

Week#: 27	Text: Genesis 42:1 – 50:26	Title: Joseph Forgives
Songs:	More Than Enough (Gary Oliver)	
	Trust In You	
	You Are Holy (Prince of Peace)	

“TRUSTING GOD” BIBLE STUDY

Lesson Five JOSEPH FORGIVES

THE IMPORTANCE OF GRACE

As Joseph’s life story evolves, we find Joseph showing grace and mercy to his brothers. In 2 Corinthians 12:9 Paul says, *“And he said unto me, **My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.** Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”*

Genesis 42:1-8 *“Now Ya’akov (Jacob) saw that there was grain in Egypt; so Ya’akov (Jacob) said to his sons, “Why are you staring at each other? ² Look,” he said, “I’ve heard that there’s grain in Egypt. Go down there and buy some for us from there, so that we can stay alive and not die!” ³ Thus Yosef’s (Joseph’s) ten brothers went down to buy grain from Egypt, ⁴ except for Binyamin (Benjamin), Yosef’s (Joseph’s) brother. Ya’akov (Jacob) did not send him with his brothers, because he was afraid something might happen to him.*

⁵ *The sons of Isra’el (Israel) came to buy along with the others that came, since the famine extended to the land of Kena’an (Canaan). ⁶ Yosef (Joseph) was governor over the land; it was he who sold to all the people of the land. Now when Yosef’s (Joseph’s) brothers came and prostrated themselves before him on the ground, ⁷ Yosef (Joseph) saw his brothers and recognized them; but he acted toward them as if he were a stranger and spoke harshly with them. He asked them, “Where are you from?” They answered, “From the land of Kena’an (Canaan) to buy food.” ⁸ So Yosef (Joseph) recognized his brothers, but they didn’t recognize him.”*

The brothers had to go to Egypt to obtain food. They knew Joseph had been taken to Egypt, but they did not expect to see him. They may have still been so ashamed of what they had done to Joseph (guilt-ridden) that they hoped he was dead. In Genesis 42:22 Reuben says, *“...therefore, behold, also his blood is required.”* They never dreamed that the man, who could provide food, would be their younger brother.

Joseph had the distinct advantage that he knew who his brothers were, but they had not recognized him. He could have had rightful or justified revenge for them at their initial reunion, but Joseph showed them the grace and mercy that had not been extended to him many years before. Joseph also knew that his brothers needed to confront their sin against Joseph.

A TIME OF RECONCILIATION (OR APPEASEMENT)

Genesis 42:9-17 *“Remembering the dreams he had had about them, Yosef (Joseph) said to them, “You are spies! You’ve come to spot our country’s weaknesses!” ¹⁰ “No, my lord,” they replied, “your servants have come to buy food. ¹¹ We’re all the sons of one man, we’re upright men; your servants aren’t spies.” ¹² “No,” he said to them, “you’ve come to spy out our country’s weaknesses.” ¹³ They said, “We, your servants, are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Kena’an (Canaan); the youngest stayed with our father, and another one is gone.” ¹⁴ “Just as I said,” replied Yosef (Joseph), “you’re spies! ¹⁵ Here’s how you can prove you’re not lying: as Pharaoh lives, you will not leave here unless your youngest brother comes here. ¹⁶ Send one of you, and let him bring your brother. Meanwhile, you will be kept in custody. This will prove whether there is any truth in what you say. Otherwise, as Pharaoh lives, you are certainly spies.” ¹⁷ Then he put all of them together in prison for three days.”*

Joseph put his ten brothers in jail for three days. This was meant to be time to reflect and repent. 2 Corinthians 7:10 says, *“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.”* Joseph knew his brothers needed to repent.

Genesis 42:18-20 *“On the third day, Yosef (Joseph) said to them, “Do what I say, and stay alive, for I fear God.¹⁹ If you are upright men, let one of your brothers remain incarcerated in the prison you’re being kept in, while you go and carry grain back to relieve the famine in your homes.²⁰ But bring your youngest brother to me. In this way your statements will be verified, and you won’t die.” So they did it.”*

GOD WATCHES OVER HIS WORD

Jeremiah 1:12 says, *“Then said the LORD unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it.”* God is watching over His word to us until He performs it. Joseph realized that his second dream about the sun, moon and eleven stars needed to be completed in real time. Not only did Joseph want Benjamin to come to Egypt, but it was part of God fulfillment of Joseph’s dream. This realization helped Joseph to depend on God to fulfill his God-given dream.

Genesis 42:21-23 *“They said to each other, “We are in fact guilty concerning our brother. He was in distress and pleaded with us; we saw it and wouldn’t listen. That’s why this distress has come upon us now.”²² Re’uven (Ruben) answered them, “Didn’t I tell you, ‘Don’t wrong the boy’? But you wouldn’t hear of it. Now comes the reckoning for his blood!”²³ They had no idea that Yosef (Joseph) understood them, since an interpreter was translating for them.”*

Now the brothers were taking responsibility for what they had done to Joseph. Admission of responsibility for our actions is the first step in repentance...Admit. You have to first admit you have sinned before you can ask for forgiveness. 1 John 1:9 says, *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

Genesis 42:24-26 *“Yosef (Joseph) turned away from them and wept; then he returned and spoke to them. He took Shim’on (Simeon) from among them and put him in prison before their eyes.²⁵ Next he ordered that their containers be filled with grain, that every man’s money be put back in his pack and that they be given provisions for the journey. When these things had been done for them,²⁶ they loaded their grain on their donkeys and departed.”*

Grace is a VERY important element of God’s character. Grace is what motivated God to send His Son, Jesus, to die a cruel death for us. Here again, Joseph showed God’s character of grace when he extended even more grace to his half-brothers, by telling the servants to fill their sacks and placing their money back in the sacks.

GOD’S THERMOMETER

Genesis 42:27-36 *“But at camp that night, as one of them opened his pack to give fodder to his donkey, he noticed his money — there it was, just inside his pack.²⁸ He said to his brothers, “My money has been restored — there it is, right in my pack!” At that, their hearts sank; they turned, trembling, to one another and said, “What is this that God has done to us?”*

²⁹ *They returned to Ya’akov (Jacob) their father in the land of Kena’an (Canaan) and told him all that had happened to them.³⁰ “The man, the lord of the land, spoke harshly with us. He took us for spies in his country.³¹ We said to him, ‘We are upright men, we’re not spies;³² we are twelve brothers, sons of our father; one is gone, and the youngest stayed with our father in the land of Kena’an (Canaan).’³³ But the man, the lord of the land, said to us, ‘Here is how I will know that you are upright men: leave one of your brothers with me, take*

grain to relieve the famine in your homes, and go on your way; ³⁴ but bring your youngest brother to me. By this I will know that you aren't spies, but are upright men; then I will return your brother to you; and you will do business in the land."

³⁵ Next, as they emptied their packs, there was each man's bag of money in his pack; and when they and their father saw their bags of money, they became afraid. ³⁶ Ya'akov (Jacob) their father said to them, "You have robbed me of my children! Yosef (Joseph) is gone, Shim'on (Simeon) is gone, now you're taking Binyamin away — it all falls on me!"

The word "afraid" or "dismayed" here is the same as the word "afraid" when Adam is hiding from God. Genesis 3:9-10, "And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? ¹⁰ And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself."

Adam was afraid because of his past failure to obey God. The returning brothers and Jacob all reacted to the money sacks being found the same way: fearfully. Jacob thought they had sold Simeon in Egypt because the payment for the grain was still in the sacks. All of their initial responses were ones of "Fear," and certainly not "Faith". When given bad news, your initial response will reveal how hot or cold your relationship with God is. Your response to bad news is God's thermometer of the degree of your intimacy with Him. If you fail a test to respond with faith, simply repent, and God will give you many opportunities to pass His test.

Genesis 42:37-38 "Re'uven (Ruben) said to his father, "If I don't bring him back to you, you can kill my own two sons! Put him in my care; I will return him to you." ³⁸ "But he replied, "My son will not go down with you. His brother is dead, and he alone is left. If anything were to happen to him while traveling with you, you would bring my gray hair down to Sh'ol (the grave) with grief."

Reuben was willing for Jacob to take his two sons if Benjamin did not return safely, but Jacob could not see this as a solution to the problem. The opposite of "faith" is "fear" so when you react in fear, you are really saying, "God, I don't trust You."

STANDING ON THE PROMISES OF GOD

Genesis 43:1-9 "But the famine was severe in the land; ² so when they had eaten up the grain which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said to them, "Go again, buy us a little food." ³ Y'hudah (Judah) said to him, "The man expressly warned us, 'You will not see my face unless your brother is with you.' ⁴ If you will send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food; ⁵ but if you will not send him, we will not go down; for the man said to us, 'You will not see my face unless your brother is with you.'" ⁶ Isra'el (Israel) said, "Why did you bring such trouble my way by telling the man you had another brother?" ⁷ They answered, "The man kept questioning us about ourselves and about our kinsmen. He asked, 'Is your father still alive?' 'Do you have another brother?' and we answered according to the literal meaning of his questions. How were we to know he would say, 'Bring your brother down?'"

⁸ Y'hudah (Judah) said to Isra'el (Israel) his father, "Send the boy with me; and we will make preparations and leave; so that we may stay alive and not die, both we and you, and also our little ones. ⁹ I myself will guarantee his safety; you can hold me responsible. If I fail to bring him to you and present him to your face, let me bear the blame forever."

JACOB KNEW HOW TO SOOTH OVER TROUBLED WATERS

Genesis 43:10-15 *“Except for our lengthy delay, we would have been there again by now. ¹¹ Their father Israel (Israel) answered them, “If that’s how it is, do this: take in your containers some of the land’s best products, and bring the man a gift — some healing resin, a little honey, aromatic gum, opium, pistachio nuts and almonds. ¹² Take twice the amount of money with you; and return the money that came back with you in your packs — it could have been an oversight. ¹³ Yes, and take your brother too; and get ready; and go again to the man. ¹⁴ May El Shaddai (God Almighty) give you favor in the man’s sight, so that he will release to you your other brother as well as Binyamin (Benjamin). As for me, if I must lose my children, lose them I will.” ¹⁵ The men took that gift, and they took twice the money with them, and Binyamin (Benjamin); then they prepared, went down to Egypt and stood before Yosef (Joseph).”*

When Jacob (Israel) finally gave in to his sons return to Egypt for food, he repeated his much earlier actions when he returned to Canaan and faced his brother (Esau); he sent a lot of gifts to soften the blow – it worked on Esau; Jacob felt it would work with the Egyptian governor. Jacob’s old way of giving gifts was sowing good seed – to reap a good harvest. He was repeating a principle that he had learned in the past (sowing and reaping). Every desert, every trial God builds on previous experiences (principles He has taught us) and victories. Let God “show-off” His great power and creativity.

JOY UNSPEAKABLE

Genesis 43:16-30 *“When Joseph saw Benjamin (*Benjamin*) with them, he said to the steward of his house, “Bring the men into the house, and slaughter an animal and make ready, for the men are to dine with me at noon.”*

This part of the story always reminds me of the story Jesus told about the Prodigal son found in Luke 15:11-24. Joseph had missed Benjamin for so many years, through no wrongful behavior of the brother, and felt this same joy reconnecting with his long lost brother.

WALK IN FAITH NOT FEAR

Genesis 43:17-23 *“The man did as Yosef (Joseph) ordered and brought the men into Yosef’s (Joseph’s) house. ¹⁸ Upon being ushered inside Yosef’s (Joseph’s) house, the men became fearful. They said, “It’s because of the money that was returned in our packs the first time that we have been brought inside — so that he can use it as an excuse to attack us, take us as slaves and seize our donkeys too.” ¹⁹ So they approached the manager of Yosef’s (Joseph’s) household and spoke to him at the entrance of the house: ²⁰ “Please, my lord, the first time we indeed came down to buy food; ²¹ but when we got to camp, we opened our packs, and there inside our packs was each man’s money, the full amount. We have brought it back with us; ²² moreover, we have brought down other money to buy food. We have no idea who put our money in our packs.” ²³ “Stop worrying,” he replied, “don’t be afraid. Your God and the God of your father put treasure in your packs. As for your money— I was the one who received it.” Then he brought Shim’on (Simeon) out to them.”*

Fear produces worry; faith produces peace. Joseph’s brothers were still trying to appease the governor by pleading their case with the steward. These men were acting out of fear again, not faith. But Joseph’s steward gave the credit to God for returning the money to the sacks. If you find yourself trying to “fix” a problem on your own, fear not, faith is manifested once you totally turn something over to God for Him to fix and you will have total peace.

There is a story I like to tell as an object lesson for this tutorial: A little boy came to his father with a broken toy and asked him to fix it. The father agreed to fix it and asked for the toy. The little boy clutched it closer to his chest and proclaimed, "I want to hold it while you fix it, Daddy!" We often treat our Heavenly Father the same way. We want Him to fix something, but we want to retain control. I am such a visual person that I have to trick my brain. I write the problem on a sheet of notebook paper, fold it up like a paper airplane, and throw it as hard as I can up to God. When it lands, I put that plane in my Bible on Philippians 4:19 (if it concerns provision), "*But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*", or in Romans 8:28 (for anything else—unless God has given me a specific verse to stand on), "*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*" I have quite a collection of airplanes now that are a testimony of God's great intervention abilities.

EVERONE LOSES IT SOMETIME

Genesis 43:24-34 *"The man brought the men into Yosef's (Joseph's) house and gave them water, and they washed their feet, and he provided fodder for their donkeys. ²⁵ Then they got their gift ready for Yosef's (Josephs) arrival at noon, for they had heard that they were going to eat a meal there. ²⁶ When Yosef (Joseph) arrived home, they went in the house and presented him with the gift they had brought with them, then prostrated themselves before him on the ground. ²⁷ He asked them how they were and inquired, "Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?" ²⁸ They answered, "Your servant our father is well; yes, he is still alive," as they bowed in respect. ²⁹ He looked up and saw Binyamin his brother, his mother's son, and said, "Is this your youngest brother, of whom you spoke to me?" and added, "May God be good to you, my son."*

³⁰ Then Yosef (Joseph) hurried out, because his feelings toward his brother were so strong that he wanted to cry; he went into his bedroom and there he wept. Then he washed his face and came out, but he controlled himself as he gave the order to serve the meal. ³² They served him by himself, the brothers by themselves, and the Egyptians included at the meal by themselves — Egyptians don't eat with Hebrews, because that is abhorrent to them. ³³ So they sat there facing him, the firstborn in the place of honor, the youngest in last place; and the men expressed their amazement to each other. ³⁴ Each was given his serving there in front of him, but Binyamin's (Benjamin's) portion was five times as large as any of theirs. So they drank and enjoyed themselves with him."

Joseph had his brothers seated in birth order. They must have been surprised with Joseph's arrangement. How could he know? Why were they being honored so? Did the brothers feel they did not deserve such love and grace because of the past sin against Joseph? Joseph's brothers had a hard time accepting God's favor and love shown through Joseph's actions. The fear they may have been experiencing, along with amazement, was again an indication of their lack of faith in God and in His goodness.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TESTING -- TESTS ARE NECESSARY

By this point in the story, Joseph has been tested and has emerged as pure gold. Joseph, however, does not know if his half-brothers hate Benjamin (his full brother) as much as they had hated him. So, he tests them to see their true colors.

Tests are necessary. Used by schools, tests help the student and the teacher see where the student's weak and strong areas are academically. Testing also allows the teacher and/or school to detect if their teaching methods are succeeding or failing.

God, however, knows the true value in testing. God does not test you to find out where your shortcomings or strengths are; He already knows them well. He allows tests in your life so you can see the weak areas where you still need growth. God even tested Adam and Eve and He made them perfect. Genesis 2:15-17 says, *“And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.”*¹⁶ *And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: ¹⁷ But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”* Adam and Eve failed that test. Genesis 3:6 tells us, *“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”*

God has been testing His people ever since. Sometimes they pass, sometimes they don't. But even on the tests that you fail, God allows for a make-up exam and another make-up exam, and another, and so on and so forth. When the Children of Israel were leaving Egypt going to the Promised Land, they circled one mountain for forty years. This journey should have taken no more than a few weeks to make. They failed the same test numerous times. I, too, have been around one or more mountains in my own life a few times. The first time around, you cut a path. The second time around, you clear the path more. Every time around that mountain, you dig the trench deeper. Eventually, that path becomes a ditch you can't escape. A grave is just a ditch with the ends closed in. As soon as you realize that you have traveled around a particular mountain (or hardship) more than once in your life, find the stones that tripped you up in the past and correct your route. Repent of those weaknesses and ask God for His help in overcoming them.

In Ephesians 6:12, Paul writes, *“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”* In that day two men faced each other and wrestled each other with the goal of getting the other guy on his back and grab his neck at the wind pipe. Then he would squeeze until the other guy either died or gave in. If he gave in, they would take him and gouge out his eyes. In the time of Sampson, when the Philistines captured Sampson, they gouged out his eyes and put him grinding out grain in a grind mill. Sampson was blind, and bound and going around and around. **One way you know you are in a real bondage is if you keep recycling doing the same thing over and over. This is called a repetitive sin.** Sampson was blind and he was so bound he kept going around in circles over and over again.

If we *“wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places,”* we are in a wrestling match with the enemy. It is his job to get us on our back where we can't get back up. You eventually just lay there and give up. 2 Corinthians 4:4 says, *“In whom **the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.**”* I believe that a spiritual blindness has been placed on the people of our time.

In Roman times there were **three keys** to being a good wrestler:

- 1)** You had to face your opponent. Paul said in Ephesians 6:13, *“Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”* This is a Greek term used by the Roman military. If a Roman soldier turned their back on the enemy, it would probably mean their death. Paul admonishes us to keep standing and see if there are any other devils to fight. This actually means, once you have defeated the enemy, keep on defeating him.
- 2)** You had to go through “endurance training”. In other words, you had to go through a “l-o-n-g” trial you had to endure to develop the patience you needed for the fight. Romans 5:3 says, *“And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;”*

3) You must train on how to get out of the holds the enemy has put you in. In wrestling, it is a defensive move when you are trying to escape the hold the enemy has on you. The enemy has snares and strongholds. Paul instructed in 1 Timothy 4:7, “...exercise thyself rather unto godliness.” In Romans times they would **train in a hot room** (They would put them in a hot room so they would sweat out the impurities in their bodies). When you come under a fiery trial, God is turning up the heat to get the impurities out of you to keep you from being destroyed later.); **they would train in an oil room** (Oil in the Bible always stands for the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Jesus told the disciples in John 14:30, “Hereafter I will not talk much with you: **for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.**” Jesus was saying that the enemy was coming but would have nothing to hold on to.); and **they would train in the mud** (War is dirty, sweaty, stinky. We do not wrestle the enemy in pristine surroundings. We wrestle in the mud. When we find a dirty, muddy, stinky fallen Christian, our first response should be to restore them, not condemn them. Even if it means you have to carry them. Go pick them up out of the pig pen and don’t leave them until you restore them.).

Attitude is everything. James 1:2 says, “My brethren, **count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;** ³ *Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.* ⁴ **But let patience have her perfect work,** that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.” James tells us to “count it all joy”. He does not say you have to be happy. **Happiness is conditional upon your feelings and emotions; it is fleeting, temporary. Joy, on the other hand, comes from within. Joy is part of the fruit of the Spirit.** Galatians 5:22-23 says, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, ²³ Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”

Galatians 5:24 adds one more level to the Fruit of the Spirit: “And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.” **Usually your flesh is crucified easier in the desert.** When you find yourself in a desert, look around to see what part of your flesh needs to die there.

Genesis 44:1-2 “Then he ordered the manager of his household, “Fill the men’s packs with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man’s money just inside his pack. ² And put my goblet, the silver one, just inside the pack of the youngest, along with his grain money.” He did what Yosef (Joseph) told him to do.”

Joseph was putting his half-brothers through one more test. His brothers had hated him years before because his father, Jacob, preferred him over them. Joseph wanted to know if they hated his full brother Benjamin for the same reason. So, he tests them to see their true colors.

Genesis 44:3-13, “At daybreak the men were sent off with their donkeys; ⁴ but before they were far from the city Yosef (Joseph) said to his manager, “Up, go after the men; and when you overtake them, say to them, ‘Why have you repaid good with evil? ⁵ Isn’t this the goblet my lord drinks from, indeed the one he uses for divination? What you have done is evil!’” ⁶ So he caught up with them and said these words to them. ⁷ They replied, “Why does my lord speak this way? Heaven forbid that we should do such a thing! ⁸ Why, the money we found inside our packs we brought back to you from the land of Kena’an (Cannan)! So how would we steal silver or gold from your lord’s house? ⁹ Whichever one of us the goblet is found with, let him be put to death — and the rest of us will be my lord’s slaves!” ¹⁰ He replied, “Fine; let it be as you have said: whichever one it is found with will be my slave. But the rest of you will be blameless.” ¹¹ Then each hurried to put his pack down on the ground, and each one opened his pack. ¹² He searched, starting with the oldest and ending with the youngest; and the goblet was found in the pack belonging to Binyamin. ¹³ At this, they tore their clothes from grief. Then each man loaded up his donkey and returned to the city.”

If Joseph's half-brothers had any animosity toward Benjamin, now would have been the prime opportunity for them to be rid of Benjamin for good. But, their hearts had changed. They are truly distraught at the realization that Benjamin's life might be threatened and the fear of Jacob's reaction.

Genesis 44:14-29 *"Y'hudah (Judah) and his brothers arrived at Yosef's (Joseph's) house. He was still there, and they fell down before him on the ground. ¹⁵ Yosef (Joseph) said to them, "How could you do such a thing? Don't you know that a man such as myself can learn the truth by divination?" ¹⁶ Y'hudah (Judah) said, "There's nothing we can say to my lord! How can we speak? There's no way we can clear ourselves! God has revealed your servants' guilt; so here we are, my lord's slaves — both we and also the one in whose possession the cup was found." ¹⁷ But he replied, "Heaven forbid that I should act in such a way. The man in whose possession the goblet was found will be my slave; but as for you, go in peace to your father."*

¹⁸ *Then Y'hudah (Judah) approached Yosef (Joseph) and said, "Please, my lord! Let your servant say something to you privately; and don't be angry with your servant, for you are like Pharaoh himself. My lord asked his servants, 'Do you have a father? Or a brother?' ²⁰ We answered my lord, 'We have a father who is an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one whose brother is dead; so that of his mother's children he alone is left; and his father loves him.' ²¹ But you said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me, so that I can see him.' ²² We answered my lord, 'The boy can't leave his father; if he were to leave his father, his father would die.' ²³ You said to your servants, 'You will not see my face again unless your brother is with you.' ²⁴ We went up to your servant my father and told him what my lord had said; ²⁵ but when our father said, 'Go again, and buy us some food,' ²⁶ we answered, 'We can't go down. Only if our youngest brother is with us will we go down, because we can't see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us.' ²⁷ Then your servant my father said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me two sons: ²⁸ the one went out from me, and I said, "Surely he has been torn to pieces," and I haven't seen him since. ²⁹ Now if you take this one away from me too, and something happens to him, you will bring my gray hair down to Sh'ol (the grave) with grief.'"*

In this part of Judah's dialogue you get another chance to see where Jacob's heart is. Jacob's heart is still heavy from the grief of losing one son. Again, Jacob still has his eyes on his problem of grief instead of lifting his head up to find his help. David told you in Psalms 121:1-2, *"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. ² My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth."*

Genesis 44:30-34 *(Judah speaking here about his conversation with Joseph.) "So now if I go to your servant my father, and the boy isn't with us — seeing how his heart is bound up with the boy's heart — ³¹ when he sees that the boy isn't with us, he will die; and your servants will bring the gray hair of your servant our father down to Sh'ol (the grave) with grief. ³² For your servant himself guaranteed his safety; I said, 'If I fail to bring him to you, then I will bear the blame before my father forever.' ³³ Therefore, I beg you, let your servant stay as a slave to my lord instead of the boy, and let the boy go up with his brothers. ³⁴ For how can I go up to my father if the boy isn't with me? I couldn't bear to see my father so overwhelmed by anguish.'"*

Judah gives a beautiful explanation of their actions and the motivation behind them. His sincere discourse shows Joseph that his heart has changed. When Joseph was in the pit twenty years before, Judah was not concerned about his welfare. Genesis 37:26-27 says, *"Y'hudah (Judah) said to his brothers, "What advantage is it to us if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? ²⁷ Come, let's sell him to the Yishma'elim (Ishmeelites), instead of putting him to death with our own hands. After all, he is our brother, our own flesh."* His brothers paid attention to him." All Judah desired at that time was to not get caught. Joseph now sees a much more mature Judah speaking. Judah pleads for his brother's life and is truly concerned about how it will affect his father.

As discussed earlier, Joseph had forgiven his brothers completely, but now Judah and the others would have to be set free from the bondage of unforgiveness toward Joseph and themselves. Forgiveness is the most liberating lesson you will ever learn. It frees you up to love others, God, and yourself the same way God loves. It will revolutionize your world. The Bible has a lot to say about forgiveness. I have summarized it down to Five Truths you can use to transform your world.

FIVE FACTS ABOUT FORGIVENESS

Fact #1: Forgiveness Looses You; Unforgiveness Binds You Up -- In Matthew 18:18 Jesus says, *“Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”* You bind yourself up by refusing to forgive. When you refuse to forgive, it hurts you, not the one you are not forgiving. They may not even know they have hurt you.

Loosing (forgiveness) is a choice. Sometimes loosing someone from the bondage of unforgiveness is the hardest thing you will ever have to do. There have been times when I have had to pray, “Lord, I forgive them! Please help me forgive them. I can’t do it in my strength. Please help me.” Sometimes the hurt is so big that you have to pray that over and over again, every time you think about them.

If it still hurts when you think of that person, you have not entirely forgiven them yet. This process may take weeks, months, or even years. Don’t give up until you have perfect peace when you say their name or even think of them.

I have also heard it said that harboring unforgiveness can lead to all kinds of physical ailments (including cancer) in YOUR body. One minister I know stated that he believes that 100% of all backaches are due to unforgiveness and the back problems cease as soon as forgiveness is given.

You can also hold unforgiveness toward yourself or even God. I have been guilty of both of these. Sometimes forgiving yourself is harder than forgiving others, but realizing that Jesus paid a high price when He shed His precious blood for that very forgiveness helps.

Holding unforgiveness toward God is almost always a perceived wrong you blame Him for (i.e. someone died, God not healing someone you love, or unanswered prayer). All of these are not God’s fault. Everything good comes from God, not bad things. James 1:16-17 says, *“Do not err, my beloved brethren. ¹⁷Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”* It just stands to reason that if you “reverse” this verse it is telling us that every bad and flawed gift is from below, coming down from the father of lies (Satan).

I know that we tend to blame God for things like tornadoes, floods, and earthquakes (or “acts of God”); however, these are not His doing. Just remember, you have an enemy (Satan). In John 10:10 Jesus says, **“The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”**

Fact #2: Forgive Others So God Can Forgive You -- Jesus said that you can’t ask for forgiveness from Him if you are not willing to forgive others. Matthew 6:14-15 *“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: ¹⁵But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”*

Jesus gave us the Lord’s Prayer as a prayer model. Matthew 6:9-13 says, *“... Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. ¹⁰Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. ¹¹Give us this day our daily bread. ¹²And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. ¹³And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.”* Prayer should be a daily thing, and Jesus ties the degree

that we forgive to the same degree we are forgiven. Do you want to be forgiven totally? Then you have to forgive totally.

Fact #3: Forgive others before the Sun Goes Down -- Paul said in Ephesians 4:26-27 *"Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: ²⁷ Neither give place to the devil."* **You need to forgive daily before the sun goes down so you don't give place to the devil.**

Describing the importance of this timing for forgiving or asking for forgiveness stems back to the creation account. In Genesis 1 when God created everything it is written: "And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.... And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.... And there was evening and there was morning, the third day...." When the sun goes down in Jewish circles, a new day starts. They believe the day begins at sundown, not sunup...etc. So, when the sun goes down our day is ending and God does not want the trouble or unforgiveness from yesterday, following you into the new day that He gives you.

Fact #4: Keep Your Heart Pliable – In Ezekiel 36:26-27 God says, *"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them."* When you get saved, God gives you a heart of spiritual clay. It is pliable. Often, the cares of this world come in and hardness creeps into this heart of ours.

Every time you decide to forgive someone, your heart softens a little. Every time you decide **NOT** to forgive someone, your heart hardens a little. Then when God has to reach a "hard heart", He has to peel away the hard layers one at a time, like an onion. The first time the term "hard heart" is used in the Bible is when Pharaoh refused to let God's people go because of his hard heart. Exodus 4:21 says, *"And the LORD said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go."* Exodus 7:13 says, *"And he hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said."* God had to remove several layers on Pharaoh's hardened heart by sending the ten plagues. Here in Joseph's life story, God was peeling off the hardened layers of the hearts of Joseph's half-brothers.

Unforgiveness is probably responsible for more Christians backsliding than anything else. Every time you harden your heart, you move further away from intimacy with God. Soon the gulf becomes great, and the devil makes you believe there is no turning back; or the hardening came on so gradually that you become duped that it has even happened.

To avoid any hardening of your heart, just get before God and simply ask Him to reveal to you anyone you have not forgiven. If anyone comes to mind, forgive them and repent.

Truth #5: Ask Others for Their Forgiveness -- Forgiveness works both ways: forgiving others that have hurt you and asking for forgiveness from those you have hurt. Sometimes, this may mean giving restitution to that person first. In Matthew 5:23-24 Jesus says, *"Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; ²⁴ Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."*

THE GREAT REVELATION

Genesis 45:1-4 *"At last Yosef (Joseph) could no longer control his feelings in front of his attendants and cried, "Get everybody away from me!" So no one else was with him when Yosef (Joseph) revealed to his brothers who he was. ² He wept aloud, and the Egyptians heard, and Pharaoh's household heard. ³ Yosef (Joseph) said to his brothers, "I am Yosef(Joseph)! Is it true that my father is still alive?" His brothers couldn't answer him, they*

were so dumbfounded at seeing him. ⁴ Yosef (Joseph) said to his brothers, "Please! Come closer." And they came closer. He said, "I am Yosef (Joseph), your brother, whom you sold into Egypt."

Joseph had to prove to his brothers who he was. Joseph told them to come near. He was actually showing them indisputable proof; his circumcision. Circumcision was part of the Covenant between Abraham and God. Genesis 17:10 says, "This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised." The descendants of Abraham were the only males who had been circumcised.

Genesis 45:5-8 "But don't be sad that you sold me into slavery here or angry at yourselves, because it was God who sent me ahead of you to preserve life. ⁶ The famine has been over the land for the last two years, and for yet another five years there will be neither plowing nor harvest. ⁷ God sent me ahead of you to ensure that you will have descendants on earth and to save your lives in a great deliverance. ⁸ So it was not you who sent me here, but God; and he has made me a father to Pharaoh, lord of all his household and ruler over the whole land of Egypt."

Joseph had kept no account of what had been done against him by his brothers. Forgiveness will open your eyes to see God's plan and way. Joseph could see the bigger picture. His brother's sin had been the means God had used to save his family and thus the seed that would bless the world. Romans 8:28 says, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose."

MENDED RELATIONSHIPS

Genesis 45:9-15 "Hurry, go up to my father, and tell him, 'Here is what your son Yosef (Joseph) says: "God has made me lord of all Egypt! Come down to me, don't delay!" ¹⁰ You will live in the land of Goshen and be near me — you, your children, your grandchildren, flocks, herds, everything you own. ¹¹ I will provide for you there, so that you won't become poverty-stricken, you, your household and all that you have; because five years of famine are yet to come.'" ¹² Here! Your own eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Binyamin, that it is my own mouth speaking to you. ¹³ Tell my father how honored I am in Egypt and everything you have seen, and quickly bring my father down here!" ¹⁴ Then he embraced his brother Binyamin and wept, and Binyamin wept on his neck, ¹⁵ and he kissed all his brothers and wept on them. After that, his brothers talked with him."

When a relationship is based on God's kind of love, forgiveness flows and releases us to be more open and vulnerable. Before Joseph had been taken to Egypt, his brothers would not speak kindly to him. Now they conversed with him calmly and openly. Forgiveness is what made this possible.

JOSEPH, GREAT LEADER DURING THE FAMINE

Genesis 47:13-26 "There was no food anywhere, for the famine was very severe, so that both Egypt and Kena'an grew weak from hunger. ¹⁴ Yosef (Joseph) collected all the money there was in Egypt and Kena'an in exchange for the grain they bought, and put the money in Pharaoh's treasury. ¹⁵ When all the money in Egypt had been spent, and likewise in Kena'an, all the Egyptians approached Yosef (Joseph) and said, "Give us something to eat, even though we have no money; why should we die before your eyes?" ¹⁶ Yosef (Joseph) replied, "Give me your livestock. If you don't have money, I will give you food in exchange for your livestock." ¹⁷ So they brought Yosef (Joseph) their livestock; and Yosef (Joseph) gave them food in exchange for the horses, flocks, cattle and donkeys — all that year he provided them with food in exchange for all their livestock.

¹⁸ When that year was over, they approached Yosef (Joseph) again and said to him, "We won't hide from my lord that all our money is spent, and the herds of livestock belong to my lord. We have nothing left, as my lord can see, but our bodies and our land. ¹⁹ Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and

*our land for food, and we and our land will be enslaved to Pharaoh. But also give us seed to plant, so that we can stay alive and not die, and so that the land won't become barren.”*²⁰ *So Yosef (Joseph) acquired all the land in Egypt for Pharaoh, as one by one the Egyptians sold their fields, because the famine weighed on them so severely. Thus the land became the property of Pharaoh.*²¹ *As for the people, he reduced them to serfdom city by city, from one end of Egypt's territory to the other.*²² *Only the priests' land did he not acquire, because the priests were entitled to provisions from Pharaoh, and they ate from what Pharaoh provided them; therefore they did not sell their land.*

²³ *Then Yosef (Joseph) said to the people, “As of today I have acquired you and your land for Pharaoh. Here is seed for you to sow the land.*²⁴ *When harvest time comes, you are to give twenty percent to Pharaoh; eighty percent will be yours to keep for seed to plant in the fields, as well as for your food and for that of your households and your little ones.”*

²⁵ *They replied, “You have saved our lives! So if it pleases my lord, we will be Pharaoh's slaves.”*²⁶ *Yosef (Joseph) made it a law for the country of Egypt, valid to this day, that Pharaoh should have twenty percent. Only the property belonging to the priests did not become Pharaoh's.”*

Joseph's leadership abilities really shine here. When you are operating in your gifting you will shine, too. First we see Joseph's organizational gift when he helped settle his family in their new land. Then Joseph gave them food according to the size of their family.

The famine over the entire area was very severe and the people soon ran out of money and had no way of earning more until the drought was over. Joseph let them trade food for livestock and when that ran out, they sold their land for food. The following year, the only thing they possessed was their very life, so they sold themselves into slavery. Then Joseph turned around and gave those same people seed to sow in what was now Pharaoh's land. He made a deal with them to let them keep four-fifths of what they grew to pay themselves out of debt and still give Pharaoh one-fifth of everything. Joseph was quite an administrator.

THE DEATH OF JOSEPH

*Genesis 50:22-25 “Yosef (Joseph) continued living in Egypt, he and his father's household. Yosef lived 110 years.*²³ *Yosef lived to see Efrayim's great-grandchildren, and the children of M'nasheh's son Makhir were born on Yosef's (Joseph's) knees.*

²⁴ *Yosef (Joseph) said to his brothers, “I am dying. But God will surely remember you and bring you up out of this land to the land which he swore to Avraham, Yitz'chak and Ya'akov.”*²⁵ *Then Yosef (Joseph) took an oath from the sons of Isra'el: “God will surely remember you, and you are to carry my bones up from here.”*

As we see here, the Word of God was still precious to Joseph. Joseph repeated his father's burial instructions to his grandchildren when he was dying and four-hundred-thirty years later when the children of Israel exited Egypt, they brought with them the bones of Joseph. We find this account in Exodus 13:19: *“And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you.”* Then in Joshua 24:32 we continue this saga, *“And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for an hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph.”*

Then in Hebrews 11:21-22, Joseph ended up in the Hebrews Hall of Fame (Faith): *“By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.”*²² *By faith Joseph, when he died,*

made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.” You notice that there is no mention of the bones of any of the other brothers or even of Joseph’s sons.

Genesis 50:26 *“So Yosef died at the age of 110, and they embalmed him and put him in a coffin in Egypt.”*

Joseph’s life account also showed up in Acts 7:9-16, *“And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him, ¹⁰ And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house. ¹¹ Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Chanaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance. ¹² But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first. ¹³ And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph’s kindred was made known unto Pharaoh. ¹⁴ Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls. ¹⁵ So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers, ¹⁶ And were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor the father of Sychem.”*

Joseph’s story takes up about thirteen or fourteen chapters out of the fifty chapters in Genesis. That is about 1/3 of the entire book. His story has inspired many and has helped scores of people down through the ages to be able to tolerate their afflictions.

Our study of the life of Joseph has come to a close. His life is rich with “life lessons.” I hope this book has helped you understand Joseph and his family.