



HOME GROUPS

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Series: **Joseph Part 8**

Read: Genesis 42:1 - 45:15

SUMMARY:

Over the past seven weeks, we've followed Joseph's trajectory of transformation from an arrogant and brash kid to someone on whose wisdom and discretion Pharaoh calls. We reflected on the fact that who we are today does not limit who we might become tomorrow. Today we are bringing the story to a close by focusing on the reconciliation of Joseph and his family.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. As you reflect on what we have covered in Joseph's story, what were some of the highlights for you?

Alternatively, share how what Carolyn Yoder says about forgiveness resonates with you,

*"Forgiving is a process that is made easier if our hurt is acknowledged by others, especially by the "enemy." Yet if we link our conditions for forgiving to the responses of those who hurt us, we stay forever in their power. Regardless of their actions or response, we choose whether or not to walk the journey of forgiving."*¹

2. Before we look at Joseph and his brothers reunited after 20 years, consider Genesis 41:41-57 when Joseph is put in charge of the whole land of Egypt. What leadership lessons can we learn from Pharaoh and Joseph here? Or, what helps Joseph to move from apparent to actual authority? Have you had an experience of this kind of transition in your life?

3. Consider Gen 41: 1-26. While providing the reason for the brothers' first trip to Egypt, what does the author want us to notice about the relationships between Jacob and his sons in Gen 42:1-5?² How have things changed with Joseph being out of the picture?

Why do you think the brothers could not recognize Joseph?

¹Yoder, Carolyn. Little Book of Trauma Healing: When Violence Strikes And Community Security Is Threatened (p. 62). Good Books. Kindle Ed.

² "looking at each other" literally "to stare at someone" and usually used in the battle context.

4. Why do you think Joseph wants to test them and does not reveal his identity right away? What are the indications in this first encounter that Joseph himself is being tested? What hints of the possibility of the reconciliation are we given?³

5. In dealing with his brothers how does Joseph manage to re-create the situation from 20 years ago? What do the brothers choose to do this time and why?

6. Compare the three speeches of Judah in this story - Gen 37:26-27, 43:1-10, and 44:18:34 (the longest speech in Genesis).⁴ What has changed?

7. Why is forgiveness necessary for reconciliation to begin? What are the indications in the story that Joseph had forgiven or was ready to forgive his brothers even before they admitted their guilt?⁵

How do both Joseph and Judah in this story point to Christ and remind us that God moves toward us first?

If you have time, share about what you would like to continue thinking about or bringing to God as a result of spending time in the Joseph story.

BENEDICTION:

*As we exit Joseph and we enter advent,
And we prepare ourselves to remember
That God has never waited for us to be ready, or right, or
repentant,
May you notice God's movement toward you today,
May that enable you to send your hurts away,
And may you endlessly fall into the embrace of the one
Who already loves you without precondition,
Amen.*

³ "Silver, money" *kesep*, is mentioned 20 times (42:25-45:22). In the beginning of the story, the brothers put a total 20 pieces of silver before a brother (Gen 37:28)...Other key words are "brother" (about 50 times) and "father" (about 40 times). Waltke, *Genesis*, 541-542.

⁴ 43:9 "I myself will guarantee his safety" literally "I will become surety for him". Waltke, 554.

⁵45:1-5 "Do not be distressed" lit. do not feel pain for your past, "Do not be angry with yourself" lit. do not cause yourself pain in the present.