

**Ron Armstrong • September 6, 2020**

### **The Story: The Small, Big, and Grand Stories**

**Genesis 37:3** Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons ... and he made an ornate robe for him. **4** When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him ... **5** Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more.

**19** "Here comes that dreamer!"... **20** "Come now, let's kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns ...

**23** So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe ... **24** and they took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern was empty; there was no water in it.

**25** As they sat down to eat their meal, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. Their camels were loaded with spices ... and they were on their way to ... Egypt.

**26** Judah said to his brothers, "What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? **27** Come, let's sell him to the Ishmaelites ... after all, he is our brother ..." His brothers agreed.

**Genesis 42:8** Although Joseph recognized his brothers, they did not recognize him. **9** Then he remembered his dreams about them and said to them, "You are spies! You have come to see where our land is unprotected."

**10** "No, my lord, your servants have come to buy food. **11** We are all the sons of one man. Your servants are honest men, not spies."

**12** "No!" he said to them. "You have come to see where our land is unprotected."

**13** But they replied, "Your servants were twelve brothers, the sons of one man, who lives in the land of Canaan. The youngest is now with our father, and one is no more."

**Genesis 45:1** Then Joseph could no longer control himself ...

**2** And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him ...

**3** Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still living?" But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence.

**4** Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me." When they had done so, he said, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! **5** And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you."

#### **A. Let's hear the story.**

1. Bad dad, arrogant son, envious brothers.
2. Potiphar to prison to dream interpreter.
3. From fat cows to deputy Pharaoh.
4. Famine, tricks, and forgiveness.

#### **B. The "small story," "big story," and the "grand story."**

1. Three stories are happening simultaneously.
  - a. The small stories of a bad dad, an arrogant Joseph, envious brothers, and a coming famine.
  - b. The big story of the amazing way God is going to weave Joseph's small stories into a phenomenal life.
  - c. The grand story of God weaving stupid, arrogant, envious, and deceitful behavior together to save Israel.
2. God always has authority, but he doesn't always exercise control:
  - a. Grand story. God has authority and control.
  - b. Big story. God has authority and exercises some parental control. This is your life.
  - c. Small story. God has authority, but he allows us to make decisions.
3. Like Joseph, your small stories make up your big one.
  - a. It's here that you choose better than favoritism, wiser than Joseph's arrogance, and the brothers' envy.
  - b. It's your small stories where you overcome the temptation of Potiphar's wife and the adversity of Pharaoh's prison.
  - c. One small story is not your big story, but if you put enough small stories together and it is.