

October 2nd - 8th

Joseph pt. 4 Bad Blood

In this lesson you will learn three ways of handling forgiveness.

Intro: Joseph has interpreted the dream of Pharaoh. He has been lifted up from the prison to the palace, and is now in a position of great leadership over the whole land of Egypt. He has been given a respectable wife and God has now given him two sons. He names one Manasseh and another one Ephraim. There is a tension in his life where he wants to forget about the family that sold him into slavery. He wants to move on from his old family members (his brothers) and enjoy this life God has given him with his new family members (his sons). The test of leadership is forgiveness.

I. Objections to Forgiveness

- A. *Time will heal it, so I'm not going to deal with it.* You cannot delegate the healing of your offense to time. You must address the hurt head on. *I'll forgive when they say they're sorry.* You can't wait for someone else to realize or recognize their wrongdoing. Take the initiative and forgive them. Release their grip and hold on your life and progress. *I can't forgive if I can't forget.* The truth is, you can't forget until you have forgiven. Unforgiveness is focused on rehearsing and rehashing the wrong in your mind. *If I forgive, they'll just do it again.* The fallout from unforgiveness punishes everyone in its path. You cannot control people's behavior. So, forgive them and walk in love towards them while keeping healthy boundaries (Eph 5:2).

II. Struggling to Forgive

- A. 23 years have passed since Joseph has shared the dream with his brothers. He has gone through a lot of pain, trauma, and heartache to get to this point. Just when he thinks he is over it, and he won't ever have to face his family again, his brothers show up. He puts one of the brothers in prison and messes with their money as they try to transact business. This is a test to see what Joseph will do to those who have wronged him when he is in a position of authority. Joseph knows the right thing to do, but is struggling with the hurt he experienced. Jesus tells Peter, you can't put a limit on forgiveness (Matt 18:22).

III. How to Forgive

- A. Forgiveness is always your choice. Remember that you have been forgiven by God. He did not withhold his forgiveness from you. Reflect on how Jesus forgave those who crucified him, even when he was free of any wrongdoing. Recite the Lord's prayer and pause on the part about forgiveness. He will forgive us the same way that we forgive those who have wronged us. Release the need to see people suffer or pay for it. Release the need for control up to God. Cast all of your cares on God (1 Pet 5:7). Choose to be a forgiver for the rest of your life. Live a life that is always forgiving others. Never allow offenses to hold you down or tie you up.

Discussion Questions

1. What objection to forgiveness have you held onto?
2. Who have you struggled to forgive in your life?
3. How will you live a life of forgiveness?