Living A Life of Integrity
“The Pride Test”
Message 2 of 7 in “Living A Life of Integrity” series

Scripture Text: Genesis 37:1-11

Read Scripture Text:   Genesis 37:1-11

Prayer

INTRODUCTION

Today as we continue with our sermon series: Living A Life of Integrity, we are going to be looking at the first of six ways in which our integrity is tested…….and that is THE PRIDE TEST.

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Illustration:   How many pet owners do we have here this morning?

When we think of pets we typically think of owning a dog or a cat or a parakeet or an aquarium full of fish.

But some people prefer more exotic pets like alligators or snakes.

On December 22, 1999, two police officers in Port Orange, Florida were dispatched to the home of Robert Raulerson, age 32.
When Police arrived they found Raulerson lying deceased on the floor with a 12 ½ foot long reticulated python wrapped around him.

Seeing two puncture wounds on Raulerson’s forehead and an open cage and bottle of medicine nearby, the police pieced together what they suspect had happened.

They believe Raulerson had opened the cage to give his pet snake some medication when it suddenly grabbed the deceased on the forehead with its fangs then slowly wrapped itself around his neck and chest and suffocated him to death.

When the police searched the rest of the house they found five more reticulated pythons still in their cages.

No doubt Robert Raulerson believed he was in control of his pet snakes and had a false sense of security they could never harm him. Tragically Robert Raulerson underestimated the nature of his pet python.

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In many ways PRIDE is a lot like a PYTHON. It may seem harmless. In fact, if you were to make a list of the ten worst sins, chances are PRIDE might not even be on most of your lists.

And yet the Bible makes it very clear that PRIDE is the most sinful …..the most deadly attitude that can be possessed by men or angels.

The very first sin ever committed was the SIN of PRIDE. Long before Adam and Eve fell in the Garden of Eden, Isaiah 14:12- 14 tells us how Satan came to be: How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, “I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.”
Jesus condemned PRIDE more than He did adultery, lying, cheating or stealing.

Do you realize there will be more people go to hell because of the sin of PRIDE than any other sin?

HELL will be full of people who were too PROUD to accept Christ......too PROUD to repent of their SINS......too PROUD to confess JESUS as their Lord and Savior......too PROUD to be BAPTIZED for the remission of their SINS......too PROUD to go to CHURCH......to PROUD to live for Christ. Their PRIDE will cost them eternal life!!!

God hates PRIDE!

James 4:6 tells us “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

Jesus tells us in Matthew 23:12 “For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”

Proverbs 6:16-19 lists the six things God hates and right at the very top of the list is “haughty eyes.” In other words, “a proud look.”

And Proverbs 16:18 warns us “Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.”
Joseph Faced The Pride Test

It is interesting the very first test JOSEPH faced was in the area of PRIDE.

The account of Joseph’s life begins with an acknowledgement of serious family problems. This family was about as dysfunctional as it gets.

*Now before I go any farther I want to correct a statement I made in my message last Lord’s day. In that message I said Leah had bore the first ten sons of Jacob.

Actually Leah bore six of those ten sons and one daughter. Jacob then married Leah’s maidservant Bilhah and fathered two more sons by her. Later he married Rachel’s maidservant, Zilpah and fathered two more sons by her. Many years later when Jacob was much older he fathered two more sons through Rachel.

So for those of you who are keeping a scorecard that’s one husband……four wives……and thirteen children all by the same father but by four different mothers.

Makes the Brady Bunch look like a normal family doesn’t it?

Well through no fault of his own, JOSEPH became his father’s favorite son.

verse 3a  Now Israel (Jacob) loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age.
To demonstrate his unabashed favoritism toward Joseph, *verse 3* goes on to tell us…….

*verse 3b*  
And he (speaking of Jacob) *made a richly ornamented robe for him*. (more commonly: “the coat of many colors.”)  

Now it doesn’t matter if its JACOB’S FAMILY or YOUR FAMILY or ANY FAMILY for that matter………any time a parent shows favoritism toward one son or daughter over another it creates hurt and tension and problems within the family.

*VERSE 4* bears out this truth:  
When his brothers saw that their father loved him (Joseph) more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.

It’s important that we understand all this underlying tension and jealousy and resentment in order to see how THE PRIDE TEST comes into play in JOSEPH’S life.

**Three Incidents Perceived As Pride**

It has been said, “*One’s perception often becomes one’s reality.*”

Joseph wasn’t proud or arrogant, but because Jacob showed obvious favoritism toward him and gave him that beautiful coat of many colors, Joseph’s brothers perceived Joseph to be a PROUD SPOILED BRAT who thought he was better than the rest of them.  

*Their perception became their reality.*

There are three incidents recorded in *VERSES 1-11* that certainly didn’t help Joseph change how his brothers felt about him.
The first incident is recorded in verse 2.........

(A) Joseph Spread A Bad Report About His Brothers vs. 2

v. 2 This is the account of Jacob. Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father’s wives, and he brought their father a bad report about them.

Now get the picture here. Joseph was tending sheep along with four of his brothers, Dan, Naphtali, Gad and Asher.

The scripture doesn’t give us any detail as to what these four brothers were doing, but apparently it was something bad enough that Joseph felt like he needed to tell his father what his brothers were doing.

Joseph’s sense of love and devotion compelled him to report honestly to his father the things he had observed his brothers doing.

No doubt this didn’t set well with those four brothers. In their eyes Joseph was a “snitch” “a tattletale” “a whistleblower.”

Even in today’s society people who snitch or blow the whistle about unethical behavior in the workplace are looked upon as being “a goody two shoes.”

When Joseph blew the whistle on whatever his brothers were doing out in the sheep pastures it just increased their hatred toward him.
In VERSES 5-8 we see a second incident that incited the hatred of Joseph’s brothers and that was when

(B) Joseph Shared A Big Dream With His Brothers vs. 5-8

5 Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they hated him all the more.

6 He said to them, “Listen to this dream I had:

7 We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it.”

8 His brothers said to him, “Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?” And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said.

Any time you share a big dream or a big goal or big plan with people it is not unusual to come across as sounding proud or boastful. Dreamers are often looked upon with disdain by those who are content to live mediocre lives.

Joseph’s brothers were shepherds. They always had been and always would be nothing more than shepherds. They had no aspirations to ever be anything other than shepherds.

So when Joseph shared this big dream with them that one day they would bow down before him it incited their hatred toward Joseph all the more. Because they already perceived him as a PROUD SPOILED BRAT, his words sounded arrogant and boastful.
As if Joseph wasn’t already in enough hot water with his brothers, VERSES 9-11 tells us about a third incident……

(C) Joseph Shared An Even Bigger Dream With His Brothers and Father

9 Then he had another dream and he told it to his brothers. “Listen,” he said, “I had another dream, and this time the sun, the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.”

(Do you suppose at this point Joseph’s brothers were thinking, “Alright, that’s it, let’s pounce on him boys and teach him a lesson he’ll never forget!”)

10 When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, “What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?

11 His eleven brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

The symbolism in both dreams didn’t even need interpretation. To Joseph’s brothers these dreams meant this son who was already favored was going to be elevated to an even higher position of favor over them.

But Jacob’s response to Joseph’s dream is interesting. While his initial response may have been to dismiss the dream as nonsense verse 11 says, “He kept this matter in mind.”

Jacob, being a devout man of God, realized there must be more to Joseph’s dream than what could be understood on the surface. So Jacob took time to reflect on the deeper meaning of the dream.
What mistakes, if any, had Joseph committed in these three incidents?

-Perhaps one mistake he made was underestimating how his actions and words might be perceived as PROUD and BOASTFUL.

-And perhaps a second mistake he made was in his youthful enthusiasm and ignorance he told his brothers and father about these dreams he had received from the Lord rather than keeping them to himself.

As we will see in our message next Lord’s Day, these youthful mistakes would lead Joseph down a very difficult path. But through that pain and suffering we will see how God built character, honor and integrity in Joseph.

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A P P L I C A T I O N

Do you have a problem with PRIDE? Is it possible you do and don’t even recognize it?

When we think of PRIDE we think of the person who brags or boasts about themselves……the person who is always tooting their own horn…..or patting themselves on the back. Indeed that is the kind of PRIDE that makes everyone sick but the person who has it.

But we must understand PRIDE goes far beyond blatant bragging and boastfulness. PRIDE can creep into our lives in many subtle ways.
A. To neglect Bible study and prayer is a symptom of PRIDE.

You see the truth is its not because we’re too busy. The truth is we believe we can do just fine living our lives without God’s help.

B. The inability to admit you are wrong is an symptom of PRIDE.

A proud person will always blame others for their problems. A proud person will refuse to take responsibility for their actions, their choices, their habits or their addictions.

C. Being overly busy is often a symptom of PRIDE.

Are you one of those people who believes you have to do everything yourself because nobody can do the job better than you? That is pride!

D. Being a know-it-all is a symptom of PRIDE.

Are you one of those people who likes to impress others with your knowledge on a wide-variety of issues and topics?

Are you unteachable? That is PRIDE!

E. Chronic criticism and judging of others is a symptom of PRIDE.

Do you consider yourself to have a special “gift” when it comes to being able to spot the faults and shortcomings in others?

F. Being a “perfectionist” is a symptom of PRIDE.

Are you one of those people who demands absolute perfection from yourself and from others? Are you intolerant of mistakes in your life and in the lives of others?
G. Living in habitual sin is a symptom of PRIDE.

Do you take great pride in the fact you have been able to

H. Self-centeredness is a symptom of PRIDE.

Pride seeks to promote and advance SELF in every way possible. Does your whole life revolve around me, myself and I?

I. Stealing glory from God is a symptom of PRIDE.

Do you take credit and glory for the God-given gifts and abilities you possess? Do take pride in being a “self-made” man or a “self-made” woman?

J. Having a sense of superiority is a symptom of PRIDE.

Do you think having a better job or making more money or driving a nicer vehicle or wearing nicer clothes or living in a nicer home or doing a better job of raising your kids than someone else makes you better than everybody else?

That is PRIDE in its grossest ugliness!

K. Even wallowing in self-pity is a symptom of PRIDE.

Refusing to let go of one’s hurts, disappointments and injustices rather than releasing those things to the Lord is an act of PRIDE.

These are just a few of the many faces of PRIDE! Do you pass the PRIDE TEST?
CONCLUSION

A U.S. Air Force transport plane with its Captain and five crew members was flying over Alaska in the mid-1950’s when they ran into an unusually fierce snowstorm.

The navigator contacted an air base only to be told they had veered several hundred miles off course. Correct coordinates were given to the navigator who insisted his calculations could not be that far off.

Soon the plane ran low on fuel. The six men decided to abandon the plane and parachute to safety. But because of the minus 70 degree temperatures and 50 mph winds, all six men froze to death within a few minutes of hitting the ground. Six men died as the result of that Navigator’s pride.

Proverbs 12:15 The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice.

As we close this morning I want to leave you with this thought:

You and I can never live up to our God-given potential or fulfill our God-given purpose in this life so long as even the slightest amount of PRIDE remains in our heart.

How do we OVERCOME that PRIDE? We can do it in one of two ways: We can either HUMBLE OURSELVES before the LORD or we can BE HUMBLED BY THE LORD.

THE CHOICE IS YOURS!