**SLESSONS FROM THE STORY OF JOSEPH**

**By Pastor Saustin Mfune**

**Scripture Reading:**

*Genesis 37:2-3*

*2 “This is the account of Jacob and his family. When Joseph was seventeen years old, he often tended his father's flocks. He worked for his half-brothers, the sons of his father's wives Bilhah and Zilpah. But Joseph reported to his father some of the bad things his brothers were doing.*

*3 Jacob loved Joseph more than any of his other children because Joseph had been born to him in his old age. So one day Jacob had a special gift made for Joseph—a beautiful robe.” (New Living Translation).*

**Short History of Joseph**

* Jacob had 12 Children.
* Joseph was child number 11.
* Joseph was born while Jacob was advanced in years and because of this, Jacob loved Joseph very much, much more than his other sons.

**What Do We Know About Joseph?**

* He tended his father's flocks. Joseph and his brothers were shepherds. Probably the flocks they tended were sheep and cattle.
* He worked for his half-brothers. Probably they were paying him. While he tended his father's flocks, he also worked for his half-brothers.
* He was the youngest in the group.
* He reported the bad things his brothers were doing.

**Joseph's Qualities**

* He was a hard worker. He did not just sit and expect to be spoon-fed. He was not lazy
* He refused to bow down to peer pressure. The verse tells us that Joseph's brothers were doing bad things and Joseph refused to join them in doing the bad things.
* It would have been easy for Joseph to join his brothers because his parents were not around. But Joseph knew that even though his parents were not around to see the bad things his brothers were doing, angels were watching what was being done.
* Joseph was a principled young man. He knew He was answerable to Jesus and not to his brothers.

**What About You?**

* Have you found yourself in a situation where your friends were teasing somebody and instead of standing for the right, you found yourself joining your friends so that they don't call you a sissy?
* What about in church? Have you found yourself texting messages to your friends so that you are part of the gang and yet your conscience is telling you to listen to what is going on in the church?
* Have you found yourself not wanting to help with house chores because you are busy watching TV or playing Computer games?
* Have you found yourself spending time on your phone and not wanting to do your homework?
* Have you found yourself spending time on Facebook and not on Faith Book – your Bible?

**How Can You Be Like Joseph?**

* Learn to choose good friends.
* Work with your parents to make a daily timetable as to when you can watch TV, play computer games, do your house chores and your homework. This will help you become a good steward.
* If you don't have a Bible, ask your parents to buy you one and begin to read it.
* Like Joseph, you can take on little jobs during your school holidays and earn some pocket money, but be sure you learn to pay tithe, give mission offering, and save some too.
* Since almost everything is digital these days, ask your parents to add on the money you have saved to buy Bible and spiritual-based computer games so that as you play, you are also learning spiritual things.

**A Lesson for Parents and Teachers**

3 *“Jacob loved Joseph more than any of his other children because Joseph had been*

*born to him in his old age. So one day Jacob had a special gift made for Joseph—a beautiful robe.” (New Living Translation).*

**Filling the Love Cup**

What was one important factor that impacted Joseph’s overall development? The answer lies in verse 3 we have read above. It is because he was ***loved.***

**Love** is one of the basic human needs of children, and if not met, can affect their growth and development. Saying and showing you love your children can overcome almost any parenting "mistakes" you might make.

In fact, research tells us that when children are genuinely loved:

* They develop strong self-esteem.
* They develop resilience.
* They are likely to have fewer behavioral problems.
* They develop a strong work ethics.
* They are likely to reciprocate love to their parents.
* They show love to others.

**There are many ways parents and teachers can show love and affection to their children.**

* When children are younger, parents need to show this affection through physical demonstration, such as hugging, cuddling and holding the children.
* Family games are a great way to show love and affection.
* In toddler age, holding your child’s hands while they walk is a good way to show affection. It has the added benefit of giving them a feeling of security.
* Remembering and celebrating important moments in their lives, expressing their love and kissing them good night before bed play an important role in children’s lives to know that they are important and are valued.
* For teachers, talking with children and taking an interest in them in your Sabbath School class is another way to show love.
* Paying attention to children, helping them to complete their crafts, praying with them and comforting them in times of difficulty show children that you care and love them.

**Conclusion:**

Children and parents:-

The success which Joseph realized in the future did not start when he was 25 or 30 years old. His success started when he was just a teenager. Parents and children work as a team to build each other’s success.

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After the sermon, the speaker can invite 2 to 4 children and teens to go on stage to give a brief testimony of what their parents and Sabbath School teachers have done that impacted their choice for Jesus based on the questions provided below. Give one question to each child ahead of time so that they can prepare. Each child will share for 2-3 minutes each.

**Questions for Children’s Testimonies:**

1. What one thing can you remember that your parents did that has influenced

 you to follow Jesus?

2. Is there a Sabbath School teacher you remember who has helped you make

 good choices not to get involved in doing bad things?

3. What children’s programs besides Pathfinders have you attended that have

 helped you to be a better follower of Jesus like Joseph?

4. What did you learn from your Sabbath School experience that teaches you

 how to love others?