

JOSEPH
Reconciliation
Genesis 44-45

Age does not always result in wisdom and better character. Sometimes, it just leads to being an OLD FOOL. I am always aware of this when I see a man who was known to be an adulterer and a cheat in his past, but who now is just old and crippled and weak. But just because he is a weak old man does not mean he is now REFORMED. He may just be a weak old SCOUNDREL! Joseph did not assume that his brothers were all reformed either. He had to TEST their character. This testing was actually an OPPORTUNITY for the brothers to RECONCILE with Joseph and REDEFINE their future. It was a way for their repentance and change of heart to be revealed through a WISE PROCESS. A process like this always gives room for someone to admit FAULT and accept CONSEQUENCES. Then, abundant GRACE can be SHOWN and RECEIVED.

THE TESTING OF THE BROTHERS' CHARACTER. [Review the "stolen" Silver Cup.]

Genesis 44:12-16 NIV

12 Then the steward proceeded to search, beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest. And the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. 13 **At this, they tore their clothes. Then they all loaded their donkeys and returned to the city.** 14 Joseph was still in the house when Judah and his brothers came in, and they threw themselves to the ground before him. 15 Joseph said to them, "What is this you have done? Don't you know that a man like me can find things out by divination?" 16 "What can we say to my lord?" **Judah replied. "What can we say? How can we prove our innocence? God has uncovered your servants' guilt. We are now my lord's slaves--we ourselves and the one who was found to have the cup."**

Am I still ruled by my former sins and selfishness? How can we/others KNOW?

These brothers have been driven by God to a PERSONAL CRISIS. They are not just dealing with a seemingly cruel Egyptian leader; they are having to face their own INTERNAL SINS. They cannot separate the two. **God**, Judah says, "has UNCOVERED their GUILT." They were not guilty of stealing Joseph's cup, but they were absolutely guilty of "murdering" their own brother. Judah makes it clear that they now ACCEPT their punishment. There is NO DEFENSE. **They demonstrate repentance by the CHOICES they freely make concerning Benjamin in this test that Joseph puts them through.**

***The brothers' response to Benjamin's "guilt" was UNIFIED and SELFLESS!**

- They tore their clothes – a sign of personal grief and brokenness. **(Vs. 13)**
- They went back with Benjamin instead of heeding the Stewards offer. **(Vs. 10)**
- They REFUSED to let Benjamin take the punishment alone. **(Vs. 16b)**
- *They let Judah be the spokesman for their guilt. **[ONE VOICE.]**
- Judah ACKNOWLEDGED their GUILT. "God has UNCOVERED our guilt." **(Vs. 16a)**

CONFESSION before God is the NECESSARY FIRST STEP in receiving FORGIVENESS. God loves to forgive, but we must SEE our need for it and acknowledge that to him. Notice that Judah declares their guilt **before God!** Have you ever done this?

Joseph gave them one final test when he insisted that only Benjamin become his slave, and that the brothers could go home in PEACE to their father! **Genesis 44:17 NIV**
17 But Joseph said, "Far be it from me to do such a thing! Only the man who was found to have the cup will become my slave. The rest of you, go back to your father in peace."

This was the MOMENT OF TRUTH. Would these brothers leave Benjamin in Egypt and go back to their father, Jacob, with a fabricated story about his demise? They did not! They CHOSE to SUFFER with Benjamin! **Again, they allowed JUDAH to be their spokesman (the very one that had formerly come up with the plan to sell Joseph into slavery!).** His speech is one of the most moving pleas for mercy in the entire Bible! **Genesis 44:18-34 NLT**

18 Then Judah stepped forward and said, "Please, my lord, let your servant say just one word to you. Please, do not be angry with me, even though you are as powerful as Pharaoh himself. **19** "My lord, previously you asked us, your servants, 'Do you have a father or a brother?' **20** And we responded, 'Yes, my lord, we have a father who is an old man, and his youngest son is a child of his old age. **His full brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother's children, and his father loves him very much.'** **21** "And you said to us, 'Bring him here so I can see him with my own eyes.' **22** But we said to you, 'My lord, the boy cannot leave his father, for his father would die.' **23** But you told us, 'Unless your youngest brother comes with you, you will never see my face again.' **24** "So we returned to your servant, our father, and told him what you had said. **25** Later, when he said, 'Go back again and buy us more food,' **26** we replied, 'We can't go unless you let our youngest brother go with us. We'll never get to see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us.' **27** "Then my father said to us, 'As you know, my wife had two sons, **28** and one of them went away and never returned. Doubtless he was torn to pieces by some wild animal. I have never seen him since. **29** Now if you take his brother away from me, and any harm comes to him, you will send this grieving, white-haired man to his grave.' **30** **"And now, my lord, I cannot go back to my father without the boy. Our father's life is bound up in the boy's life.** **31** If he sees that the boy is not with us, our father will die. We, your servants, will indeed be responsible for sending that grieving, white-haired man to his grave. **32** **My lord, I guaranteed to my father that I would take care of the boy. I told him, 'If I don't bring him back to you, I will bear the blame forever.'** **33** **"So please, my lord, let me stay here as a slave instead of the boy, and let the boy return with his brothers.** **34** For how can I return to my father if the boy is not with me? I couldn't bear to see the anguish this would cause my father!"

Judah's INTERCESSION for Benjamin and his brothers is a clear sign of his repentance! **Judah actually gave us a glimpse of Jesus in his INTERCESSION.** [Jesus was the Lion of Judah!]

-Judah showed LOVE and COMPASSION for his aged, grieving father.

[Jesus' love for us in our frail, failing state.]

-Judah took PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY for Benjamin's "crime."

[Jesus took our sin on himself.]

-Judah PASSIONATELY PLED with Joseph to release Benjamin and his brothers, and to take him alone! [Jesus took our PUNISHMENT!]

Judah was like Jesus in his intercession, but Jesus FAR EXCEEDED him in his work as an Intercessor! **Hebrews 7:25-27 NIV**

25 Therefore he is able to save completely^[a] those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. **26** He is the kind of high priest we need because he is holy and blameless, unstained by sin. He has been set apart from sinners and has been given the highest place of honor in heaven.^[b] **27** Unlike those other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices every day. They did this for their own sins first and then for the sins of the people. **But Jesus did this once for all when he offered himself as the sacrifice for the people's sins.**

THE RESTORATION OF THE BROTHERS' RELATIONSHIP WITH JOSEPH

I believe that Joseph demonstrated FORGIVENESS for his brothers by the way he acted over the 13 years that he had been separated from his family. **Our ability to be reconciled with someone that has offended us is made possible by our ACCEPTANCE of God's work in us during that season of betrayal. God's goodness was not diminished by the sins of others!** But, Joseph's RECONCILIATION with those brothers had to involve a rebuilding of TRUST between them. **Forgiveness and reconciliation are 2 different things! You can forgive someone without being reconciled with them, because reconciliation requires REPENTANCE from the offender.** When that happens, the world will begin to change! **Genesis 45:1-15 NIV**

1 Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, "Have everyone leave my presence!" So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers. **2** And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and Pharaoh's household heard about it. **3** Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still living?" But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence. **4** **Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me." When they had done so, he said, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! 5** And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. **6** For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will be no plowing and reaping. **7** **But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. 8** "So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt. **9** Now hurry back to my father and say to him, 'This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; don't delay. **10** You shall live in the region of Goshen and be near me--you, your children and grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and all you have. **11** I will provide for you there, because five years of famine are still to come.

Otherwise you and your household and all who belong to you will become destitute.' 12 "You can see for yourselves, and so can my brother Benjamin, that it is really I who am speaking to you. 13 Tell my father about all the honor accorded me in Egypt and about everything you have seen. And bring my father down here quickly." 14 **Then he threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin embraced him, weeping. 15 And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterward his brothers talked with him.**

This was such a DRAMATIC MOMENT! Can you imagine how SHOCKED these brothers were when Joseph transformed from a stern Egyptian ruler into their "dead" brother? This is the stuff that movies are made of! **But God's work in Joseph paved the way for it.**

UNCONDITIONAL FORGIVENESS PAVES THE WAY FOR TRUE RECONCILIATION.

Forgiveness frees you to see God's hand in everything you endure!

- Joseph did not DENY the fact that his brothers had sold him into SLAVERY. (Vs. 4)
- Joseph ACCEPTED that God was SOVEREIGN over his brother's actions and his Subsequent circumstances. (Vss. 7-8)

"How wonderfully those two things meet in practical harmony — the free will of man and the predestination of God! Man acts just as freely and just as guiltily as if there were no predestination whatever; and God ordains, arranges, supervises, and over-rules, just as accurately as if there were no free will in the universe." (Spurgeon)

Forgiveness keeps the door open for reconciliation!

Joseph could have decided that he would not only NOT forgive his brothers, but that he would instead exact REVENGE upon them if he ever saw them. This was not what he did. His heart was TENDER toward his brothers from the moment he saw them because he kept a tender heart toward God from the moment they sinned against him! This allowed him to welcome his brothers back into relationship with him when he saw the genuineness of their repentance.

GENUINE REPENTANCE ALLOWS OTHERS TO BECOME VULNERABLE TO US.

Only God knows when someone is truly repentant, but he has made a way for it to be somewhat evident to others; and it is not TEARS. **Sorrow alone is not evidence of repentance.** Paul makes this clear in **2 Corinthians 7:10**, when he says, "For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience **leads us away from sin** and results in salvation. There's no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death." True repentance results in INNER and OUTER CHANGE. **These brothers were not the same men that sold Joseph into slavery.** At whatever point repentance was actually complete within them, it became EVIDENT when they ACTED far differently from how they had acted 22 years before. They were no longer bitterly set against a son of Rachel and Jacob. They were not resentful of Jacob and Joseph's kind treatment and favoritism of Benjamin. They were not trying to save their

own skin any longer, but they were acting like loving and protective big brothers. How beautiful is that? Joseph saw this, and it opened the door for one of the most powerful stories of reconciliation in human history!

Joseph's became emotionally open when he saw their repentance.

-Contrast this weeping with the other times he has wept so far! He HID it!

Joseph was willing to be ALONE with his brothers when he saw their repentance.

-Joseph was even willing to allow them to get CLOSE to him w/o protection at this point

-Joseph began to speak THEIR LANGUAGE when he opened up to them!

Joseph showed open AFFECTION for them. (Vs. 15)

-Open, friendly conversation between them began once again.

Joseph was willing to demonstrate GRACE to them when he saw their repentance.

-He gave them PROVISIONS and GIFTS! (Vss. 21-23)

Joseph was willing to LIVE NEAR to them when he saw their repentance! (Vs. 10)

This was not a TEMPORARY arrangement. He wanted back in their lives!

REPENTANCE CAN "BRING BACK TO LIFE" SOMETHING THAT YOU THOUGHT WAS FOREVER LOST!

-The brothers thought that Joseph was DEAD.

-Jacob believed that Joseph was DEAD.

GENUINE REPENTANCE BRINGS ABOUT A GREATER DELIVERANCE THAN YOU COULD HAVE IMAGINED. This was far more than just the reunion of a family, it was a humanitarian RESCUE from famine, the birth of a NATION, and the preservation of GENERATIONS of Hebrews! **Genesis 45:16-28 NIV**

16 When the news reached Pharaoh's palace that Joseph's brothers had come, Pharaoh and all his officials were pleased. 17 Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Tell your brothers, 'Do this: Load your animals and return to the land of Canaan, 18 and bring your father and your families back to me. I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you can enjoy the fat of the land.' 19 "You are also directed to tell them, 'Do this: Take some carts from Egypt for your children and your wives, and get your father and come. 20 Never mind about your belongings, because the best of all Egypt will be yours.' " 21 So the sons of Israel did this. Joseph gave them carts, as Pharaoh had commanded, and he also gave them provisions for their journey. 22 To each of them he gave new clothing, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred shekels of silver and five sets of clothes. 23 And this is what he sent to his father: ten donkeys loaded with the best things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain and bread and other provisions for his journey. 24 **Then he sent his brothers away, and as they were leaving he said to them, "Don't quarrel on the way!"** 25 **So they went up out of Egypt and came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan.** 26 They told him, "Joseph is still alive! In fact, he is ruler of all Egypt." Jacob was stunned; he did not believe them. 27 **But when they told him everything Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts**

Joseph had sent to carry him back, the spirit of their father Jacob revived. 28 And Israel said, "I'm convinced! My son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."

What a story! So many people seem to be in desperate need of this same kind of relational healing. Does there need to be a reconciliation of sorts in your life that hinges on YOUR humility and repentance? The next step is up to you, by God's GRACE.

Let's pray.

JOSEPH Olive Branch Week 7 Facilitation Guide Reconciliation

Start talking

What has been your greatest takeaway from this series on Joseph so far?

Start thinking.

Why do so many people grow older without growing any wiser?

Start sharing.

[Read Genesis 44:12-16.](#) Talk about the ways that this passage demonstrates confession and repentance. Why was the test that Joseph put his brothers such a necessary process?

[Read Genesis 44:18-34 and Hebrews 7:25-27.](#) How does Judah's speech reveal a love for his father and a willingness to face his own sins? How does he reflect the character of Christ in this speech?

What evidences have you seen so far in Genesis that Joseph had forgiven his brothers before he was reconciled with them? What is the difference between forgiveness and reconciliation?

[Read Genesis 45:1-15.](#) How did Joseph demonstrate vulnerability with his brothers in this passage?

Start praying.

Pray for someone that has hurt you in your life.

Start doing.

Forgive that person you just prayed for, even if they don't want to reconcile with you. Why might this be difficult for you?