

Cultivate Genesis Study  
Chapter 42

Read and meditate on Genesis Chapter 42 this week  
and prayerfully answer the following questions before Tuesday's class.

In Chapter 42, we see that the famine did not only affect Egypt, but Jacob's family was also suffering in Canaan. Pastor Skip said, "Everyone knew there was a famine."

These events happened 21 years after Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers.

In verse 1,2, we see Jacob's frustration as a Dad. Did they lose livestock to the famine or keep close to home with no plentiful pastures for their flocks? His sons were downcast, worried and weakened.

Do we allow our day to day circumstances to wash over our faith?

Jacob sent them off to Egypt buy food.

The round trip to Egypt and back would have been 250-300 miles and taken the men about 6 weeks to travel.

1. Do you think Jacob sending his sons to Egypt was a lack of faith or a leading from the Lord? Scripture does not specifically say.

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If Jacob wasn't looking to God for direction, he was looking to Egypt (the world). The answers to famine in our lives is not found in this world.

2. Read Matthew 5:6, Nehemiah 9:15, Revelation 7:16,17, John 6:35.

Which verse stood out to you and why?

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While Jacob's grandfather Abraham had shown a lack of faith in going down to Egypt during a famine, Jacob's decisive instruction may have **showed his faith in God's provision.**

Do you just sit around and wait for God to answer your prayers, or do you put action to your words?

Effective Prayer Life By Chuck Smith, Prayer In Action

“Prayer should never be an excuse for idleness or fool-hardy action. God has given you good common sense and He expects you to use it. If you’re being threatened by an enemy, pray first—but then take what defensive measures are necessary. **Action following prayer is not a lack of faith.** Be practical. If you ask God to heal your poor eyesight, don’t throw away your eyeglasses before the optometrist has a chance to retest you and says that you’ve been healed. Prayer shouldn’t lead you into reckless or careless actions. It should create a diligence within you. In fact, prayer will lead you into activity more often than it will lead you into inactivity. Pray first, then take action. Some people are very lazy and think that God is going to do all the work for them. You question them about something and they use the excuse, “I’m just leaving that in the hands of the Lord.” No, the Lord expects you to act, too! For instance, if you need a job, you don’t just sit at home and wait for someone to call. You ask God to give you one. Then go out and submit applications every place you can. Then trust that the Lord will open the door to the job He wants you to have. Don’t just sit there and say, “Okay, Lord, bring me the job.” You don’t say that when you have to eat. You don’t lie in bed and say, “If you want me to eat today, Lord, just drop the food in my mouth.” You’re not passive about that, and you shouldn’t be passive about the other areas of your life.”

Verse 4, *“But Jacob did not send Joseph’s brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he said, “I am afraid that harm might befall him.””*

Benjamin was the only thing of his beloved Rachel that remained. Because Jacob had thought Joseph dead for the past twenty years, there was no way he was going to send Rachel’s other son into danger. He could not bear the thought of losing her second son, as well. Benjamin was not a young boy. He was now twenty-four years old.

3. Do you wonder if Jacob had any suspicion that there was more to the story of Joseph’s disappearance than what his sons were telling? Remember that he had first-hand experience with both sibling rivalry and deception. What are your thoughts?

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Note that there was no protest from the other brothers in leaving Benjamin behind. There is no indication that the other sons grumbled about this. Why would Joseph’s brothers not have grumbled?

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Perhaps the brothers were feeling guilt over their treatment of Joseph *and* their father. The guilt of unrepented sin weighs heavy on us and is not truly forgotten.

Jesus sets us free.

4. Find verses regarding you being free because of Christ. Write down two favorites.

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“My chains are gone. I’ve been set free.” – Chris Tomlin

Read verses 6-9.

Verse 9 says “he remembered his dreams” Read Genesis 37:5-10. Joseph had two dreams, which dream was this?

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The brothers did not realize, of course, that their bowing was the very dream for which they had hated Joseph coming true. Do you think Joseph may have anticipated this day? \_\_\_\_\_

His brothers bowed down to him, not recognizing him. Joseph would have looked and spoken like an Egyptian. Why would they consider that their brother could be in such a position? But now, life and death were in Joseph’s hands.

The brothers were blind and could not see or recognize Joseph. Just as we were once blind and could not see our sin or our Savior’s love for us.

In verses 10-17, Joseph began testing his brothers to reveal what was in their hearts.

5. Do you find any harshness or cruelty in Joseph’s words and actions in these verses? Explain

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Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown: “... and spake roughly...”; “It would be an injustice to Joseph’s character to suppose that this stern manner was prompted by any vindictive feelings — he never indulged any resentment against others who had injured him. But he spoke in the authoritative tone of the governor in order to elicit some much - longed - for information respecting the state of his father’s family,...”

In verse 11, After hearing “*your servants are honest men*”, what do you think Joseph’s thoughts might have been at this point toward his brothers?

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Joseph had to first determine their true attitudes before he would tell them who he was.

Verse 17

He put them in prison for three days. The language is more accurately a place of confinement, like a “house arrest”. The three days they were detained was no comparison to the years he suffered and endured by their actions.

Joseph likely wanted to be sure that his brothers had not killed Benjamin since they had contemplated killing him all those years ago.

6. Knowing Joseph’s character and love for God, what do you think Joseph’s true intentions were, what was his strategy?

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Spurgeon Study Bible Notes: “Perhaps we will object to this - that Joseph seemed, for a while, to afflict and tantalize his brothers. By no means! He was seeking their good. The love he bore to them was wise and prudent. God, who is far more loving than Joseph, frequently afflicts us to bring us to repentance and heal us of many evils.”

God wants us to completely give up the old woman, so that we cannot or will not rely on ourselves.

Read 2Corinthians 5:17

Verse 18, “I fear God.” Meaning *Elohim* The same used in Genesis 1:1. This would have been a remarkable thing for Jacob’s sons to hear from an Egyptian, yet it went over their heads.

Read verses 21-28.

Joseph’s brothers come to an understanding of their sin against Joseph and God. Read Psalm 41:4, 2Samuel 12:13. They had hidden their sin for 21 years and now their circumstances have brought it to the surface.

It is interesting that of all the sins the brothers committed to date (Genesis 34:25, Genesis 38:24-26, Genesis 35:22), that the sin of selling Joseph is the one they attributed to as the cause of their current suffering. Read 2Corinthians 7:10

7. What do you think the brothers really needed at this point?

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Verse 24

8. Why Simeon? Why would Joseph keep Simeon instead of Reuben, who was the oldest?

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Verses 25-28

Romans 11:22

Joseph showed kindness to his brothers by filling their grain bags and returning their money. May we never take for granted the Mercy and Grace of the Lord. Romans 2:4

“Joseph did this for his brothers *before they were reconciled to him*. They had yet to repent or ask forgiveness – yet He loved them and cared for them. He gave to them and they didn’t even know it! In the same way, Jesus gives us unexpected, undeserved blessings. Some are obvious and up front, and some are hidden to be discovered later – but He gives to us *even before we were reconciled to Him*”. David Guzik

In verse 28, Jacob’s sons are fearful and face another test. Do they return with Benjamin risking being accused of stealing their sacks of grain, by not paying for them? Or do they stay in Canaan and let Simeon die in prison? Will they trust the God that has “done this” to them?

9. Read James 1:3. How does testing of our faith improve our Christian walk? In what way has your faith been tested in the past, that brought you closer to the Lord?

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Verses 35-38

“If you drink of the river of affliction near its outfall, it is brackish and offensive to the taste, but if you will trace it to its source, where it rises at the foot of the throne of God, you will find its waters to be sweet and health-giving.” - Spurgeon

Jacob cried out that everything was against him but, not only were things not working against him but, they were working for his good and the good of his whole family.

Matthew Henry Commentary- "Jacob plainly distrusted his sons, remembering that he never saw Joseph since he had been with them. It is bad with a family, when children behave so ill that their parents know not how to trust them. Jacob gives up Joseph for gone, and Simeon and Benjamin as in danger; and concludes, All these things are against me. It proved otherwise, that all these things were for him, were working together for his good, and the good of his family. We often think that to be against us, which is really for us. We are afflicted in body, estate, name, and in our relations; and think all these things are against us, whereas they are really working for us a weight of glory."

Verse 37- What satisfaction could Jacob possibly get out of killing two of his own grandsons? Reuben obviously spoke without thinking.

Jacob saw his life as a half empty glass, missing all his blessings. He was blessed with:

Ten sons able to make the journey to Egypt to buy food for all his family.

He had enough donkeys for each of his sons and silver to buy the food needed for all the families.

The famine was great but God's provision even greater!

God filled their sacks with grain, gave them their money back and provided extra food for their journey back to Canaan.

We don't see Jacob waiting on God, looking to Him for wisdom or instruction. What we do see is God's faithful hand upon His chosen people.

Have you, like Jacob, focused on the negative circumstances in your life, instead of praising God for His faithful provisions? Offer Him a prayer of confession and repentance.

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Read Romans 8:28

10. How does this Scripture encourage you?

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In these last days may we not be blind to our sin and so full of ourselves; whether it be pride of life or self-pity that we will not humble ourselves and cry out to God.