

**Old Testament Men and Women of Faith**  
***Joseph and His Jealous Brothers; Judah and Tamar***

1. Genesis 37: Jacob's preferential treatment of Joseph was at the heart of the problem. Verse 4: "When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him."
  - Verses 3-11: The robe and the dreams. Was it wise for Joseph to reveal the dreams? Even Jacob was disturbed. "Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?"
  - "Here comes the dreamer. Let's kill him."
  - Judah's suggestions: "What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? Come, let's sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood."
  - Jacob's response: "In mourning will I go down to the grave to my son."
  - Conclusion: Meanwhile, the Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard.
  
2. Genesis 38: Judah and Tamar
  - This is a strange story but is necessary to indicate the continuation of the line of Judah.
  - Judah married a Canaanite woman – Shua. Three sons – Er, Onan and Shelah.
  - Er married Tamar. Verse 7: "Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the LORD's sight; so the LORD put him to death."
  - According to the custom of levirate marriage (later codified into law in Deuteronomy 25:5-10), if a man died before providing sons to his wife, it was the duty of his brothers to marry her and to give her sons.
  - The deceit of Onan and the consequence – Onanism. Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, "Live as a widow in your father's house until my son Shelah grows up." For he thought, "He may die too, just like his brothers." So Tamar went to live in her father's house.
  - Tamar's deceit: "For she saw that, though Shelah had now grown up, she had not been given to him as his wife." – the consequences of an unmarried woman.
  - When Tamar conceived, it certainly was not intended by Judah, but it was definitely planned by both Tamar and God.
  - Tamar, acted shrewdly and vindicated herself against the charge of prostitution. She makes the logical appeal of noting that the one who hired her is just as guilty as she.
  - The birth of Perez and Zerah. Matthew 1:3 and Luke 3:33 each list Perez as an ancestor of Jesus the Messiah. God took the son of this ungodly situation and put him in the family line of the Messiah, despite the fact that neither Judah or Tamar were examples of godliness. "Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar."
  - The sons of Israel were by no means good and wholesome. They were a corrupt and problem-filled family.

**Next time: Joseph in Egypt**