

The Story of Joseph: Seeing the Bigger Picture

Week 8: Family Drama

Scripture:

Genesis 43:1-18

Motivation (Why You Need This):

Age 17 - The betrayal (Genesis 37)

- Joseph receives the robe and has dreams (Gen 37:2–11)
- Sold by his brothers; taken to Egypt (Gen 37:28)

Late Teens/Early 20's - The rise in Potiphar's house (Genesis 39:1–6)

Serves in Potiphar's house; rises in responsibility

Early/Mid 20's - The fall into prison (Genesis 39:19–20; 40)

- Falsely accused and imprisoned (Gen 39:19–20)
- Interprets dreams for the cupbearer and baker (Gen 40)

Two full years later - Still in prison (Genesis 41:1, 14)

- Pharaoh dreams (Gen 41:1)
- Joseph is summoned to interpret (Gen 41:14)

Age 30 - The promotion (Genesis 41:33–46)

Joseph interprets and points Pharaoh to God

Elevated to second-in-command (Gen 41:46)

God's plan becomes clear: 7 years of plenty, 7 years of famine (prepare now)

Ages 30–37 - The plenty years (Genesis 41:47–49)

Joseph stores up grain during abundance

Age 37 - The famine begins (Genesis 41:53–54)

The crisis starts; food becomes the pressure point

Age 39 - Where we are now: brothers in Egypt (Genesis 42)

- The famine forces Joseph's brothers to Egypt (Gen 42:1–20)
- The brothers bow (dreams coming true) but don't recognize it's Joseph
- Joseph tests them by asking them to bring their younger brother
- Jacob refuses to allow Benjamin to return to Egypt with the brothers

Information (What You Need to Know):

Where we left off last week...

Genesis 42:38 (ESV) But he said, “My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he is the only one left. If harm should happen to him on the journey that you are to make, you would bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to Sheol.”

■ Things went from bad to worse for Jacob and his sons

- ✓ The famine got worse and Jacob asked his sons to get more food from Egypt

Genesis 43:1 (ESV) Now the famine was severe in the land. **2** And when they had eaten the grain that they had brought from Egypt, their father said to them, “Go again, buy us a little food.”

- ✓ Judah tried to reason with his father

Genesis 43:3 (ESV) But Judah said to him, “The man solemnly warned us, saying, ‘You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.’ **4** If you will send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food. **5** But if you will not send him, we will not go down, for the man said to us, ‘You shall not see my face, unless your brother is with you.’”

- ✓ Jacob asks his sons a “*why did you do this*” question

Genesis 43:6 (ESV) Israel said, “Why did you treat me so badly as to tell the man that you had another brother?” **7** They replied, “The man questioned us carefully about ourselves and our kindred, saying, ‘Is your father still alive? Do you have another brother?’ What we told him was in answer to these questions. Could we in any way know that he would say, ‘Bring your brother down?’”

- ✓ Judah offered to bear the blame forever if anything happened to Benjamin

Genesis 43:8 (ESV) And Judah said to Israel his father, “Send the boy with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and you and also our little ones. **9** I will be a pledge of his safety. From my hand you shall require him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever. **10** If we had not delayed, we would now have returned twice.”

■ Jacob realized that he had no other choice then to *let go*

- ✓ Jacob told them to take back food and money

Genesis 43:11 (ESV) Then their father Israel said to them, “If it must be so, then do this: take some of the choice fruits of the land in your bags, and carry

a present down to the man, a little balm and a little honey, gum, myrrh, pistachio nuts, and almonds. 12 Take double the money with you. Carry back with you the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks. Perhaps it was an oversight.

- ✓ Jacob told them to take Benjamin

Genesis 43:13 (ESV) Take also your brother, and arise, go again to the man.

- ✓ Jacob told them to go with the Lord's mercy, and that he would trust the Lord to do as He saw fit (no matter what happened)

Genesis 43:14 (ESV) May God Almighty grant you mercy before the man, and may he send back your other brother and Benjamin. And as for me, if I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.”

Jacob's acquiescence to let Benjamin go ended with prayer for the brothers' and Benjamin's safety and with a cry of being a helpless victim of circumstances. Pessimism had apparently set into his heart and deepened after the loss of Joseph. - MacArthur Study Bible

- **The brothers now stand *vulnerable* and *as they are* before Joseph**

- ✓ Joseph asked for a meal to be prepared for his brothers and himself

Genesis 43:16 (ESV) When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, “Bring the men into the house, and slaughter an animal and make ready, for the men are to dine with me at noon.” 17 The man did as Joseph told him and brought the men to Joseph's house.

- ✓ Joseph's brothers were afraid

Genesis 43:18 (ESV) And the men were afraid because they were brought to Joseph's house, and they said, “It is because of the money, which was replaced in our sacks the first time, that we are brought in, so that he may assault us and fall upon us to make us servants and seize our donkeys.”

Application (What You Need to Do):

As we conclude this part of the story as Joseph's brothers' fate hangs in the balance, it brings a deep thought to my mind from Proverbs...

Proverbs 28:1 (ESV) The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion.

- The guilty conscience is always *looking over their shoulder*
- The conscience free from wrongdoing can live in peace and boldness

The choices you and I make now will determine how free we can live...