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Ephesians 6:1-4:

1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

2 "Honor your father and mother" - which is the first commandment with a promise -

3 "so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."

4 Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

This passage teaches that children should obey their parents in the Lord, as it is the right thing to do. It emphasizes the importance of honoring and respecting parents, which comes with a promise of blessings and longevity. On the other hand, it instructs fathers to avoid provoking their children but rather to raise them with the training and instruction of the Lord, in a gentle and respectful manner.

James 1:2-4:

2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds,

3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.

4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

This passage reminds us to consider it pure joy when we encounter various trials and difficulties because through them, our faith is tested and produces perseverance. It encourages us to allow perseverance to have its full effect so that we may become mature and complete, lacking nothing.

These scriptures teach us about the importance of establishing harmonious relationships within the family and relying on God's strength and guidance when facing challenges and adversity. They provide guidance and encouragement, enabling us to experience peace and harmony within our families and find strength and hope in difficult times.

Dear Lord,

We pray to you, asking for your help in resolving the discord within our family and the divisions among siblings. We are deeply troubled by jealousy and discontent caused by money and special favoritism, which have driven us apart and hindered our ability to connect with one another.

Lord, please teach us to foster an attitude of fairness and equality in our family relationships. Help us understand that each member is unique and valuable, and not to show favoritism or preference towards anyone, so as not to stir up jealousy and disharmony.

We ask you to remind us to share our dreams and goals with caution while respecting the dreams of others. May we learn to listen to others' voices with respect and inclusiveness, avoiding unnecessary friction and conflicts.

Lord, we also reflect on the betrayals and disruptions among siblings. Please help us establish a harmonious relationship within our family, nurturing an atmosphere of trust, support, and love, while avoiding actions that harm or betray others.

Most importantly, we ask for your guidance and trust in your guidance and plans. Despite the challenges and adversities we may face, lead us towards a better path. Grant us wisdom and strength to support one another, walk with you in our family, find ways of reconciliation, and rebuild our relationships.

Lord, we pray that your love and mercy fill our family, restoring harmony and peace to our lives. We believe in your power and wonderful works.

In the name of our Lord Jesus, we pray, Amen.

## Genesis chapter 37

Genesis chapter 37 tells the story of Joseph, the son of Jacob and Rachel. The chapter begins by introducing Joseph as a seventeen-year-old who is shepherding with his brothers. Joseph is favored by his father, which causes jealousy among his brothers.

Joseph has dreams in which he sees himself ruling over his brothers, and he excitedly shares these dreams with his family. His brothers become even more jealous and resentful because of these dreams and their father's special affection for Joseph.

One day, when Joseph is sent by his father to check on his brothers who are grazing the flock, they see him approaching from a distance. Fueled by their envy, they conspire to kill him.

However, Reuben, the oldest brother, suggests throwing him into a pit instead, intending to rescue him later and return him to their father.

When Joseph arrives, his brothers seize him, strip him of his colorful robe (a symbol of his favored status), and throw him into a pit. While they are eating a meal nearby, a caravan of Ishmaelites passes by, and Judah proposes selling Joseph to them as a slave. The brothers agree, and Joseph is sold for twenty pieces of silver.

Unaware of what has transpired, Jacob is devastated when his sons bring Joseph's torn and bloodstained robe, leading him to believe that Joseph has been killed by a wild animal. He mourns deeply for his lost son.

Meanwhile, Joseph is taken to Egypt by the Ishmaelites and sold to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh. The chapter concludes with a note on Joseph's character, stating that even in his servitude, the Lord is with him, and he prospers in all his endeavors.

Here are some important verses from Genesis chapter 37:

Genesis 37:3: "Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. Also, he made him a tunic of many colors." (This verse sets up the foundation for Joseph's favored status and the source of his brothers' jealousy.)

Genesis 37:5-8: "Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more. So he said to them, 'Please hear this dream which I have dreamed: There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf.' And his brothers said to him, 'Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?' So, they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words." (These verses depict Joseph's dreams and the escalating jealousy and animosity among his brothers.)

Genesis 37:18-20: "Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him. Then they said to one another, 'Look, this dreamer is coming! Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, "Some wild beast has devoured him." We shall see what will become of his dreams!'" (These verses reveal the extent of the brothers' envy and their plot to kill Joseph.)

Genesis 37:23-24: "So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the tunic of many colors that was on him. Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit was empty; there was no water in it." (These verses describe the actual act of Joseph being thrown into the pit by his brothers.)

Genesis 37:28: "Then Midianite traders passed by; so, the brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt." (This verse marks the moment when Joseph is sold into slavery, setting the course for his journey to Egypt.)

These selected verses capture the key events and dynamics in Genesis chapter 37, highlighting Joseph's favored status, his dreams, the jealousy and hatred of his brothers, and the consequential actions that lead to his eventual sale into slavery.

### Reflections on Genesis chapter 37

After studying Genesis chapter 37, several reflections can be drawn from the events and themes presented in the passage.

**The destructive power of jealousy and favoritism:** The chapter emphasizes the negative consequences of Jacob's favoritism towards Joseph. The envy and resentment it generates among Joseph's brothers ultimately lead to a plot to kill him. This serves as a reminder of the destructive nature of jealousy and the importance of treating all individuals fairly and equally.

**The significance of dreams:** Joseph's dreams play a prominent role in this chapter. While his intentions may have been innocent, sharing these dreams exacerbates his brothers' jealousy and fuels their animosity towards him. It is a reminder to exercise wisdom and discernment when sharing personal aspirations and visions, considering the potential impact on others.

**The consequences of actions:** The actions of Joseph's brothers have far-reaching consequences. Their deceit, betrayal, and willingness to sell their own brother into slavery not only impact Joseph's life but also deeply affect their father, Jacob, who grieves the loss of his beloved son. It serves as a reminder that our choices and actions can have significant and lasting effects on ourselves and those around us.

**God's presence and providence:** Despite the hardships Joseph faces, the chapter highlights that the Lord remains with him. Even in the midst of betrayal and being sold into slavery, God blesses Joseph and enables him to prosper. This serves as a reminder that God's presence and guidance can be with us even in the most challenging circumstances.

**The unfolding of God's plan:** Although it may not be evident at this point in the story, the events in Genesis 37 set the stage for God's greater plan. Joseph's journey to Egypt will eventually lead to his rise to power and the salvation of his family during a time of famine. It reminds us that even in moments of adversity and uncertainty, God is working out His plans for our lives, often in ways we cannot fully comprehend.

Overall, Genesis chapter 37 serves as a cautionary tale about the destructive power of jealousy and favoritism, the consequences of our actions, and the assurance of God's presence and providence. It encourages us to reflect on our own attitudes and actions, seek fairness and equality in our relationships, and trust in God's greater plan, even in the midst of difficult circumstances.