**The Ephraim Complex**

Do you know anyone who would call you only when she needs something or is in trouble, but when things are going okay, she socializes with others while hardly recognizing your existence? Then there are those who always feel slighted by not being the first to be called, asked, or tagged. Now imagine a person who embodies both traits who happens to be in your class, office, church, or house. Before wondering who, we ought to examine ourselves whether we fit that description. After seeing what eventually happens to folks like that in today’s study, perhaps we will be more self-aware in order to shed ourselves of manipulative and narcissistic tendencies in our human relationships.

**Discussion Question:** Describe the most difficult coworker or classmate you’ve ever had. What made him or her so unbearable?

1. The passages in Judges personify the tribe of Ephraim and Manasseh, as individuals, treating their history that spanned several hundred years as a life span of these sons of Joseph. Read the following passages and describe Ephraim’s behavior:

a) Joshua 17:15-18 and Judges 1:27-29.

b) Judges 7:22 – 8:3. Why was Ephraim upset at Gideon?

c) Judges 12:1-6. Why was Ephraim angry at Jephthah?

1. What does Psalm 78:9-11 say about the Ephraimites? What can we learn from the story Ephraim?

Read Ephesians 4:17-32. (This is a passage some of us went through last term).

1. What instructions does Paul give to the Ephesians? How do these commands contrast Ephraim’s actions?
2. a) What is the motivation for all of Paul’s instructions?

b) How have you experienced these verses in your life? Where do you have a hard time seeing it? Why?

**Application:** In the previous studies, we saw how God made a way for the judges to be faithful and how God used the weak to lead the strong. Share with one another about an area in your life where you want to experience more of God’s power and grace, and pray for one another.