



Hi, my name is Reuben, the oldest son of Jacob and big brother to Joseph. We found it easy to pick on Joseph. He was younger. He was smaller. Our father loved him the most. Let's just say it wasn't hard to find a reason to make his life tougher. But don't get me wrong – all of those reasons do not make the way we treated him the right way. And it's certainly not something we're proud of! But it did happen.

You see, Joseph always walked around with this attitude of importance. Like he was better than us. I'm sure he didn't think that – I mean, he was never too proud to work hard and help us with the chores. But he just seemed to know he was destined for great things, and, as older brothers...let me tell you, there was nothing that made us more angry!

You know, maybe that's part of the reason why we were jealous? We did see that there was something special about him. And that sort of thing was hard to take. I mean, who wants to admit that their younger brother is destined for greater things than they are?

Joseph certainly didn't help himself. Some of the things he said made it really hard for us to like him...and one of the worst was when he had his dreams. You see, one night he dreamt that he was standing in the middle of a field of wheat, and it began to bow down to him. He told us the next day that we were the wheat – that one day, we would all bow down to him! Our younger brother! We were so angry!

But the turning point for us had to be the coat – my father's special gift to Joseph. A gift that showed Joseph how much my father loved him. Actually, the coat itself wasn't what made my brothers and I angry – the gift could have been anything. It was more what the coat meant. We felt it was the final sign that our father loved Joseph more than the rest of us. And it was too much for the rest of us to take!

So we did a horrible thing. We ganged up on Joseph, tied him up, and threw him into a well. And we wanted him to die in there – we were just that angry! Of course, we lied about it to our father – told him that a wild animal had killed his favourite boy. There was no way we could tell him the truth.

But we had doubts about what we did from the beginning. I knew I hadn't done the right thing, and no matter what argument I made, I knew in my own heart I had done wrong. I had to make it right.

I had gone to check on the sheep and had intended to get Joseph out of the well but when I got back I was horrified to find out that a group of merchants had moved through our lands. Seeing an opportunity, Judah offered them Joseph. And they were more than happy to take him with them...as their slave.

It wasn't the best thing, but I was sure it was a better option than leaving him to die in a well. It would not be a great life... but it would be a life.

I was not proud of any of this. None of us are. It just shows that life isn't easy.

And it's hard to know how this will end up. We have treated our brother so unfairly. We have destroyed our father. And the lie is something that continues to tear the brothers apart. I think all we can do is to recognise our mistake, and hope for the Lord's mercy on Joseph. And more importantly, on us.

I mean, we're not monsters. I know I'm not. I do hope that Joseph is safe and well. I pray to the Lord for his safety each and every day. And I know that God is a forgiving God. But it's what we have to live with in the meantime. The knowledge that we lied to our father. That, in jealousy, our brother was sold into slavery. It's always in my head - this is tearing us apart.

In the end? I just want my brother back. But because of what we've done...I fear I may never see that happen. And that's the horrible thought I have to live with each day.



Written by Chad Walsham
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