

# Dysfunctional Family Tree

## Week 2: X-Rated Secret

**Weekly Summary:** Judah's name would eventually become highly respected in Jewish culture, but in his early life Judah was one of the vilest characters in the whole Bible! The closet of his appalling past contained quite a few skeletons. Yet even wicked Judah's heart was not beyond God's capacity or willingness to change. That's what the Christmas story is about—a God who makes his grace available to people who do not deserve him.

### GUILT

- Guilt is caused by sin, but fueled by \_\_\_\_\_.
- ❖ **Matthew 1:1-3a** – This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham: <sup>2</sup>Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, <sup>3</sup>Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar ...
- ❖ **Genesis 37:26-27** – Judah said to his brothers, “What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? <sup>27</sup>Come, let's sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood.”
- ❖ **Genesis 37:31-33** – Then they got Joseph's robe, slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. <sup>32</sup>They took the ornate robe back to their father and said, “We found this. Examine it to see whether it is your son's robe.” <sup>33</sup>He recognized it and said, “It is my son's robe! Some ferocious animal has devoured him. Joseph has surely been torn to pieces.”
- ❖ **Genesis 38:6-7** – Judah got a wife for Er, his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. <sup>7</sup>But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the LORD's sight; so the LORD put him to death.
- ❖ **Genesis 38:11** – Judah then said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, “Live as a widow in your father's household until my son Shelah grows up.” For he thought, “He may die too, just like his brothers.” So Tamar went to live in her father's household.
- ❖ **Genesis 38:12-14** – After a long time Judah's wife, the daughter of Shua, died. When Judah had recovered from his grief, he went up to Timnah, to the men who were shearing his sheep, and his friend Hirah the Adullamite went with him. <sup>13</sup>When Tamar was told, “Your father-in-law is on his way to Timnah to shear his sheep,” <sup>14</sup>she took off her widow's clothes, covered herself with a veil to disguise herself, and then sat down at the entrance to Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah. For she saw that, though Shelah had now grown up, she had not been given to him as his wife.

- ❖ **Genesis 38:15-19** – When Judah saw her, he thought she was a prostitute, for she had covered her face. <sup>16</sup>Not realizing that she was his daughter-in-law, he went over to her by the roadside and said, “Come now, let me sleep with you.” “And what will you give me to sleep with you?” she asked. <sup>17</sup>“I’ll send you a young goat from my flock,” he said. “Will you give me something as a pledge until you send it?” she asked. <sup>18</sup>He said, “What pledge should I give you?” “Your seal and its cord, and the staff in your hand,” she answered. So he gave them to her and slept with her, and she became pregnant by him. <sup>19</sup>After she left, she took off her veil and put on her widow’s clothes again.
  
- ❖ **Genesis 38:24** – About three months later Judah was told, “Your daughter-in-law Tamar is guilty of prostitution, and as a result she is now pregnant.” Judah said, “Bring her out and have her burned to death!”
  - The greatest danger in our hearts is the desire to \_\_\_\_\_ ourselves.
  
- ❖ **Genesis 38:25-26** – As she was being brought out, she sent a message to her father-in-law. “I am pregnant by the man who owns these,” she said. And she added, “See if you recognize whose seal and cord and staff these are.” <sup>26</sup>Judah recognized them and said, “She is more righteous than I, since I wouldn’t give her to my son Shelah.” And he did not sleep with her again.
  
- ❖ **Genesis 38:27-30** – When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. <sup>28</sup>As she was giving birth, one of them put out his hand; so the midwife took a scarlet thread and tied it on his wrist and said, “This one came out first.” <sup>29</sup>But when he drew back his hand, his brother came out, and she said, “So this is how you have broken out!” And he was named Perez. <sup>30</sup>Then his brother, who had the scarlet thread on his wrist, came out. And he was named Zerah.
  - **Big Idea:** Christmas is the story of God’s grace \_\_\_\_\_ into the lives of people who do not deserve it.
  - Jesus declares: “In spite of your sin, you are \_\_\_\_\_.”

## **Digging Deeper**

1. How does guilt create a debt-debtor relationship? How do we experience this in very real ways in our own lives?
2. Have you ever thought that your actions made you unworthy of a relationship with God? What’s true about that? What’s false?
3. If someone said to you, “I’m not good enough to be in church,” how would you respond? What Bible passages/stories might you make use of?
4. How did Judah’s unresolved guilt affect him? In your experience, how does unresolved guilt typically affect a person?
5. Have you ever placed the blame on somebody else, instead of seeing how you were the one at fault?
6. Do you agree that secrecy fuels guilt? Why do people conceal sin (either from others or from God)?
7. Read James 5:16 and 1 John 1:7-9. Why is concealment much more “costly” than confession?
8. **Challenge:** Ask yourself: What areas of your life do you need to bring out from under the shadows? What would happen if you did? Would your life and relationship with God be better or worse?
9. **Homework:** Read Joshua 2 to prepare for next week’s lesson from Jesus’ *Dysfunctional Family Tree*.