

Coat Tales (Joseph, Part 1)

Genesis 37:3-5 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him. And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren; and they hated him yet the more.

Genesis 37:19-20 And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh. Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams.

Genesis 37:23-24 And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colours that was on him; And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it.

Joseph did nothing wrong, but he was hated by his brothers because he had a DREAM! His coat indicated the FAVOR of his father, and that is what they were envious of. If you have a dream, or if you have been blessed by God, settle it in your mind that someone somewhere is going to have a problem with it. Joseph's brothers schemed to take away his blessing and his dream – **AND GOD LET THEM DO IT!**

The Bible says that we will have various kinds of problems here on earth:

John 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Some of these will simply be problems common to the human family:

Matthew 5:45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

Others are specific to believers, attacks from Satan to discourage us:

1 Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

But the problems that we find hardest to understand, cope with, and overcome are problems that have to do with our BRETHREN!

Psalms 55:12-14 For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company.

The Bible calls this type of problem an OFFENSE. The Greek word "skandalon" means "a stumbling block," "something that causes one to fall," "something contrary to expectations that brings disappointment," or "the trigger of a trap."

Luke 17:1 Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come!

OFFENSE is like the bait in a trap – it is harmless unless we feed on it. But it is deadly when it is consumed!

It is a fact of human nature that the closer the relationship, the more severe the offense (most vicious legal cases – divorces). That is why problems among brethren can be so severe!

Jesus said it is IMPOSSIBLE to live in this life and not have the opportunity to be offended! The question is not "Will you encounter this trap?" but "How will you respond to it?"

One of the signs of the end time is that many will be offended!

Matthew 24:10-13 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

Notice that Jesus warns of false prophets immediately after His prophecy of many being offended. He called false prophets "wolves" (Matthew 7:15) because they prey on wounded and young sheep, not strong and healthy ones. False prophets tell people what they want to hear, not what they need to hear. **Offended people are easy prey!**

Strong cities of ancient times had WALLS around them as their protection. They kept unwelcome invaders out; all entrants were screened. Those owing taxes were not allowed in until they paid. Those considered a threat to the city's health or safety were kept out.

Proverbs 18:19 A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle.

We construct walls when we are hurt to safeguard our hearts and prevent any future wounds. We become selective, denying entry to all we fear will hurt us. We filter out anyone we think owes us something. We withhold access until these people have paid their debts in full.

EVENTUALLY, OUR WALLS OF PROTECTION BECOME A PRISON.

At that point, we are not only cautious about who comes in, but so in terror of future injuries that we cannot venture outside our fortress. But if left unchecked, our walls of offense will turn into bitterness.

Hebrews 12:15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.

If roots are nursed, watered, protected, fed and given attention, they increase in depth and strength. If not dealt with quickly, roots are hard to pull up. As the offense grows, many people are corrupted.

Francis Frangipane: “Bitterness is unfulfilled revenge.”

IMAGINE HOW DIFFERENT JOSEPH’S STORY WOULD HAVE BEEN IF HE HAD YIELDED TO THE SIN OF OFFENSE! But Joseph refused to let another person’s sin affect his relationship with God!

Joseph lost his BLESSINGS and his DREAMS (at least temporarily!), but still had the right to choose his RESPONSE. He chose to FORGIVE!

If Joseph had been offended he would later have killed his brothers – but when he could have REHEARSED his offence, he chose to REVERSE it!

Genesis 50:20 But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

FORGIVENESS is the only cure for OFFENSE. When we forgive, we release the power of God to bring good out of a bad situation!

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

We often assign blame – “**If it weren’t for _____, then I _____.** **My disappointment is their fault.**” But absolutely no man or devil can get you out of the will of God! Only you can thwart the will of God in your life – by getting offended!

Joseph lost his FIRST coat in a time of TRIBULATION at the hand of his brethren – but he FORGAVE them.