

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

Genesis

JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS REUNITED

Genesis 42-46

Elementary Lesson

Year One, Quarter Two, Lesson Seven

[0200]

AIM: to use the story of Joseph and his brothers reuniting to teach my students the importance of forgiveness

OBJECTS TO HAVE: The word “forgive” written on a card
 A picture of Joseph’s ten brothers
 A picture of Benjamin
 A picture of a saddlebag
 A picture of a silver cup
 Your Bible

POINT OF CONTACT: Can anybody read this word to me? That’s right—forgive. Say that word with me, ready?
Forgive.

Do you know what it means to forgive? It means that, when someone has done something to hurt you, you are willing to say, “That’s okay. I’m not angry at you. I’m not going to hold it against you. I’m going to do my best to forget about it.”

That’s a very difficult thing to do, isn’t it? When someone does something to hurt us, we want to get angry, stay angry, and even try to get back at them. But God says that we are supposed to forgive those who hurt us.

Today we are going to find out how Joseph was able to forgive his brothers, even after all that they had done to hurt him.

STORY: Last week I told you that Pharaoh had two dreams. Pharaoh’s two dreams were a warning that a famine was coming. (A famine is a time when there is no food, because there is no water. Plants die, so there are no fruit or vegetables to eat. The animals have nothing to eat, so there is no meat.) Pharaoh appointed Joseph to help to prepare for the famine. First came seven years of plenty and prosperity, just like Joseph had warned. After the seven years of prosperity came seven years of terrible famine. Joseph spent the seven years of prosperity storing away food for the people of Egypt. Joseph wanted to have enough food stored away so that when the seven years of famine came, everyone would have enough to eat. Finally, the seven years of famine did come. People came from many different countries to get food, because the famine was everywhere, and they had heard that the Egyptians had food to sell.

Back in the land of Canaan where Joseph was from, Joseph’s brothers and his father were starting to get worried. They did not know that this famine was coming, and they had not prepared. They were getting very low on food, and they did not know what they were going to do. Jacob, Joseph’s dad, heard that there was food far away in Egypt. He decided to send his sons to Egypt to buy some food. Jacob called his ten sons together and instructed them to travel to Egypt and buy some food for the family. Jacob’s ten sons loaded up their donkeys and left for Egypt.

When they got to Egypt, they went to the man who was in charge of selling the food. Who was that man? It was their brother, Joseph. It had been over ten years since they had last seen their brother, and Joseph had grown up a lot. Joseph’s brothers did not know that Joseph was in Egypt. Joseph’s brothers did not recognize him...but Joseph recognized them. Joseph did not tell them who he was. In fact, Joseph did not even speak their language. Though he still understood the Hebrew language, Joseph spoke Egyptian, and he spoke to them through an interpreter.

Joseph wanted to find out how his family was doing, but he did not want them to find out who he was just yet. So Joseph said, “Why are there so many of you traveling together?”

They said, “We are ten brothers. We have another brother who is dead, and a younger brother who is home with our father.”

Joseph thought, “Good, my father is still alive.” But then Joseph said, “I don’t believe you. I don’t think that you are brothers. I think that you are spies, and that you came here on a secret mission to look over the land.”

Joseph’s brothers said, “No, we’re not spies, honest!”

Then Joseph said, “Alright, if you want to prove to me that you are really not spies, leave one of you here as my prisoner, and go back home and bring back the younger brother that you told me about.”

Joseph's brothers did not know what to do, but they had no choice. They left their brother Simeon behind, took their food, and went back home.

But before they left, Joseph did something very special for them. He took the money that they had paid for their food, and when they weren't looking, he had it put in their saddlebags. He was giving them all of their food for free! On their way home Joseph's brothers stopped at a motel to sleep. When they opened their bags and found their money they thought, "Oh, no! That man in Egypt is going to think we stole this money! How did this happen?"

When they finally got home and told their father Jacob what had happened, and that the man in Egypt wanted them to bring their youngest son Benjamin back with them, Jacob said, "No way! If anything ever happened to Benjamin I would die. Benjamin cannot go with you."

But before too long the food was all gone. And Jacob said, "I guess I have no choice. Take Benjamin with you, go back to Egypt, and get us more food." Jacob knew that he might never see his youngest son Benjamin again.

When Joseph's brothers got back to Egypt, they were afraid to see Joseph. They still did not know that it was Joseph, but they thought they were going to be accused of stealing from him. When they went to the market to buy the food, a servant said, "The man in charge of the food wants to see all of you in his house." They thought that they were in big trouble. But when they got there, they found that Joseph had made a big dinner for all of them. Joseph's brothers began to explain about the money, and how they didn't know how it had gotten back into their bags. But Joseph said, "I don't know what you mean. I have your money. Everything's fine."

Joseph brought Simeon out to be reunited with his brothers. Then Joseph saw his young brother Benjamin. Joseph was so overwhelmed to see his brother again that it made him cry. Joseph went alone and cried, so his brothers would not see him.

After their big meal, Joseph sent his brothers away with more food. He still did not tell them who he was. But before they left, Joseph had one of his servants place a very special cup in Benjamin's bag, so that it would look like Benjamin had stolen it. Then when they were a little way off, Joseph sent some officers after them, to arrest whoever had stolen the cup. The officers caught up with Joseph's brothers, and searched all of their saddlebags. When the cup was found in Benjamin's bag, Joseph's brothers began to cry aloud. They knew that Benjamin would not be going home with them. They knew that their father Jacob would be very upset.

All of Joseph's brothers returned to Egypt to appear before Joseph. They bowed on their faces to the ground to beg for mercy. Then Judah, one of Joseph's brothers, began to make the case to Joseph for him to let Benjamin go, and to keep him as prisoner instead.

When Judah did that, Joseph could not hold back any longer. Joseph instructed all of the Egyptian servants to go out. Then Joseph told his brothers, "I am Joseph." They couldn't believe it! They didn't know what to say. This man that they had been dealing with was their brother, whom they had sold as a slave. Joseph's brothers were speechless. They all began to cry and get acquainted.

Then Joseph said, "Go home and get our father Jacob. Tell him that I am alive and well in Egypt. And bring him and all of the family down here to live."

This was all a part of God's plan for His people, the nation of Israel. But why was Joseph able to help his family like this, after all that his brothers had done to him? Because Joseph was willing to forgive them. If Joseph had not forgiven them, he could not have helped them.

Have you ever had anyone be mean to you? You need to be strong enough to forgive people who are mean to you.

Have you ever had anyone do something to disappoint you? You need to be strong enough to forgive those who disappoint you.

Have you ever had anyone do something to hurt you? You need to be strong enough to forgive those you try to hurt you.

If we do not forgive people, we cannot help people. If you do not forgive people, we cannot grow stronger. If we do not forgive people, we cannot please God.

Joseph made a difference for his family and for his future nation because he was willing to forgive those who had hurt him.

Let's learn our memory verse. **Proverbs 3:5** – *Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.*

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Teen and Adult Lesson

Year One, Quarter Two, Lesson Seven

[0200]

Teacher, choose one of the following truths to expand upon in teaching this portion of Scripture to your teen/adult class. Teach and apply the truth that you choose using statements and illustrations that are most helpful and applicable to your students.

- I. **GOD MAKES ALL OF THE PIECES OF THE PUZZLE COME TOGETHER.** Joseph's years of inexplicable "bad luck" created so many questions and loose ends. Joseph even gave up on the dreams of his youth as it looked like his future in Egypt was taking him down a different road. Genesis 41:51-52. But through the famine, and his brothers' trip to Egypt, Joseph saw all those wasted years make sense. Genesis 50:15-20.
- II. **GOD BRINGS VINDICATION IF YOU WILL FORGET ABOUT VINDICATION.** Romans 12:19. God says that vengeance is His business, we must forget about it. It is one of the ironies of the Bible: if we get consumed with revenge and vindication, we will never see it like we hope to. But if we will die to revenge and vindication, and leave it to God, He will do a far better job of it than we can possibly imagine.
- III. **GOD WILL USE YOUR TRIALS TO HELP THOSE YOU LOVE.** The betrayal, false accusations, and neglect that Joseph suffered over the course of ten years or more put him in the position that eventually saved his entire extended family from starvation. The pain and heartache that you endure as you obediently pursue God's will is going to enable you to be a help and a blessing to the people that you love.
- IV. **GOD HAS AN OUTCOME FOR HIS OBEDIENT CHILDREN THAT IS GREATER THAN WE CAN IMAGINE.** Joseph had a dream that motivated him as a young man, and he believed in that dream. But even Joseph could not imagine how powerfully that dream would be fulfilled. When you pursue God's best for you, your faith will be rewarded with greater blessing than you can comprehend.
- V. **GOD'S REWARD OF THE OBEDIENT CONTRIBUTES PERFECTLY TO HIS GREATER PURPOSE.** God's greater purpose for bringing Jacob and his family to Egypt was to grow his family into a nation in the furnace of affliction, while He let the wickedness of the nations of Canaan run its course. So the resolution of Joseph's personal conflict is the smaller story within God's great purpose. What a wonderful God we have, that in solving our personal struggles, He uses us to contribute to His great purpose. This is the meaning of Romans 8:28.

Joseph and His Brothers Reunited

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The Dreams of Joseph's Youth are Fulfilled

I. GENESIS 42 Jacob Sends His Sons to Egypt to Buy Food

1-17 Joseph recognizes them, but they do not recognize him

18-28 Joseph imprisons Simeon, and requires them to bring Benjamin

29-38 Jacob refuses to let Benjamin go to Egypt

II. GENESIS 43 Jacob's Sons go to Egypt the Second Time

1-14 Jacob agrees to let Benjamin go

15-25 Joseph invites them to eat at his house

26-34 Joseph weeps when he sees Benjamin

III. GENESIS 44 Benjamin is Arrested for Stealing from Joseph

1-6 Joseph has a valuable cup planted in Benjamin's saddlebag

7-13 Joseph's men find the cup and arrest Benjamin

14-34 Judah offers himself in Benjamin's place

IV. GENESIS 45 Joseph Reveals Himself to His Brothers

1-15 Joseph and his brothers have an emotional reunion

16-24 Joseph sends his brothers away with great provision

25-28 Jacob is overwhelmed to hear that Joseph is alive

V. GENESIS 46 Jacob Moves to Egypt

1-7 Jacob moves his family from Canaan to Egypt

8-27 God gives us the details of Jacob's family

28-34 Jacob and Joseph are reunited

Proverbs 3:5

Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

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[0200]

Match the answer from the right column that best fits the clue in the left column.
Write the LETTER of the correct answer in the SPACE beside the matching clue.

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| _____ <i>Lasted for seven years</i> | A JOSEPH |
| _____ <i>Was in charge of providing food during the famine</i> | B JOSEPH'S SPECIAL CUP |
| _____ <i>Sent his sons to Egypt to buy food</i> | C BENJAMIN |
| _____ <i>Did not recognize Joseph</i> | D WEPT |
| _____ <i>Joseph accused the ten brothers of being these</i> | E JOSEPH'S BROTHERS |
| _____ <i>Joseph told his brothers that they must bring him back with them</i> | F HIS OWN MONEY |
| _____ <i>On their way home everyone found this in his own bag</i> | G FAMINE |
| _____ <i>After their second trip, this was found in Benjamin's bag</i> | H JACOB |
| _____ <i>Joseph did this when he finally told his brothers who he was</i> | I EGYPT |
| _____ <i>The end result was that Jacob and his whole family moved to this place</i> | J SPIES |

***Trust in the LORD with all thine heart;
and lean not unto thine own understanding.***

Proverbs 3:5

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The answers to today's puzzle

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| <u>G</u> <i>Lasted for seven years</i> | A JOSEPH |
| <u>A</u> <i>Was in charge of providing food during the famine</i> | B JOSEPH'S SPECIAL CUP |
| <u>H</u> <i>Sent his sons to Egypt to buy food</i> | C BENJAMIN |
| <u>E</u> <i>Did not recognize Joseph</i> | D WEPT |
| <u>J</u> <i>Joseph accused the ten brothers of being these</i> | E JOSEPH'S BROTHERS |
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