

From Bitter to Better: Choosing to Forgive

Lesson 3

Genesis 41:1-42:38

August 30, 2020

A Turn of Fortune

Introduction

Joseph was abandoned and betrayed by his brothers and sold into slavery at a young age. He was taken to Egypt and spent much of his adult life enslaved, imprisoned, and separated from his father and family. Despite this, Joseph recognized God's presence in his life and gave God credit for all of his achievements and abilities. He even named his two sons in honor of the blessings that God had given him.

Joseph rose to be second in command in Egypt, second only to Pharaoh himself. So, when his brothers came to Egypt looking for help, Joseph had every right to reject them and even could imprison them. Instead, he reacted out of forgiveness, thankfulness, and love. His brothers were confused, scared, and flabbergasted.

Jesus wants us to react to those that sin against us in the same way that Joseph responded to his brothers. Although the world might say that we have the "right" to be angry and vengeful, Jesus reminds us that these emotions are deadly to our hearts and emotions. On the contrary, the more that we focus on the ways that Jesus has blessed us and forgiven us, the more we will be able to forgive those that have offended us, and the more the Holy Spirit can work in our lives.

Memory verse: "For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."—Matthew 6:14-15

Pray and read Genesis 41:1-42:38. What questions or observations do you have about these passages?

What do the passages say?

1. Where did Joseph give credit to his ability to interpret dreams? (Genesis 40:8, Genesis 41:16, Genesis 41:25)
2. How did Joseph say that he was able to interpret dreams? (Genesis 41:15-16)
3. Why did Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of his house and second in command in the nation? (Genesis 41:37-44)
4. What did Joseph name his two sons that were born in Egypt? (Genesis 41:51-52)
5. What was Joseph's initial way of acting toward his brothers when they came to Egypt? (Genesis 42:6-17)
6. What was the deal Joseph made with his brothers to sell them grain? (Genesis 42:18-20)

7. What did Joseph's brothers think was happening to them, and why? What was his reaction to this information? (Genesis 42:21-24)
8. What was Jacob's reaction to the terms of the deal? (Genesis 42:36)

What does the passage mean?

1. Jacob clearly loved Joseph and Benjamin more than his other ten sons. What emotions do you imagine Joseph's brothers felt toward Joseph as he was telling them about his dream? How do you think Joseph felt when he realized his dream came true? (Genesis 37:2-9, 42:8)
2. Joseph was abandoned by his brothers, sold into slavery, falsely accused of rape and imprisoned by a tyrant, but God also blessed him during all of these trials. What can you see in these passages that show Joseph was obedient to God and thankful for his blessings rather than bitter about his trials? (Genesis 39:8-10, 41:51-52, 45:5-7, 21-23)

3. God's presence with Joseph was apparent to those who were around him. What was it about Joseph that made it obvious that God was blessing him? (Genesis 39:3, 41:38-39)

4. Joseph's story quickly turned for his good, seemingly out of nowhere. But Joseph recognizes God's plan for him. What was God's purpose for Joseph's trials? (Genesis 41:39-40, 45:7)

Applying the passage

1. Joseph recognized that his rise to authority was due to God's blessings and guidance. He chose thankfulness, and he gave God credit rather than glorifying himself. Has there been a time that you have seen a person in your life do the same thing? What effect did this person's example have on you and those around you? (Genesis 41:16, 51-52)

