



## **February Theme:**

**God restores all things (because of His great love)!**

## **Monthly Memory Verse:**

“Surely there is a future, and your hope will not be cut off.”

- **Proverbs 23:18** (ESV)

## **Monthly Challenge Verse:**

“...aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.”

- **2 Corinthians 13:11** (ESV)

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## **February 12<sup>th</sup> | Life Application:**

**God restores those who mourn.**

**Parents:** This month we are learning that **God restores all things**. This week, **God restores those who mourn**. After listening to the sermon, take some time during the week to have great conversations with your kids. Read **pages 109-111** (top of page 111 only) together in *The Action Bible*, and use **Genesis 43** in your Bible for reference.

**Review:** This week, we learn that God restores those who mourn. **What does it mean to “mourn?”** (To experience great sadness, to grieve over a loss, especially of someone we love.) **Have you ever felt this way?** (Discuss: a grandparent dies, a lost treasure, a pet dies, a neighbor moves away, a friend rejects us, etc.)

In **Genesis 43**, we have two people who have mourned. **Who are they?** (Read **Genesis 43:14**: Jacob has lost Joseph and now he knows he could also lose Benjamin. Also, read **Genesis 43:29,30** where Joseph goes away to weep when he sees his long-missed brother Benjamin.)

1. **Jacob allowed his sons to take Benjamin to Egypt. Why?** (Because the family needed food, and also because Simeon was still being held captive until Joseph could see Benjamin.)
2. **Why were the brothers afraid to return?** (**Genesis 42:35**: Because when they opened the sacks of grain, the money they had paid to the Egyptians was in every sack!)
3. **What did Joseph tell them to do?** (**Genesis 43:11-14**: to take double the money to Egypt, along with gifts for Joseph, and also take his youngest son Benjamin as requested by Joseph.)
4. **How did Joseph act when he saw Benjamin?** (He was so touched to see his younger brother that he had to go away and weep. Joseph had mourned over losing his family but especially Benjamin and his father.)
5. **Joseph tested his brothers to see if they had changed. Had they? How?** (They were honest, returning all the money and more. They kept their part of the bargain and brought Benjamin back with them. They showed respect to him. They prostrated themselves before him, showing they were not proud.)
6. Joseph told the brothers to share a meal with him at his home. Read **Genesis 43:32-34**. **Where did everyone sit?** (The Egyptians and the Jews sat apart, and the brothers sat in order of age. Joseph sat by himself.) **Why do you think Joseph sat by himself?** (Because he was not an Egyptian, and his family did not know he was a Jew.)
7. The last test was this: When the food was brought to the table, Benjamin received five times as much as his brothers. **Why was this an important test?** (The brothers had sold Joseph into slavery because they were jealous, and he wanted to see if this made them jealous of Benjamin.) Read the top section of **page 111 in The Action Bible**. **Did the**

**brothers seem jealous?** (*No, they were relieved that Benjamin was safe.*)

Joseph's brothers passed all of the tests he had given them to see if they had truly changed. **How do you think Joseph felt?** (*Discuss: Joseph probably wanted to be able to trust his brothers again but he needed to KNOW they had changed!*)

### Points to Remember

- When someone has hurt us, it's important to forgive them, but that doesn't mean we have to have reconciliation. **What is the difference?** Forgiveness is "letting go" of the right to retaliate and pardoning the person who has offended us. Reconciliation is restoring the relationship.
- **Do we have to have a relationship with someone who continues to hurt us or have bad behavior?** (*No. Forgiveness does not always mean restoration.*)
- **How can we know that they have changed?** (*According to David Chadwick, we can test them to see if they have truly changed before we reconcile with them.*)

Parents, depending on your child's age and maturity, you may need to guide them through forgiveness and reconciliation.

### Family Challenge:

**For younger kids:** When your child has done something wrong, whether intentional or not, make it a practice for them to say: "I'm sorry for..."

And, for the person they have offended, to say: "I forgive you."

**For older kids:** Do the same, but ask them to give more detail. For example:

"I'm sorry I broke your \_\_\_\_\_. I didn't mean to do it, but I know it made you upset."

"I know I hurt your feelings when I said you were \_\_\_\_\_. I'm sorry."

And, the other person has to say how it made them feel, but forgive them. "It did make me feel sad, but I forgive you."

Sometimes, it's hard, especially when kids are older, to admit they are wrong. **Give a forgiveness notebook** to each of your kids and keep it for when it is needed. This can also be done between

kids and parents! Have the “offender” write out to the person they offended why they are sorry, the other person reads it, and writes words of forgiveness in the same notebook. Sometimes both are the offenders. In that case, both should write an “I’m sorry for\_\_\_” letter and trade notebooks, writing an “I forgive you” note back.

Parents, you may want to monitor what is written and send them back to do it again if you don’t see true repentance happening. Forgiveness is not easy, and it takes practice!

**Prayer:**

*Dear God, Thank You for restoring those who mourn and are sad. Joseph was sad, but he forgave his brothers. Help us learn to forgive others and to know when it’s okay to have a relationship with them, as Joseph did when he tested his brothers. We know we need Your wisdom and the examples of people You gave us in the Bible to help us. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*