

Jacob: Favoritism & Envy

Week 12 Study Questions

[Genesis 37:1-36](#)

We see two threads being woven into the story of Jacob's son, Joseph, and his brothers: the escalation of sin and the providence of God. We can trust God in spite of both the sin in us and around us and of the resulting consequences.

Application

1. The sin in Jacob's life has negative consequences on his family. His sons pick up his deceptive ways and put them into practice. How have you experienced consequences due to someone else's sin? How have you seen your sin affect those around you?
2. James 1:14-15 reads, "Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death." It is clear that unaddressed sin escalates. How do you see this process play out in the life of Jacob? How have you seen this process play out in your life, where one sin escalates leading to more sin and more consequences?
3. We learn from Jacob and his sons that harboring sin in our hearts will reveal itself in destructive ways. Is there sin fostering in your heart that needs to be confessed and repented of (jealousy, envy, hate, lust, anger, selfishness, etc.)? Who are you willing to confess it to?
4. What is a particular situation, resulting from sin, that you need to stop trying to fix but instead put your trust and faith in God's providence? What is a practical step of belief that in his providence, he is redeeming and rescuing even in the sins of others?
5. Robby said, "God may be silent, but he's not still." God's providence reminds us that he is always at work. In what area of your life or in a loved one's life does he seem silent to you? In moments when it appears that sin has been victorious, how have you trusted that God is at work?

Key Points

- There is always a cost to sin. It affects others whether we acknowledge it or not. Sin is not only destructive to us but undervalues others, not giving them the value they deserve as children made in the image of God.
- Unaddressed sin is dangerous, waiting for any opportunity for expression. Sin left alone, unconfessed and unrepented, *will* grow and *will* have consequences. A pattern of sin generates more and additional sin.
- “Meanwhile . . .” (Genesis 37:36) the story was just getting started. The hope in all of our stories is that it’s not over yet; we are unfinished. And God’s providence—his governing will and protective care—is greater than all of the sin in every situation. We can have confidence in and trust that God is a personal God who is involved in every detail of our everyday lives.
- God is not removed from us, he is invested in us.
- If we are to defeat sin, it is before it has a chance to act—being in community, sensitive to our conscience and the Holy Spirit, not defensive, and willing to confess and repent. We have the power to overcome sin because of the death of Christ and his resurrection.
- Confession helps to stop the cycle of ignoring our sin.
- God may seem silent, but we can be confident that he is moving the pieces of our lives into place to accomplish his will in a way that will most glorify him.

Scripture References

[James 1:14-15](#)