



Shepherd's Path

A Shepherd's Personal Devotions

Pass The Promise Series, Lesson 21

Lesson Title: Joseph and His Brothers

Take Home Point: Jealousy "jails us" but God can free us.

Warm-Up:

"It's not fair!" How often I heard that from my children as they were growing up! From their perspective, someone had an advantage my child didn't want them to have, or that my child wanted, too. It was especially heightened when the other person was their sibling. Oh, boy, did I hear it then! The cake had to be cut EXACTLY evenly, or one just had to get on the swing, usually when a brother or sister was there first. And it's not limited to families or children. Do you ever hear the same phrase at work? You get the picture. It's a story as old as Cain and Abel and as new as today's workplace. "It's not fair!"

Read: Genesis 37

Observation (What happened?):

Why were Joseph's brothers jealous of him?

What were his brothers willing to do because of their intense jealousy?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

Do you think Joseph's brothers were justified in their jealousy?

What might Jacob have done to reduce the animosity of Joseph's brothers? What might Joseph have done? What about his brothers?

Insight:

When we say (or think!), "It's not fair!" in jealousy or envy, what is really happening? We are comparing our circumstances to someone else's without knowing their whole situation. We also are putting ourselves in the place of deciding what another person deserves, or what we think we deserve in relation to them. And we are rejecting God's wisdom and plan for us and for that other person. When you think about it, what makes us think we really have an understanding of what is truly fair or not for someone else? Isn't it better to let God be the one who decides? In fact, knowing how universal and profound this problem is, Jesus told a parable about it from a spiritual perspective in Matthew 20:1-13. Later in Scripture, the apostle James denounces envious behavior in James 3:13-16. To live in jealousy or envy is really more serious than we think.

Application (What does it mean to me?):

How do you deal with feelings of jealousy or envy when they arise? What do your children or others around you see in how you respond to someone you think has an advantage in life?

Pray for the children in your small group to understand that jealousy can control our attitudes and actions towards other people, but with God's help they can overcome it.