

CGYG & LIFE Bible Study – Genesis 42:1 – 45:28

Read Genesis 42:1-38

1. What was the dream Joseph had had regarding his brothers? (v.9; cf. 37:5-8)
2. Why didn't Joseph reveal who he was to his brothers right away? Why did he treat his brothers harshly, and why did he keep Simeon in jail? Was he trying to get revenge?
3. What do you think God was doing to Joseph's brothers through these events (v.28)?
4. How did Jacob react to his sons' report about the trip to Egypt? (v.36-38) How does this contrast with the way Joseph handled adversity?

Read Genesis 43:1-34

1. Why did Jacob wait until all the grain was gone before allowing his sons to go back to Egypt?
2. How does Jacob's interaction with his sons in v.1-14 reflect the pattern of his life to this point?
3. If you put yourself in Jacob's sons' shoes, how would you have seen God answering Jacob's prayer (v.14) as you went back to Egypt and as the events of this chapter unfolded?

Read Genesis 44:1-34

1. Why did Joseph falsely accuse his brothers? Why did he choose to put the cup in Benjamin's sack?

2. How did the brothers' response when Benjamin's "crime" was discovered (v.12-13) contrast with their prior treatment of Jacob's other favored son, Joseph? Does this surprise you? Why or why not?

3. What did Judah mean when he said, "God has uncovered your servants' guilt"? (v.16, cf. 42:21-22)

4. Why did Judah offer himself in place of Benjamin? How did Judah get to this point, from being the one who took the lead in selling Joseph into slavery 20 years earlier (cf. Gen. 37:26-27)?

Read Genesis 45:1-28

1. How does Joseph comfort his brothers after revealing himself? How can the example of his life be a comfort to us today?

2. Why was Joseph able to forgive his brothers so readily? How can you apply his example to your own life?

3. What are some ways the events of Joseph's life to this point demonstrate God's faithfulness?

Aliens and Strangers

Even though neither he nor his brothers could see it at the time he was sold into Egypt, Joseph came to understand that God had greater purposes behind the trials he suffered - to preserve a remnant for Israel by a great deliverance (v.5-7). Not only that, but God used the fallout from that event to discipline and shape Joseph's brothers, bringing them to conviction and repentance that ultimately showed itself in their solidarity with Benjamin when they were tested. Though they had intended it for evil when they sold Joseph into slavery, surely, God meant it for good (Gen. 50:20). Because Joseph grasped this truth, he was able to forgive his brothers and show them love in spite of all the wrong they had done him.

We cannot always see the hand of God in the midst of circumstances which may discourage and perplex us; but as Joseph did, we should remember that we serve an all-wise God who works all things for good for those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. Spend some time thinking about how you can live each day in light of this precious truth. How do you handle adversity in your life? Do you thank God for the difficult circumstances He brings into your life? Do you thank Him for the 'difficult people' He brings into your life and seek to love them as God has loved you in Christ? Are you quick to forgive others when they wrong you, because you know that God is using even these things for your good?