thrive
A HOPE WOMEN'S GATHERING

Persevering Faith: Lessons from the Life of Joseph

Lesson 1: Favored
Teacher: Jennifer Evans
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INTRODUCTION:

READING: Genesis 37:2-11

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[a] 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.

5 Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. **6** He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had: **7** We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it."

8 His brothers said to him, "Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?" And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said.

9 Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. "Listen," he said, "I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me."

10 When he told his father as well as his brothers,his father rebuked him and said, "What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?" **11** His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

TABLE STUDY:

1. What is your "first impression" of Joseph?
2. In what ways do you think Joseph was arrogant? In what ways do you think he showed discernment?
3. What are some ways that Jacob showed favoritism to Joseph?
4. Summarize the dreams Joseph had that he shared with his brothers.

TEACHING NOTES:

BIG QUESTIONS FROM THE STORY OF JOSEPH:

What can I learn about God in the story of Joseph?

Do I really believe that God is sovereign over ALL things, even the bad things that happen in my life and in the world?

How do I develop a persevering faith like Joseph? How do I learn to trust God when he is silent and I don't see him working in my life?

TABLE DISCUSSION:

1. Can you relate to the experiences of Joseph or his brothers in regard to favoritism in a family? How can favoritism fracture family relationships?

2. When you are experiencing difficult circumstances, do you have a hard time trusting God's intentions, or wondering if he has forgotten about you?

3. Read Isaiah 40:25-31 together. What encouragement can be found in these verses for someone going through difficult times? What promises does God give us?

4. In the lesson we talked about how "God was doing something, even though Joseph was completely unaware." Can you share a similar experience from your life?

UNISON READING: Genesis 50:20

"You planned something bad for me, but God produced something good from it."