifying God and that He is sovereign, no matter what is happening in our lives. Do you find this knowledge comforting or does it make you nervous? Explain. Read Jeremiah 29:11. Discuss how you can reconcile the above teaching with this and other verses.
10. Pastor John reminded us that one of the key lessons from this chapter is the unchanging providence and sovereignty of God, and how He is always actively working in our lives even when we are not aware. We learned that encounters can be specially ordained by God. A very famous poem that speaks to the unending sovereignty of God in our lives is called "Footprints in the Sand" by Mary Stevenson. Please read this:

One night I dreamed a dream.  
As I was walking along the beach with my Lord.  
Across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life.  
For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand,  
One belonging to me and one to my Lord.

After the last scene of my life flashed before me,  
I looked back at the footprints in the sand.  
I noticed that at many times along the path of my life,  
especially at the very lowest and saddest times,  
there was only one set of footprints.

This really troubled me, so I asked the Lord about it.  
"Lord, you said once I decided to follow you,  
You'd walk with me all the way.  
But I noticed that during the saddest and most troublesome times of my life,  
there was only one set of footprints.  
I don't understand why, when I needed You the most, You would leave me."

He whispered, "My precious child, I love you and will never leave you  
Never, ever, during your trials and testings.  
When you saw only one set of footprints,  
It was then that I carried you."

Share with one another times when you saw and experienced the sovereignty of God in your life.

11. Review these verses to generate a definition of "God's sovereignty":
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|------------------|-----------------------|
| a. Psalms 115:3  | e. II Chronicles 20:6 |
| b. Proverbs 16:9 | f. Isaiah 40:23       |
| c. Romans 8:28   | g. Isaiah 43:13       |
| d. Genesis 50:20 |                       |
12. When reflecting on Pastor John's application regarding our obedience, and that obedience does not necessarily guarantee 'success' or comfort for our lives, share a time when obedience to God had cost you something but how did things eventually turn out in the long wrong?