



CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

APRIL 13 2019

Scripture Story: Genesis 41:54-56; 42-50.

Commentary: *Patriarchs and Prophets* (or *Beginning of the End*), chapter 21.

could you do it?



Photo by Luis Guerra, Jr.

flashlight

“Joseph was satisfied. He had seen in his brothers the fruits of true repentance. Upon hearing Judah’s noble offer he gave orders that all but these men should withdraw; then, weeping aloud, he cried, ‘I am Joseph; doth my father yet live?’ His brothers stood motionless, dumb with fear and amazement. . . . All their ill treatment of him passed before them” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 230).

keytext

“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! 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.’”

(Genesis 45:4, 5, NIV)

what do you think?

Brothers and sisters can be the best and the worst!

Take a moment to list five things you'd like to change about your brother, sister, or best friend. Then list six things you like about them!

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Things you like:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

did you know?

The Bible says that Jacob (Israel) loved Joseph more than his other sons. No wonder they got upset with him!

The Jewish rabbis wrote more about Joseph than any other patriarch in the Midrash (Jewish book of wisdom).

Joseph was in slavery for 10 years. (And still he forgave his brothers! Could you?)

Slavery was a common practice in ancient times. It was possible to put yourself into slavery if you owed too many people too much money!

After Joseph, working on Pharaoh's behalf, had taken all the money from the Egyptians, he then acquired their livestock, and then their land. Talk about *power!*

INTO THE STORY

“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.”

“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.

“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! 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. For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five

years there will be no plowing and reaping. But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. . . . 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. . . . 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.’”

“Then he threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin embraced him, weeping. And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterward his brothers talked with him.

“When the news reached Pharaoh’s palace that Joseph’s brothers had come, Pharaoh and all his officials were pleased. Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘Tell your brothers, “Do this: Load your animals and return to the land of Canaan, 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.”’”

“So they went up out of Egypt and came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan. They told him, ‘Joseph is still alive! In fact, he is ruler of all Egypt.’ Jacob was stunned; he did not believe them. 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. And Israel said, ‘I’m convinced! My son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.’”

(Genesis 45:1, 3-11, 14-18, 25-28, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

What are the main themes in this story (e.g., forgiveness)?

How much is too much to forgive? Can you imagine forgiving someone who had put you into prison for 10 years?

What did God do ahead of time in order for Jacob's sons to be able to buy food during the famine?

Joseph seemed to believe that God had put him in slavery in order to save his family later; do you agree or disagree? Why?

Why did Jacob love Benjamin and Joseph more than his other sons?

Would you want to exact revenge on the people who harmed you once you had power?

Why does Jacob not want to send Benjamin back with his brothers to Egypt?

punch lines

“And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins” **(Mark 11:25, NIV).**

“A person’s wisdom yields patience; it is to one’s glory to overlook an offense” **(Proverbs 19:11, NIV).**

“Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone” **(Romans 12:17, NIV).**

“Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing” **(1 Peter 3:9, NIV).**

“We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; when we are slandered, we answer kindly” **(1 Corinthians 4:12, 13, NIV).**

“Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy” **(Matthew 5:7, NIV).**

further insight

“When we come to ask mercy and blessing from God we should have a spirit of love and forgiveness in our own hearts. . . . If we expect our own prayers to be heard we must forgive others in the same manner and to the same extent as we hope to be forgiven.”—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 97.

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read Romans 12:17, Matthew 5:7.

Complete the *What Do You Think?* section. What do you like about your siblings? (If you don't have siblings, substitute a close friend.) What behaviors are hard for you to be around? Could any of those behaviors be your fault?

Without a doubt, Joseph loved his brothers. They were not always happy with him, mainly because of the dreams he couldn't seem to keep to himself. But don't you imagine that there were times when they liked him as well?

What happens when we let negative feelings overshadow positive thoughts about another person?

Sunday

Read Genesis 45.

Notice how Joseph feels when he is able to tell his brothers who he really is. What did he consider the reason they had sold him? How did he feel about all that had happened to him in the preceding years? Do you think you could be so forgiving of people who had done horrible things to you? Do you have the ability to forgive those around you for little things they do to you? Where does the ability to forgive come from?

Monday

Read Genesis 45:4, 5.

The *Key Text* describes how powerful Joseph's forgiveness was to his brothers. What does it tell us about Joseph's belief in God's plan for his life? What does it tell us about his brothers' sense of guilt?

How do you think Joseph felt about his own act of forgiveness? Forgiveness is a funny thing; it frees not only those who are forgiven but also those who forgive.

Try forgiving someone who has done some-

thing very wrong to you. What do you need to do first? What can you learn from the experience that gives you a better understanding of God's forgiveness of us?

Tuesday

Read Philippians 4:12, 13.

In the *Flashlight* section we see Joseph evaluating his brothers to see if they were truly repentant. What were the fruits of their true repentance? What specifically do you think softened Joseph's heart? Can people look into your life, especially when you have made a huge mistake, and see that you are truly sorry for what you have done? When you are forgiven, do you change the way you live? Are you connected enough with God's plan for your life that you can see the bigger picture and not get too upset by someone's actions toward you? How does Paul related to God's plan.

Wednesday

Read the *Punch Lines* section of this week's lesson. Which of the verses relating to forgiveness speaks most strongly to you right now? Why do you think that is?

Which verse do you most wish you could share with someone whose actions annoy you? How do you think they would react?

Notice in Genesis 42:1 the humor in Jacob's comment to his hungry sons ("Why do you just keep looking at each other?"). Remember that even though these stories about people in the Bible are ancient, the people were still very much like you and me.

With which character in Genesis 42 to 50 do you most identify? What traits of character do you see in that person that you have and would like to keep? to change? to develop? How might developing a sense of humor help you in strengthening your ability to forgive?

Thursday

Read Mark 11:25.

Joseph had to wait decades before he could forgive his brothers for what they had done to him. Do you have in your life someone who needs to be forgiven? What are you waiting for? How long are you going to wait to forgive or seek forgiveness? Do you think the longer you wait the easier it will get? If you were Joseph, do you think you would have been able to forgive after so much time? Perhaps this is the time for you to make some things right with some people in your life.

Friday

Read Proverbs 19:11.

What does Joseph's willingness to forgive teach us about the following?

- His understanding of God
- His understanding of God's plan in his life
- His love for his family
- His love specifically for his father
- His pride

Put yourself in his shoes (or sandals!) and think about what you would have done if you had a chance like Joseph had, to command the attention of all his brothers at once. What would you have done after all the hardship you had gone through? Spend some time writing out your thoughts.

Texts credited to NIV are from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc®. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

this week's reading*

Patriarchs and Prophets (or *Beginning of the End*), chapter 21.

**Beginning of the End* is a special adaptation of *Patriarchs and Prophets*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.