

Dreamer: The Life of Joseph Immorality and Deceit **A Study in Genesis 37-50** Genesis 38:1-30

June 6, 2021

About three months later Judah was told, "Tamar your daughter-in-law has been immoral. Moreover, she is pregnant by immorality."
- Genesis 38:24

I. JUDAH MOVES DOWNWARD

- As Jacob goes down to Sheol in mourning, and as Joseph will be brought down into Egypt, so Judah goes down from his brothers into sin (Gen. 37:35, 38:1, 39:1).
- Ancient "levirate" laws are at play in this narrative, and inheritances and family names are at stake (Gen. 38:6-11; Deut. 25:5-10; Ruth 3:1-4:12; Matt. 22:23-28).
- Judah's intermarriage with Canaanite women threatens the distinctiveness of the people of Israel (Gen. 27:46, 34:9; Deut. 7:2-4; Josh 23:12; Ezra 9:14).
- God puts both Er and Onan to death for their wickedness. Do not be so sure this is impossible in our own day (1 Cor. 11:29-30).
- Tamar uses cunning, deceit, and wisdom in obtaining heirs in the family line of Jacob. Sadly, she knows Judah's character, and thus her scheme works (Gen. 38:13-19).
- Judah demonstrates the hypocrisy that always accompanies immorality (Gen. 38:24-26).

II. EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES...EXTREME GRACE

- Immorality is rampant in this narrative, but God is not absent. The genealogy of Matthew reveals God's plan, which includes humans and their sinful actions (Matt. 1:1-6, 15-16).
- Where sin increases, God's grace abounds even more (Rom. 5:18-21).

KNOW: God works in extremes. Sometimes, real sin is turned into real blessing in his economy.

DO: Live like you have been redeemed. Trust God to work in all the details.

Suggested Reading:

Secure in the Everlasting Arms by Elisabeth Elliot (LifePoint Library #266.282 ELL)

Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners by John Bunyan (LifePoint Library #234 BUN)

Questions/Discovery Points for Life Groups/Families

Please Read Genesis 38:1-30

1. This is a very sordid tale. Why do you think it is included in the Scriptures?
2. Why was it wrong for Jews to intermarry with Canaanites in Jacob's day?
3. What are your thoughts concerning the Lord putting Er and Onan to death for their wickedness?
4. Talk about Judah's overall character. What is negative? Anything positive?
5. Talk about Tamar's character. What is negative? Anything positive?
6. How does God take the evil of this chapter and turn it to good?
7. What are your lessons from this narrative? What application is there for you?