

THE ABANDONED COAT

Lesson 1

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES:

- A. What do most people think about when someone mentions clothing?
 - 1. Americans may mention coats, sweaters, skirts, dresses, jeans, shirts—all types of clothing worn for working, for fashion, for sports or for convenience.
 - 2. In Bible times there were tunics, cloaks, ephods, robes, veils, head coverings, etc.
- B. It is usually the woman's responsibility to care for the clothing of the entire household to be sure that everyone has something presentable to wear every day.
 - 1. She is not only responsible for the washing, drying, folding and ironing.
 - 2. She has to buy or make the family's clothes, making sure there are clothes for the proper occasions.
 - 3. She also considers each person's taste while monitoring the cost.
- C. Even with all her care, the results are only temporary.
 - 1. Two days of washing pile up in the place of the one just finished.
 - 2. Clothes are worn out, outgrown, or outdated.
 - 3. Shopping for a bargain or sewing becomes a never ending task.
- D. Wouldn't it be great to find a detergent that would protect clothes from ever getting dirty again? What if there were a special brand of clothing that could be guaranteed never to wear out?
 - 1. This 13 lesson study of the GARMENTS OF THE BIBLE is intended to help us focus on the symbolism of various garments and how they helped or destroyed the ones who wore them.
 - 2. The later lessons are also intended to bring us to a better understanding of our spiritual clothing as the bride of Christ.
 - 3. Hopefully, these lessons will give us a new perspective on the various articles of clothing we study from scripture as well as those we are commanded to adorn as children of God.

II. Joseph's Coat is one of the most well known garments in the Bible.

- A. The importance of Joseph in the history of the nation of Israel is confirmed by the fact that the account of his life (from birth to death – 110 years) takes **13 of the last 14 chapters** of Genesis, beginning in chapter 37.
 - 1. Joseph was the first born son of Jacob's beloved wife, Rachel, for whom he had to work for fourteen years in order to marry her. (**Gen. 31:41**)
 - 2. Rachel died giving birth to her second son, Benjamin.
- B. Joseph was the favorite son of his father Jacob (Israel) (**Genesis 37**)
 - 1. Jacob made a coat of many colors for Joseph.

2. When his ten older brothers saw his "favored status" they hated Joseph so much that they could not even speak peaceably to him.
 3. At the age of 17 Jacob began to have dreams that caused them to hate him even more.
 - a. Joseph told his brothers his dream: "*There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf.*" (Genesis 37:7)
 - b. His brothers realized that his dream indicated that Joseph would rule over them which fueled their hatred for him even more.
 - c. Joseph told his brothers of his second dream: "*And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me.*"
 - d. Joseph's father rebuked him for suggesting that his father and mother and brothers would all bow down to earth before him.
 - e. By this time his brothers became envious. (Genesis 37:11)
 4. Jacob sent the ten older sons out to the field to care for their flock.
 - a. After a while, Jacob sent Joseph out to check on them.
 - b. When they saw him coming, they decided to kill him.
 - c. Reuben said they should not kill him, but leave him in a pit that he could not get out of (thinking he could come back to rescue him).
 - d. The others agreed with Reuben, but when Reuben was with the flock, they saw a band of Ishmaelite traders traveling to Egypt passing by and they decided to sell Joseph to them.
 - e. When Reuben returned and found Joseph gone, he was upset. But they all devised a plan to keep their father from finding out what they had done. They took his famous "coat of many colors" and covered it with lambs blood as proof to their father that harm had come to him.
 - f. Jacob assumed that Joseph had been eaten by a wild animal and he grieved so that none of his sons could comfort him.
- C. Joseph was taken to Egypt and sold to Potiphar, the captain of the guard of Pharaoh's army. (**Genesis 39**)
1. The Lord made everything that Joseph did prosper, so that Potiphar put Joseph in charge of everything he owned.
 2. Joseph was a very handsome young man and Potiphar's wife tried many times unsuccessfully to seduce him.
 3. Joseph told her that he could not do such a thing to Potiphar who had put such trust in him, but she continued day after day.
 4. One day Joseph was in Potiphar's house and no one was there except Potiphar's wife. She approached Joseph again and took hold of his garment, but Joseph slipped out of the garment and left it with her as he ran out of the house. (verse 12)

5. Potiphar's wife was furious and saw that she had an opportunity to punish Joseph so she called the men of the household inside and showed them Joseph's garment. She claimed that Joseph had attacked her and when she screamed, he ran out leaving his garment.
 6. Potiphar believed his wife and in his anger, he had Joseph thrown into prison. But the Lord continued to bless Joseph by giving him favor in the eyes of the prison keeper so that Joseph was put in charge of all the other prisoners. All that he did prospered.
- D. Joseph interprets dreams in prison. (**Genesis 40**)
1. While Joseph was in prison the king also put his chief butler and chief baker into prison.
 2. They each had a dream that disturbed them because there was no one to interpret the dreams.
 3. When Joseph saw that they were upset, he asked to hear the dreams and he interpreted them both.
 - a. The chief butler dreamed that there were three vines that produced buds, then blossoms, then clusters of grapes. Suddenly the cup of the Pharaoh appeared in his hand and the butler squeezed the grapes into the cup and gave it to the Pharaoh.
 - 1) the vines represented three days
 - 2) the king would restore the butler to his previous job
 - 3) Joseph asked the butler to mention his situation to the Pharaoh and try to get him out of prison.
 - b. The chief baker dreamed that there were three baskets stacked on his head. In the top basket were all kinds of breads. But the birds came and ate the bread from the basket.
 - 1) the baskets were three days
 - 2) the baker would be hanged and the birds would eat his flesh.
 - c. On the third day the butler was released and given his job back and the baker was hanged. But the butler did not remember to speak to the Pharaoh about Joseph.
- E. The Pharaoh finally needs Joseph to interpret his disturbing dream. (**Genesis 41**)
1. Joseph spent two more years in prison after the release of the butler.
 2. The Pharaoh had two disturbing dreams:
 - a. Pharaoh stood by a river and saw seven fat cows come up out of the river, followed by seven skinny cows who came up out of the river and ate the seven fat cows.
 - b. Pharaoh seven good, plump heads of grain came up on one stalk, followed by seven thin, blighted heads that ate the seven plump heads.

- c. The butler finally remembered that Joseph had interpreted his dream correctly, so Pharaoh called for Joseph to interpret his two dreams:
 - 1) Joseph told Pharaoh that it would be God who would bring the interpretation of the Pharaoh's dreams.
 - 2) the dreams both meant the same thing
 - 3) the fat cows and the plump grain represent seven years of plenty in the land
 - 4) the skinny cows and the thin grain represent seven years of famine in the land
- F. Joseph counseled Pharaoh to prepare for famine.
 1. He suggested that Pharaoh choose a wise man to be over all Egypt.
 2. Appoint officers to collect 1/5 of the crops for each of the seven years of plenty to store up for use in the seven years of famine.
 3. Pharaoh decided that since God had given Joseph this information that there was no one more wise and discerning in the land than Joseph.
 4. Joseph was 30 years old when he was made second in command over all of Egypt. By this time he had been in Egypt for about 13 years.

III. Two garments had a great affect on the life of Joseph.

- A. His coat of many colors was an infuriating reminder to his ten older brothers that Joseph was his father's favorite.
 1. The brothers were full of envy toward Joseph instead of loving him as their brother.
 2. Their envy turned to hate. (Genesis 37)
 3. Their hate turned to thoughts of murder.
 4. However, God had different plans for Joseph. The caravan of Ishmaelites must be viewed as God's providence in providing protection of Joseph's life from his brothers.
 5. Joseph probably did not consider those circumstances as beneficial, but he could not know what God had in store for his life.
- B. This is a lesson we can still appropriate for ourselves today.
 1. **Proverbs 14:30** – "*A sound heart is life to the body, But **envy** is rottenness to the bones.*"
 2. Envy is a dangerous emotion because it can so easily evolve into hate.
 3. Jesus taught that even the most dangerous sin of murder begins with anger that is nurtured and allowed to grow:
Matthew 5:21-24 – ²¹ "*You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.'*
²² *But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of*

hell fire. ²³ *Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift."*

4. Even Pilate knew that the Jews had handed Jesus over to him to be murdered because of envy. (**Matthew 27:17-18**)
- C. Joseph's second garment was used against him when Potiphar's wife set a sinful trap for Joseph.
1. Although Joseph's ten older brothers intended that harm should come to him, God blessed Joseph in everything he did after he was sold to a band of Ishmaelites.
 2. Imagine the bargain Potiphar thought he had made by buying Joseph as a slave when he saw that everything Joseph touched became success.
 3. Potiphar was so impressed that he placed everything he owned under Joseph's control (except his wife).
 4. Unfortunately, Potiphar's wife was not a virtuous woman. She saw the handsome young man and the scripture says "she looked longingly at him".
 5. With no apparent regard for her husband, she shamelessly pursued Joseph.
 6. Joseph tried to explain that he could not do such an evil thing to his master who had entrusted all of his wealth to Joseph's care, and day after day he continued to rebuffed her advances.
 7. The depth of Potiphar's wife's depravity is exhibited when she set a trap for Joseph when no one was in the house.
 8. When Joseph saw that she was being very aggressive by grabbing his garment, he pulled his arms out of the garment and left it in her hands. Joseph ran out of the house to escape her clutches.
 9. Potiphar's wife was infuriated by Joseph's rejection so she accused him of attacking her and used his garment as proof of his crime.
- D. Joseph's second garment was the evidence of Joseph's pure heart in the face of great temptation.
1. Like the harlot in **Proverbs 7:6-27**, Potiphar's wife had laid a trap for Joseph and thought to take him by her trickery.
 2. She was vulgar and deceitful of heart, in stark contrast to the purity of heart and modesty which becomes women professing godliness (**1 Timothy 2:10**).
- E. What lessons can we take from these events in Joseph's life?
1. Notice how the temptation to sin came to Joseph. It was not presented to him as a hideous, fire-breathing monster, but as something soft and enticing—something perhaps that he might do and nobody would ever know.

2. The Devil would never win any battles for our souls if he made sin look like what it really is or if there were "danger" signs flashing.
 3. Our Heavenly Father describes the Devil as going about like a roaring lion in **1 Peter 5:8** – *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."*
 4. The ones who are tempted usually do not see him like that because he crouches secretly and pounces suddenly as the deed is done.
 5. What the unwary person may see is Satan disguised as an angel of light, in **2 Corinthians 11:14-15** – ¹³*For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.* ¹⁴*And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.* ¹⁵*Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.*
- F. God offers many, many alternatives to sin.
- 1 Corinthians 10:13** – *"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but **will with the temptation also make a way to escape**, that ye may be able to bear it."*
1. The simplest way to escape temptation is to RUN away:
 - **1 Corinthians 6:18** – *"Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body."*
 - **2 Timothy 2:22** – *"Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart".*
 2. The wisest way to escape temptation is to AVOID the sources that provide it.
 - a. **1 Thessalonians 5:22** – *"Abstain from every form of evil."*
 - b. **Psalms 1:1** – *"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night."*
 - c. **1 Corinthians 15:33** – *"Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."*
 - d. **Proverbs 12:26** – *"The righteous should choose his friends carefully, For the way of the wicked leads them astray."*
 3. Sometimes, however, we must just stand firm and RESIST it.

James 4:7 – *"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you".*

 - a. Joseph had "resisted" Potiphar's wife over and over, but when all else failed he had to simply run away.

- b. Viewing his action from the eyes of the world, that may have seemed cowardly, but in the eyes of God he behaved admirably.
 - c. Joseph was righteous and suffered for it, but he was blessed in so many amazing ways by God for his faithfulness.
1 Peter 2:20 – *"For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God."*
 - d. **2 Peter 2:20** – *"²⁰For **if**, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning."*
4. Another way to help us resist temptation is to fortify our minds and our spirits through God's word.
- a. **Psalm 119:11** – *"Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You."*
 - b. **Psalm 119:15** – *"I will meditate on Your precepts, And contemplate Your ways."*
 - c. **Colossians 3:16** – *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."*
 - d. **2 Timothy 2:15** – *"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."*
 - e. **Hebrews 4:12** – *"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."*
 - f. **Hebrews 5:12-14** – *"¹² For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need *someone* to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. ¹³ For everyone who partakes *only* of milk *is* unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. ¹⁴ But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."*
- G. Can we each apply this lesson to ourselves honestly?
- 1. The problem with lessons about adultery or immorality is that we often take them lightly because we just know that we could never be tempted in such an evil way. Really?
 - a. Approximately 10 years ago, within the space of six months, I learned that two Christian women I knew well, both preacher's wives, left their husbands of 40 years for other men.
 - b. One of these women had been my dear friend for over 20 years.

- c. Could they both have been vulnerable to this sin simply because they just knew that it could never happen to them.
 - d. Were they both unprepared for the power of that temptation when it presented itself because they had not considered it a threat to themselves?
2. We must also accept lessons like this by applying them to every sin, especially those that seem most likely to be tempting to us.
- a. While we see adultery, murder, theft and the like as terrible sins to be avoided, we often forget that God has not ranked sin on a sliding scale from "horrible" to "insignificant".
 - b. We must look at those common sins that test us every single day such as lying, gossiping, greed, laziness, selfishness, anger, pride, envy, worldliness and so many more.
 - c. Are we as willing to "run away" from these sins? Do we actively resist them every day?
 - d. Do we sometimes think that we are so strong that these things can't harm us?
 - e. Maybe we should remember these passages:
 - **I Corinthians 10:12** – *"Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall."*
 - **2 Peter 20:21-22** – *"²¹For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. ²²But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: "A dog returns to his own vomit," and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire."*
 - **Proverbs 17:18** – *"The highway of the upright is to depart from evil; He who keeps his way preserves his soul. Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall."*
 - **Ezekiel 18:24** – *"But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and does according to all the abominations that the wicked man does, shall he live? All the righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; because of the unfaithfulness of which he is guilty and the sin which he has committed, because of them he shall die."*
 - **Ezekiel 33:13** – *"When I say to the righteous that he shall surely live, but he trusts in his own righteousness and commits iniquity, none of his righteous works shall be remembered; but because of the iniquity that he has committed, he shall die."*