

Broken

5 B's--part 1

January 5, 2014

DAY 1: Commitment to Self

1. Life is hard. When it is hard, our minds go in the wrong direction, almost immediately. (1) "Where is God? (2) Why would He allow me to go through *this*? (3) Maybe I did something wrong. If I repent then He'll bless me." None of these questions push me in the right direction!

Life will rarely be as good as we want it to be, and it will inevitably become painfully difficult for everyone before it's over. Why? (1) We're moving in the opposite direction from which we should be headed! (2) We therefore, bring a lot of grief upon ourselves. (3) The only way God can get us moving in the right direction is for us to experience pain.

How *am* I to think about my life? There is a story that God wants to tell through my life that is bigger than any of my smaller stories. But I'll never see the big story, much less value God's story in my life until I am **broken** of my **attachment** to my smaller stories.

2. Let's look at what our attachment to ourselves and our own story looks like in Joseph.

Genesis 37:1 Jacob dwelt in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan. ² This is the history of the family of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock with his brothers; he was a lad with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought an ill report of them to their father.

3. This is the introduction to Joseph, the youngest of eleven sons. Why do you think this last phrase is included in the introduction to his character?

³ *Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a long robe with sleeves.*

4. What effect would this kind of treatment reinforce in a teenager?

5. All of us begin our lives with our "self" at the center of our existence. Nothing seems more important than pleasing ourselves. We really don't need any more "help" to reinforce a bottom-line commitment to ourselves.

6. What strikes you about this introduction to Joseph? How do you see a bottom-line commitment to self in you?

7. Prayer: Ask God to surface this in your life.

DAY 2: "Self" - the Internal Driver

1. The FIRST chapter of God's story in your life is BROKENNESS, broken to making our lesser dreams the greatest dreams and then valuing the greatest dream of knowing God as an "add-on." You will never understand what God is doing in your life, especially when it gets painful without understanding this first chapter!

2. Yesterday we looked at Joseph's commitment to self. Today we see it in his brothers.

Genesis 37:4 But when Joseph's brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him.

3. Let's unpack this verse from the end back to the beginning.

a. How did the brothers relate to Joseph?

b. What "feeling" inside the brothers was driving their "drama?"

c. What would *they* have said drove their hatred?

d. That's how we think, isn't it? That's how we think because we put ourselves at the center of our universe. When someone important to us does something that "steps on" our self, we will blame that person, and justify our own behavior.

4. What strikes you personally about this story? Does this story parallel your story? Is there someone you blame? Is there a behavior you justify?

5. The real culprit is not their father nor Joseph. It's themselves. What would they need to understand in order to accept this reality?

6. What have you had to understand in order to do get yourself on the right side of this story?

DAY 3: "Self" on Display

1. Our commitment to self can be so strong that it blinds us to our destructive behavior, especially when it doesn't "seem" destructive. Let's look back at Joseph, and how he related to his brothers and father.

Genesis 37:5 Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they only hated him the more. ⁶ He said to them, "Hear this dream which I have dreamed: ⁷ behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf arose and stood upright; and behold, your sheaves gathered round it, and bowed down to my sheaf." ⁸ His brothers said to him, "Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to have dominion over us?" So they hated him yet more for his dreams and for his words.

2. That Joseph actually did have this dream is undeniable as the story will point out later. What's amazing is that he felt *driven* to share it, even knowing his brothers already hated him!!!

a. What reasons can you imagine as to why Joseph would share this particular dream?

b. What did he hope would happen?

c. How did he imagine he'd feel after sharing? Place a check next to the ones you think apply:

Superior?

Important?

Justified?

Payback?

Other? _____

3. What was the effect on his brothers?

4. Why do you think they hated him all the more?

5. How do you respond when someone puts themselves forward? Takes the spotlight? Draws attention to themselves?

6. How does your response change when it's at your "expense?"

DAY 4: When Self Starts to Die!

1. We won't see our commitment to self until (1) We experience pain, or (2) We begin to see the painful effects of our "self" on others. The brothers take matters into their own hands.

Genesis 37:20 "Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; then we shall say that a wild beast has devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams."

Genesis 37:23 So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the long robe with sleeves that he wore; ²⁴ and they took him and cast him into a pit. The pit was empty, there was no water in it.

2. What do you think was going on in Joseph's mind?

3. Would he have said, "Wow, never say *this* coming?!" Why or why not?

4. When do you think he began to put the pieces together--his own arrogance, bragging, superiority, shining the light on himself at his brothers' expense, AND the effects of these things on his brothers?

Genesis 37:25 Then they sat down to eat; and looking up they saw a caravan of Ish'maelites coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing gum, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. ²⁶ Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we slay our brother and conceal his blood? ²⁷ Come, let us sell him to the Ish'maelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers heeded him.

5. Self is alive in Judah and his brothers. What perverse ways does "self" show itself in them?

Genesis 37:28 Then Mid'ianite traders passed by; and they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ish'maelites for twenty shekels of silver; and they took Joseph to Egypt.

6. Joseph's life is spared but he is about to become a slave in a foreign land, away, without father, family, friends, farm, and future. If you had been Joseph, what thoughts would have struck you?

DAY 5: Self Finally Dies! The Life of God Begins In Us!

1. The story jumps to Egypt...

Genesis 37:26 Meanwhile the Mid'ianites had sold him in Egypt to Pot'i-phar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard.

2. Joseph becomes a household slave in Egypt, to an army officer. Teenagers would say, "My life is *over!*" What would you have said?

3. Moses inserts a story about Judah (Genesis 38). He then picks up Joseph's story at the beginning of Genesis 39.

Genesis 39:1 Now Joseph was taken down to Egypt, and Pot'i-phar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ish'maelites who had brought him down there. ² The LORD was with Joseph, and he became a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian, ³ and his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD caused all that he did to prosper in his hands.

4. This is a stunning passage. At this point in the story we don't know anything about what happened inside Joseph. All we know is that somehow, somehow, between his utter "fail" with his childhood, brothers, and "self," and the brothers' treachery, Joseph is NOT a victim of his own foolishness nor his circumstances!

5. What do you think happened to Joseph between being sold out by his brothers and when we pick him up in Potiphar's household?

a. What did he realize about himself?

b. What did he realize about God?

c. What did he realize about his brothers?

6. Nothing changes until we change. We don't change until our perspective changes.

7. Joseph's life begins to finally move in the right direction through God's leading us to **brokenness**!!! When "self" is finally broken, the life of God in us can start to do God's amazing work!