

## Chapter 44

Read and meditate on Genesis Chapter 44 this week  
and prayerfully answer the following questions before Tuesday's class

In Chapter 44, Joseph is testing his brothers as to their sincerity towards their father and youngest brother Benjamin. Read verses 1-5.

1. Think of other scenarios in the Bible where men of God or God Himself "tested" others to reveal their hearts.

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2. Why would Joseph have the steward purposefully put the cup in *Benjamin's* sack?

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"Joseph tried (*tested*) how his brethren felt towards Benjamin. Had they envied and hated the other son of Rachel as they had hated him, and if they had the same want (*lack*) of feeling towards their father Jacob as heretofore (*before*) they would now have shown it. When the cup was found upon Benjamin, they would have a pretext for leaving him to be a slave. But we cannot judge what men are now, by what they have been formerly; nor what they will do, by what they have done." Matthew Henry Commentary

Have you continued to judge someone based on their past behavior? Sometimes it is difficult to change our opinion of someone even when change has occurred in their life.

Read Luke 6:44. Yes, our actions are an indication to what is going on inside the heart.

Now read 2Corinthians 5:17. A new heart will be proved by new actions.

Joseph is testing the hearts of his brothers by their reaction.

Thank the Lord that He, the Perfect Judge, does not keep record of His children's past sins.

Verse 7

The brothers are making a point. We already returned the money that was in our sacks from our last visit? Why should we be accused of stealing now?

Verse 9

Benson Commentary

“They suspected no fraud, and were so conscious of their innocence, that they consented to suffer the severest punishment, if found guilty. Their offer, however, was rash and inconsiderate.”

3. Do you often speak rashly and without thought? What verse will you commit to memorize that the Holy Spirit can use to strengthen you during that temptation?

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Verses 7-14

Imagine the panic that must have set in when the brothers find that the 2<sup>nd</sup> most powerful man in the known world appears to have been robbed by one of them.

It was the worst-case scenario for the brothers! Benjamin, their father’s beloved son, was the apparent culprit.

It is possible they also feared they wouldn’t be able to return with food to sustain their families.

4. Sometimes the weight of the world *seems* to fall on our shoulders. When you experience “impossible” situations that are out of your control, what Scriptures can comfort you and remind you to surrender those feelings to Him?

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Verse 13, “Then they **tore their clothes** in grief, and when each man had loaded his donkey, they returned to the city.”

From International Standard Bible Encyclopedia:

“The term is (also) used to describe a Hebrew custom which indicated deep sorrow. Upon the customary for the Hebrews to tear their garments.”

Read Genesis 37:29, Job1:20, 2Samuel 13:19, Ezra 9:3

Now read Acts 14:14

5. Who tore their garments in this verse and why do you think they did?

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Here in verse 14 The word that is used for the brothers' action is **naphal: to fall, lie, collapse** whereas in Chapter 43:26 the word used is **shachah: to bow down, pay homage**.

What is the difference? \_\_\_\_\_

“They throw themselves upon Joseph's mercy, and acknowledge the righteousness of God, perhaps thinking of the injury they had formerly done to Joseph, for which they thought God was now reckoning with them. Even in afflictions wherein we believe ourselves wronged by men, we must own that God is righteous, and finds out our sin.” Matthew Henry Commentary

6. Find three New Testament Verses where someone “bowed down” in worship to Jesus.

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7. Who is speaking in Matthew 4:9?

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Read Isaiah 14:12-15

This has been the enemy's desire from the start, to be worshiped as God. The lost people of this world may not think that they are bowing to Satan, but if the Holy Spirit is not in them, if they do not belong to Christ, they are under the devil's authority.

8. Make a list and take time to pray for those that do not understand the bondage they are in. Pray that their eyes will open, and they choose to bow to the Father here on earth, while there is still time.

Write Romans 14:11

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Verses 15-17

What beautiful humility we see in Judah. It appears that Judah has matured much since the time it was his idea to sell his brother to the Ishmaelites in Genesis 37:26-27

And again, Judah, who is son number four, is the brother that is taking a leadership role in the situation.

Judah is willing that they all remain slaves over leaving Benjamin there alone. But Joseph replies, *“Far be it from me to do this. The man in whose possession the cup has been found, he shall be my slave; but as for you, go up in peace to your father.”*”

In a sense, Joseph is saying that the others are innocent. Only Benjamin is guilty and must be enslaved. This would be just and fair if Benjamin had, indeed, stolen the cup.

*“The person who sins will die. A son will not suffer the punishment for the father’s guilt, nor will a father suffer the punishment for the son’s guilt; the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself.”* Ezekiel 18:20

How they react to this circumstance is the final test of their character before Joseph. Have they really changed?

Judah has learned (vs.16) that God sees all. There is nothing hidden from God in all the universe. This realization has humbled him and made him, as it seems, repentant for the wickedness of selling Joseph. Though you and I may not have sold our sibling into slavery, we have all sinned. It is something we battle daily. Thankfully we serve a loving, forgiving God!

Is there an area in your life, like Joseph’s brothers, where God is working and wanting you to repent?

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Ezekiel 18:30-32 *“Therefore I will judge you, house of Israel, each according to his conduct,” declares the Lord GOD. “Repent and turn away from all your offenses, so that wrongdoing does not become a stumbling block to you. 31Hurl away from you all your offenses which you have committed and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! For why should you die, house of Israel? 32For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies,” declares the Lord GOD. “Therefore, repent and live!””*

Verses 18-34

“The appeal of Judah is to Joseph irresistible. The repentance of his brothers, and their attachment to Benjamin, have been demonstrated in the most satisfactory manner. This is all that Joseph sought.” Barnes Notes on the Bible

Verse 33, *“So now, please let your servant remain as a slave to my lord instead of the boy, and let the boy go up with his brothers. 34For how shall I go up to my father if the boy is not with me? I fear that I may see the evil that would overtake my father.””*

Judah was willing to take Benjamin’s place, to take Benjamin’s punishment, to allow Benjamin to return to his father.

Another beautiful reminder of Jesus and his willingness to sacrifice Himself so that His brothers and sisters can one day return to the Father.

1Peter3:18, *“For Christ also suffered for sins once for all time, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;”*

8. Find three verses about Christ dying for you, in your place. Which one touches your heart the most and Why?

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What a beautiful chapter! Grace, unmerited favor being shown to us. And what an example to us of how forgiveness can and will triumph over all sin. Joseph had every right and certainly every reason to be angry with his brothers, but he chose grace and forgiveness. As should we.