

"Learning From Mistakes"
Genesis 37:12-36
Wednesday, June 16, 2021

Introduction: We can learn from our own mistakes. Sadly, some people never do learn from their own mistakes.

- Most of us at one time or another have attended the "school of hard knocks."
- It can be a painful way to learn.

We can learn from the mistakes of others.

- It is a less painful way to learn.
- People leave footprints.
- Some are good footprints to follow, and some are not.
- Learning from others has the advantage of seeing how things turned out. We can see where their footprints took them.

Illustration: The apostle Paul used the Israelites as an example not to follow in his letter to the church at Corinth (1 Corinthians 10:6). Paul mentioned three sins in the church at Corinth that were the downfall of the Israelites.

1. Idolatry (1 Cor. 10:7)
2. Sexual immorality (1 Cor. 10:8)
3. Complaining (1 Cor. 10:10)

These same sins were the downfall of the Israelites.

1. Idolatry (Exodus 32:1-6)
2. Complaining (Numbers 16:41-50).
3. Sexual immorality (Numbers 25:1)

On Wednesday nights, we are looking at people in the Bible who left behind some footprints to follow and some footprints not to follow. Last Wednesday night Joseph was our focus.

- You read about Joseph in Genesis chapters 37-50.
- We studied Genesis 37:1-11 last week.

Review of Genesis 27:1-11:

1. Joseph was with his brothers taking care of his father's flocks.
2. Joseph reported to his father things his brothers were doing.
3. Jacob loved Joseph more than any of his other children.
4. Jacob made Joseph a special coat which did not go over well with his brothers.
5. Joseph had two dreams.
6. Then to make matters worse he told his brothers about his two dreams which made them hate him even more.

Text Tonight: Genesis 37:12-36

1. Genesis 37:12-14:

- Jacob decided to give his favorite son something to do.
- The Bible does tell us very much about how Joseph spent his teenage time. Maybe he had homework to do or did the equivalent of watching television.
- Apparently, he had nothing to do.
- His father evidently decided to give him an assignment. He sent him to check on his brothers.
- Joseph left Hebron and went to Shechem (50 miles north).

2. Genesis 37:15-36:

- Shechem to Dothan is 15 miles north.
- His brothers saw him before he saw them.
- They gave a nickname— “dreamer.”
- Reuben and Judah were born to Leah.

- Ishmaelites are also known as Midianites.
- Twenty shekels of silver was the average price for a slave.
- Potiphar more a position name than a personal name. A high-ranking officer in Egypt.

Conclusion: There are some life lessons in the sad events described in this chapter.

1. What you wish had never happened, if you respond appropriately, God will use for His glory and your good.

- This is what Joseph told his brothers (Genesis 50:20).
- Joseph told his brothers, “You meant evil against me; but God meant it for good” (Genesis 50:20).
- You see this throughout the Bible, in the lives of people, and in our own life.

Application: Things happen in life that we wish had not happened. In this life, we may never know why they happened. But what we do know is that if we respond appropriately three things will happen.

- God will be honored
- Others will be helped
- You will grow spiritually.

2. The hard things you go through in life prepare you for the plans God has for you.

- Joseph is a good example.
- The apostle Paul is a good example.
- The apostle John is a good example. It was on Patmos that John received what we have in the book of Revelation.

3. Sin's punishment is often delayed.

Illustration: Jacob lived twenty-two years in sorrow grieving for his favorite son. From the time Jacob was shown the coat he had made Joseph (37:35) until the brothers told Jacob that Joseph was alive (45:25-28) twenty-two years had gone by.

Illustration: The “deceiver” was deceived by his own sons. Jacob’s sons did to him what had been done to his father.

Illustration: Joseph's brothers lived in guilt, seeing their sin against their brother as the source of their woes (42:21-22; 44:16).

Invitation: The number one thing in life that you want to respond appropriately is your response to Jesus. Your response to Jesus determines where you will spend eternity.