

Character Study: Joseph

Part 5 – Joseph Overcomes Resentment

Genesis 42-45

What's happening?

- Because of the famine, Jacob sent his sons (with the exception of Benjamin) to Egypt to buy food. (42:1-5)
- The brothers came to Joseph to get food. Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. He accused them of being spies and forced them to return home and bring back Benjamin. (42:6-25)
- The brothers returned with Benjamin and enjoyed a meal in Joseph's house (43:1-34). Joseph then set up Benjamin to make it appear that he had stolen his silver cup. As a result, Benjamin was told he would have to remain in Egypt as a slave. Judah begged Joseph to let him take Benjamin's place. (44:1-34)
- Joseph, unable to keep the secret any longer, revealed his identity to his brothers. Overwhelming emotion and joy filled the room. (45:1-15)

What's God doing?

- > The brothers bowed down before Joseph, fulfilling the promise of Joseph's dream (compare 37:5-10 with 44:14). God had faithfully carried out His promise of having Joseph rule over his family.
- > God showed Joseph that his brothers had truly changed. They were no longer willing to abandon their brother for selfish gain, as they had done to Joseph twenty years earlier.

What's to learn?

- It could have been easy for Joseph to remain resentful toward his brothers. But Joseph showed how forgiveness can heal relationships and eliminate problems. Holding a grudge only adds to the pain, but forgiveness brings reconciliation. Is there bitterness in your heart? What steps will you take to reconcile with those who have hurt you?
- Showing grace rather than revenge shows your trust is in the Lord. Joseph saw God's sovereign hand over the situation and was able to be released from the grip of bitterness. Trusting God is the only way to overcome bitterness and show love for all people.