

“FOOTSTEPS”

Come, follow Me,” Jesus said

Mark 1:17

Kingdom Kids

Joseph’s Brothers Seek Revenge

Genesis 37:12-36

Worship Theme: Our actions show that we truly worship God.

Weaving Faith into Life: Children will seek to worship God in everything they do.

As always, either, read the scripture text or tell it in your own words to your children.

Bible Background

All of the events described in last week’s story---Joseph’s favoritism toward Joseph, and the dreams described in which his family bowed down to him---set the stage for the events described in this week’s lesson.

Reuben, the oldest was the first to show concern for Joseph’s life. As the oldest brother and leader of the family, Reuben was in some ways responsible for his brother’s safety. He would likely be the one to bring the deceitful report of his brother’s demise to their aging father. His plan to put Joseph in a cistern (probably a dry well) in the desert and rescue him later may have been suspected by some of the other brothers. Scripture doesn’t say that the brothers enthusiastically supported his plan; they just did what the eldest brother suggested as younger brothers would be expected to do.

The brothers appeared to have little remorse for what they’d done to Joseph. They simply sat down to eat --- the fresh food that Joseph had probably just brought them---while Joseph sat in the dry cistern, contemplating a long painful death from thirst.

Genesis 37:29 indicates that when the traders came along, Reuben was not present. Possibly it was his turn to check on the distant flocks; in any case, he didn’t witness his brother’s next act. Judah’s suddenly suggested that they spare Joseph’s life. We don’t know if this suggestion was that they spare Joseph’s life. We don’t know if this suggestion was prompted by pangs of guilt, the appeal of money, or a desire to punish Joseph even more severely by making a slave of him. Whatever the motive, the decision was made, and Joseph was gone before Reuben returned. When he found that Joseph was gone, he was grief-stricken, anguishing over what to do next, and no doubt, what to tell his father.

When the brothers returned to their father, they were careful not to lie. They simply showed Jacob the bloody coat and asked if it was Joseph’s. Perhaps they felt their deceit would be less evil if they allowed Jacob to assume that Joseph had been ripped apart by an animal.

Whatever their motive, both Reuben and Judah tried to save Joseph's life, and God used their efforts to bring about His plan. What the other brothers intended or evil, God ultimately used for enormous good by using Joseph to save Jacob's family and much of the region from starvation.

From a very early age, we all learn to "go through the motions." Whether we're at a family reunion or a school play, we learn to do the things that we are expected of us whether we really feel like it or not.

While this skill may serve us well in some settings, "going through the motions" in our worship is just not enough. We worship a God who looks right past the things we do to see the people that we are. He hears our hearts more than our words. And when He changes us, it is from the inside out.

When we choose to act with kindness, love, and integrity because we belong to the God who epitomizes those characteristics, our behavior itself becomes an act of worship. Our actions come to demonstrate the relationship we have with God in our hearts. True worship happens when we get beyond the motions, honoring His presence in our daily lives, no matter what circumstances or setting we find ourselves in.

When we do what's right, we grow closer to Jesus and encourage faith and growth to other people.

Tell the darling children a time when you fought to do the right thing while others simply chose the wrong path. Your story

may encourage your child(ren) to do what is right.

I always tell the darling children that *Worship is anything you do that tells God you love Him.*