

# Favoritism's Fallout

Message Magazine's Online Devotional for Sunday, July 26, 2015

Based Upon Genesis 37:3

"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."

We are continuing our exposé of the lives of stellar Bible characters with the story of Joseph.

Joseph was Jacob's favorite son, born of his favorite wife. Jacob had two wives and two baby mamas—what a complicated life. Not only does the Scripture demonstrate the unholy favoritism Jacob showed toward Joseph, but it also states that he actually loved Joseph more.

I am not naïve enough to think that parents do not sometimes struggle with the temptation to favor one child over others, or even be more drawn to said child, because of certain desirable traits or common interests. Neither am I naïve enough to believe that there may not be times that a child may, themselves, show a special love toward the parent, which might draw that parent's heart in a special way, but principled parents must beware. All of our children are special gifts from God, whom he has given us as an inheritance. The Bible says it this way: "Look, children are the heritage of Yahweh; the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them. They shall not be put to shame when they speak with enemies at the gate." (Psalm 127:3–5, LEB). We are to: "Train up a child in the way he should go [and in keeping with his individual gift or bent], and when he is old he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6, AMP). The Bible also says concerning the prophet Jeremiah's story: "Then the word of the Lord came to me [Jeremiah], saying, Before I formed you in the womb I knew [and] approved of you [as My chosen instrument], and before you were born I separated and set you apart, consecrating you; [and] I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." (Jeremiah 1:4–5, AMP).

This morning's thought is very simple: Understanding natural affinity and all that I stated in the beginning, parents of principle need to be especially vigilant to guard their affections in a way that does not show partiality. Parents are to value each child's unique, God-given contribution. We are to recognize the divine calling on each of their lives. Parents must surrender our feelings and thoughts concerning our children to God, lest we do to them what Jacob did in his family. If you read his entire saga, you will discover that he drove a wedge between the children, which could have ended tragically, but the Lord saw all that was happening and protected dear Joseph from death. While it is true that the elder brothers did mostly hate Joseph, the Lord blessed in the situation to where they were able to come full-circle and face their errors, and repent. Would you want to divide your children, foster envy, and even facilitate the untimely demise of any of your children? I certainly hope not. Let us all pray for God's help and peace to love our children equally, and direct their minds to their Creator, to live according to his example.