

Lesson 9

Joseph Forgives His Brothers

Bible Text

Gen 44:14–45:28

Bible Truth

1. Holding a grudge hurts us more than others.
2. God wants us to completely forgive others who have done us wrong.

Lesson Objectives

Students will be able to:

1. learn to forgive others from their heart.
2. understand that forgiving someone helps you become friends again.

Memory Verse

Forgive as the Lord forgave you. (Col 3:13)

Prayer

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray. Lord, we thank You for Your wonderful mercy and love. Even though we often do things that are wrong in Your sight, You forgive us and love us. Please help us to forgive others who have done things against us, like You have forgiven us. Hallelujah! Amen.

Before You Teach



What Is True Forgiveness?

For this class, you can also take some time to talk to your students about true forgiveness. Explain to them that we are all bought with a price that Jesus Christ paid in full in flesh .

1. Are you forgiving when you say, "I forgive you, but I will never forget how unkind you have been to me"?
2. Are you forgiving when you are happy that something bad has happened to someone you do not like?
3. Are you forgiving when you want to get even with someone who had pushed or hit you?
4. Are you forgiving when you stop talking to someone who had told lies about you?
5. Are you forgiving when you speak unkindly about a person who does not choose you to be on his or her team?

Point out that the correct answer to all the questions is "no". Explain that to truly forgive we must:

1. Overcome our angry feelings.
2. Not judge or criticize others.
3. Forget about what had been done.
4. Pray for those who hurt us.

Teaching Our Students to Be God-fearing

Joseph didn't just look at his troubles, he also waited for God's timing. This is one of the attributes of a God-fearing person. A God-fear

ing person is one who has totally submitted himself and entrusted himself to God. Joseph remained a God-fearing person while in slavery and prison. Joseph wasn't a weak person. He submitted his strength and walked by faith, rising to the top of the heap in slavery and in prison. How could he do that? He saw that God was with him (Gen 39:23).

In the end, he said that what his brothers meant for evil, God meant for good. God intended to save millions of lives through him, and he saw how great an honor it was to be used by God in such a significant way. He summed up his difficult experience of being sold into slavery by saying, "God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. It is truly a lesson we must teach our students. Joseph didn't become a bitter man after what his brothers had done to him. Yet, by the grace of God he rose above and God not only brought him out of slavery and prison, God used him at a level where he could change the history of the Israelites.

self-control. Sometimes the students may wonder why a bad person doesn't get punished and want to take the situation into their own hands. Assure them that God is just and will repay everyone according to what they have done. For some, it could be sooner, and for others, it could be later.

Ask the students if they have ever been in a situation where someone has wronged them (for example, someone took their candy, pushed them, took their place in line, etc.) and how they reacted. Ask them if there was a better way to handle the situation. The next time someone hurts them and they are tempted to take revenge, encourage them to ask God to calm them down and remember that judgment is the Lord's. Then they can trust in God and thank Him for taking care of the situation in the best way.

Understanding Your Students



When someone has wronged us or hurt us, the natural response is to want to fight back. To desire justice is natural and God-given. We have been made in the image of God and God is a just God, but our own justice often falls short of God's justice. For example, when we think of justice, we think of "getting even." But this is not the same as God's justice.

God is pleased when we refuse to get even with our enemies. God has said, "It is mine to avenge, I will repay" (Rom 12:19). Help the students understand that when we want to get even, we are not trusting in God to take care of the situation. God has promised that He will deal with those who wrong us. When we look for ways to get revenge, we are letting anger control us. Often, the underlying motivation for revenge is anger caused by worrying about what others think, feeling hurt and betrayed by someone we trusted, wanting our own way, etc. When we give in to the urge to fight back, we are letting anger control us and cause us to do foolish things.

Explain to the students that since we belong to Jesus, we do not need to find ways to get even. Forgiveness has been bought by Jesus at a high price, which is why we should all the more freely forgive if we desire God's forgiveness (Mt 6:14, 15, 18:35; Mk 11:25, 26). God will take care of the injustice we face. This takes trust in God, and it also takes some



Vocabulary

- forgive:** to stop being angry at someone who has done something wrong to you
- slave:** a person owned by someone else, just like a car or house is owned by someone
- Pharaoh:** the king of Egypt
- responsible:** to be in charge
- blame:** fault
- wept:** cried
- famine:** having no food to eat

Review

Last week, we learned how Joseph's brothers had to take a second trip to Egypt. Why did they have to go to Egypt again? (Their family had run out of food from the first trip.) Joseph had told them they would not be allowed to see him unless they brought a particular person with them. Who was this "person"? (Benjamin.) Benjamin was very special to Joseph because out of all of Joseph's other brothers, only Benjamin had the same mother. Jacob also loved Benjamin a lot just as he had loved Joseph. Because Joseph had been sold to Egypt, Benjamin was all that Jacob had left to remind him of their mom, Rachel. Benjamin and Joseph were the youngest of the brothers, born when Jacob was old and Jacob loved them all the more.

When all the brothers returned to Egypt the second time, they were asked to go to Joseph's house and eat with him. Imagine how confused Joseph had been feeling all this time! We're going to see how Joseph might have been feeling during this time.

Just picture that you're Joseph and you're seeing your brothers for the first time in years—and they don't know that you are their brother!

[Get the class to think about how Joseph might have felt. The following prompts can be used as a guide: "How would you feel..."

- if you see your family that you haven't seen in years and years? (Miss them, want to hug them, love, happy, etc.)

- if this same family had sold you to strangers to become a slave? (Angry, sad, don't want to remember, don't want to see them or talk to them, etc.)

- if after all this time you were now the ruler of this country, and your family was now begging you for food? (Pity, sorry for them, love, maybe still angry at them for selling you, etc.)

- if you see your one and only brother, whom you have not seen since he was a child? (Love, sad, happy, etc.)]

Joseph still remembered the awful thing his brothers did to him so many years ago. He had to know if his brothers had really changed after all these years. So he came up with one last plan.

Do you know what Joseph did? (He had a special silver cup that he told his servant to put in Benjamin's sack.) Joseph wanted to see what his brothers would do when Benjamin was in trouble.

Just as they left the city, Joseph commanded his servant to go after his brothers. While they were on their way home, the servant caught up with them.

"What have you done, stealing my master's own

special silver cup? He has been so kind to you, and this is what you do? Steal from my master?"

The brothers all turned to each other in surprise! Of course they had not done such a thing! So one by one, they each lowered their sacks to the ground. One by one, the servant searched in each sack from the oldest brother to the youngest. At last he came to Benjamin's sack. Oh no! The cup was with Benjamin!

What were the brothers going to do? Their father would be so sad if they came back without their little brother Benjamin. They couldn't just leave him to be taken back to Egypt. They had no choice: they all had to go back to Joseph's house. What were they going to do? They must have been very nervous.

Joseph Wants Benjamin to Be His Slave

Joseph knew about the cup all along, of course. All of this was part of Joseph's plan. He just wanted to see whether his brothers would leave Benjamin like they had sold him as a slave so long ago. Boys and girls, like Joseph, we are going to find out whether or not they had changed.

When the brothers got back to his house, Joseph was waiting for them. They were very afraid and bowed before him. He pretended to be angry with them and said, "What is this that you have done? Didn't you know that I would find out if you had stolen anything?"

Judah, the fourth oldest, said, "We don't know what to say. How can we prove that we didn't steal the cup? Not only will Benjamin become your slave, all of us will be your slaves."

But Joseph wanted to see how the brothers would act now that their little brother Benjamin was in trouble. Would they leave their little brother and go, as long as they were safe? Had his brothers changed or were they still the same? So he said, "The rest of you can go back home safely to your father—only the one who had the cup will be my slave."

Judah Wants to Take Benjamin's Place

What do you think happened next? Do you think the brothers have changed? (Allow students to respond) Let's find out.

Now, think back to last week's story. Do you remember the fourth oldest brother, Judah, promised the father something before they all left for Egypt? Do you remember what it was? (Pause to let the students think.) Judah promised his father that he would be responsible for Benjamin and look after him.

Even though Joseph seemed angry, Judah knew he had to do something. When Joseph said he wanted Benjamin to be his slave, Judah spoke up. "Please, sir, do not be angry with us, even though

you are as powerful as Pharaoh himself. You asked us about our family, and we told you that we have a father who is now very old. Benjamin is the youngest, and he was born when our father was already an old man. Benjamin's older brother died, and our father loves Benjamin very much.

When you asked us to bring Benjamin down here, my father said that if anything happened to him, he would surely die in his sadness. So now, if we do not bring Benjamin back to my father, he will die. I told my father that I would be responsible for bringing Benjamin home safely. If I do not do as I promised, the blame will be on me for all my life.

So please, instead of taking Benjamin as your slave, take me."

Judah was the brother who had thought of selling Joseph to the merchants long ago. What a change! Now Joseph could see that Judah loved his younger brother and was willing to give up his own life and become a slave in Benjamin's place. He knew that the brothers couldn't bear to make their father unhappy again by letting something happen to Benjamin. Joseph knew now that the brothers who had sold him into slavery so long ago had changed. How do you think Joseph felt? (Allow students to express their thoughts.)

Joseph Makes Himself Known

Did Joseph still remember what happened to him all those years ago? (Yes, of course he did.) Joseph knew God had planned this all along.

Joseph saw that his brothers had changed—they loved Benjamin, and they loved their father. All of this made Joseph very emotional, and he could no longer hold back the tears.

He told all of his servants to leave. Then in front of his brothers, he wept very loudly and cried in their language, "I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?"

The brothers were so surprised that none of them said anything. They were so frightened they could not say a word! They were afraid that Joseph would hurt them or take revenge on them because they had sold him all those years ago.

Joseph Forgives His Brothers

But Joseph said, "Come close to me. I am Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt. Don't be sad or angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was all God's plan. He sent me here before you so that you and all of these people wouldn't be killed by famine.

So it was not you who sent me here, but God. God put me in charge of Pharaoh's entire household and made me the ruler of all Egypt. Now hurry back to Father and tell him that God has

made me the ruler of all Egypt. Come back quickly to me and don't wait. You and your children can live here and be near me. I will take care of you here because there are five more years of famine to come. Otherwise, our families might starve to death.

Now you see that it is really me. Tell Father about everything that has happened to me, and bring him down quickly."

Joseph hugged Benjamin tightly and both of them wept. He then hugged all of his brothers, and all of them wept because they had found each other again. They must have been so happy because Joseph was no longer sad or angry with them. Joseph had forgiven them and God had been with him, protecting him all this time.

Joseph's Brothers Tell Jacob the News

When Pharaoh heard that Joseph's brothers had come, he told Joseph to bring them all down to Egypt. He would give them the best of the land, and they could all live there.

So Joseph gave them carts and donkeys loaded with presents and all the food they needed for their journey back home. Then he sent his brothers away and said, "Don't fight along the way!"

When his brothers got home, they cried out to their father, "Joseph is alive! Joseph is alive! In fact, he is the ruler over all Egypt!"

Jacob was so shocked that he didn't believe them. But when they told him everything Joseph had said to them, and when Jacob saw all of the carts and presents from Egypt, Jacob was so happy! His beloved son Joseph, who he thought had died so long ago, was still alive! He wanted to see Joseph so much. And now he was finally going to get a chance to see him again.

So Jacob's whole family, seventy people in all, traveled to Goshen in the land of Egypt to meet Joseph again. Even though there was a famine, they had plenty to eat.

Next week, we will learn about how Joseph gathered the whole family and let them stay in Egypt, and we will see just how God watched over them.

Memory Verse Practice



Please reinforce the memory verse every week. You can practice the memory verse with your students anytime during class.

Check For Understanding

1. In whose sack was Joseph's silver cup found? (Benjamin's.)
2. After the silver cup was found in Benjamin's sack, where did the brothers go? (Back to Joseph's house.)
3. When the brothers got there, what did Joseph do? (He pretended to be angry.)
4. How did the brothers feel when they had to go back to Joseph's house? (Suggested answers: afraid, nervous, worried, or perhaps guilty if they remembered what they had done to Joseph.)
5. What did he say Benjamin had to do? (Become his slave.)
6. How would Jacob feel if Benjamin did not come home with the other brothers? (So sad that he would die of sadness.)
7. Why did Joseph plan all of this? (He wanted to see if his brothers had changed; he wanted to see what his brothers would do now that their little brother was in trouble and if they would do to Benjamin what they did to him years ago.)
8. Who spoke up for Benjamin and asked to become the slave in his place? (Judah.)
9. Why did all of the brothers return home? (To tell their father that Joseph was alive and to bring their families to Egypt to live.)

Did you see how an older brother was willing to take the place of the youngest brother? Can you imagine if someone took your place if you were going to die? Actually, someone did. That someone is Jesus. He died for all the wrong things we have done so that we might go to heaven at the end of our life. If we trust Him, He will watch over us and take care of us always. What a friend! God wants us to forgive others and love others as He loves us.

- Pray to God to have the wisdom and strength to live according to His will.
- Have the faith to entrust all to God: do not allow anger towards others to hurt us, and do not allow our anger to hurt others.
- Remember the price for forgiveness that Jesus had to pay, and emulate His example of forgiveness.

Spiritual Teaching & Life Application

Spiritual Teaching 1:

Sometimes we don't see what God has planned for us right away, but gradually He shows us what He is doing. There are times when things are difficult and we wonder why the situation is the way it is. Joseph had been wronged time and again and suffered for many years. Despite this, he did not sin against God. When he finally realized God's purpose, he did not hold resentment towards those who had caused his suffering. He attributed his life events to God's greater will for good.

Life Application:

Trust and obey. Entrust everything to God because He knows, loves, and cares for you. He knows what is best, and even though things may be hard, He will gradually show you the right path. It takes faith, obedience, and strength to fully rely on Him. Teach your students to pray to God for wisdom and the strength to obey.

Spiritual Teaching 2:

Forgiving does not necessarily mean forgetting what someone has done to wrong you in the past. Forgiving does mean to let go of all the anger and resentment inside. It means not seeking revenge or seeking to hurt the one who has hurt you. Having a sense of justice is natural. Humankind was created in the image of God, and God is a just God. Desiring justice is not wrong. True justice, however, can only come from God and cannot come from ourselves. This requires faith in God.

Life Application:

Jesus paid the ultimate price for the forgiveness of our sins. Any act of forgiveness we do is small in comparison. Nonetheless, God wants us to have faith in Him and trust that He will do the right thing. Teach your students to recall Jesus' sufferings for our reconciliation to God, and to pray for the faith and patience to allow God to work in His own way.

Suggestions for Activities:

A major application from this lesson is forgiveness. Talk to the children about what it means to forgive others even when most want to take revenge. Bring bandages and talk about why we use them (to help protect a wound and help it heal). Give each person a bandage and ask them to help others who have hurt feelings this week.

Activity 1

I Forgive You Puppet Role-play

Objectives: Students will understand the importance of forgiveness.

Instructions:

Bring a puppet (Harry) to class to help you perform this skit for the students.

Teacher: What's up, Harry? you look a little angry.

Harry: Humph, I'm not very happy right now.

Teacher: Well, tell me what happened that made you so unhappy.

Harry: Last night Billy came over to borrow my new Playstation game. It was brand new, and he scratched up the CD and now it doesn't work anymore.

Teacher: Well that does seem very unfortunate, but I'm sure Billy didn't mean it.

Harry: Well he did say it was an accident, and he was sorry...but I can't forgive him, it was my favorite game, Frogger!

Teacher: You know, that reminds me of a story in the Bible.

Harry: Frogger reminds you of a story in the Bible?

Teacher: No silly, the forgiving part.

Harry: Oh, really?

Teacher: This story was about a young boy. He was very special in his father's eyes.

Harry: Moses was special.

Teacher: True, but this is a story about Joseph, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. Jacob loved his son Joseph so much, do you know what he did? He gave him a coat of many colors, especially for him.

Harry: I bet it was beautiful.

Teacher: It was, and Joseph loved his coat very much. But his eleven other brothers became very jealous. They didn't get a beautiful coat.

Harry: So what did they do?

Teacher: What they did was very cruel. First they put Joseph in a deep hole and left him to die but then decided to sell him instead to some merchants traveling to Egypt.

Harry: I bet Joseph was really angry.

Teacher: He was at first, just like you are angry now, but he also loved God.

Harry: So what happened?

Teacher: Let's ask one of my students if they know. Does anybody want to tell Harry what happened? (Allow students to tell Harry.) Joseph made his home in Egypt and soon became an important person there. One day God told him in a dream that there would be great famine in the land. Do you know what a famine is?

Harry: I think that is when there is nothing to eat.

Teacher: That's right, and this famine was going to last for seven years.

Harry: Wow! That's a long time. Everyone would starve to death.

Teacher: Yes, but Pharaoh had a plan. He let Joseph get ready for the famine by storing large amounts of food to eat later. So finally, the famine came, and Joseph's brothers ran out of food....

Harry: ...So they tried to get some food from Joseph?

Teacher: Yes, they did.

Harry: But he was still angry and wouldn't give them any. "Get away," he said, "starve to death, go..."

Teacher: Hold on, Harry (hand over mouth), that's not what happened. He forgave them and shared the food because he realized that God had planned the whole thing. Because of his brothers, Joseph went to Egypt and was able to save all of them from starving to death. You see, God knows what is best for us even when we don't, and when we learn to forgive others in our hearts, He can do great things for us.

Harry: I guess Joseph did the right thing by forgiving his brothers. I better forgive Billy, too. Maybe then God will help me win at Frogger.

Teacher: Well, that's not quite what I meant, but anyway, it's a good start to forgive Billy.

Harry: Yeah...he is a good friend.

Activity 2

Forgiving Situations

Objective: To identify situations where we can forgive.

Procedure:

1. Ask the students to come up with ten situations where someone has done wrong to someone else. Examples can be: a sister hitting her brother, a classmate stealing a pencil, someone cutting in line, etc.
2. Ask the students to find the three hardest things to forgive and the three easiest things.
3. Go through each situation and first ask if any of the students experienced it before. Choose one student to share how they dealt with the situation. Then ask the class how Joseph might have dealt with this situation.

Activity 3

To Forgive Acrostic Poem

Each letter of the word “forgive” forms the start of a line describing the word (e.g., a situation where the students would forgive, what forgive means to them, where others have forgiven them in the past, a description of Jesus’ mercy, etc). It can be done as a class activity (each student contributing a line), group activity, or individual activity. The finished poems are then written up, embellished, and mounted on the wall.

Suggested ideas:

- use of “scrolls”
- 3D frames in contrasting color with the use of “foam tape”
- decorative borders
- calligraphy and fancy lettering
- paper “aging” by dipping completed poems in cold tea or coffee (when dry, have the teacher/assistant burn the edges of the paper)

Activity 4

Board Game

Make a simple board game of Jacob’s family traveling from Israel to Egypt. Students need to roll a die. Landing on certain squares means answering questions about the lesson or sharing their thoughts on something. First one to Egypt wins. Penalties can be included by taking steps backwards.

Homework Answer Key

1. b
2. Joseph, silver
3. True
4. False
5. God
6. forgave
7. a
8. five
9. Jesus
10. b
11. Student’s answers

Homework Assignment

Name: _____ Parent's signature: _____ Date: _____

- Bible Truth:**
1. Holding a grudge hurts us more than others.
 2. God wants us to completely forgive others who have done us wrong.

- Lesson Objectives:**
1. Learn to forgive others from our heart.
 2. Understand that forgiving someone helps you become friends again.

Bible Reading: Please put a check mark in the space when you complete the reading each day.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat

Prayer: Please put a check mark in the space provided on the days you prayed to God.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat

Memory Verse: Please write down this week's memory verse

_____ (Col 3:13)

What I learned from the Bible this week:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Homework Assignment

Year 1 Book 2 Lesson 9

1. **Multiple choice: Why did the brothers return to Egypt a second time?**
 - a) They missed Joseph and wanted to see him again.
 - b) They ran out of food.
 - c) They wanted to bring Benjamin to see Joseph.
2. **Fill in the blanks: _____ asked his servant to put the _____ cup in Benjamin's sack.**
3. **True or False: Judah had promised his father that he would keep Benjamin safe. _____**
4. **True or False: Judah became Joseph's slave instead of Benjamin. _____**
5. **Fill in the blank: Joseph knew it was _____ who brought him to Egypt to save many people from starving.**
6. **Fill in the blank: Joseph _____ his brothers for what they had done to him. He was no longer angry or upset about what they did to him.**
7. **Multiple choice: _____ went down to live in Egypt.**
 - a) All of Jacob's family
 - b) Only Benjamin's family
 - c) Only Joseph's brothers
8. **Fill in the blank: There were _____ more years of famine when they moved down to live in Egypt.**
9. **Fill in the blank: God wants us to forgive others because _____ already died to forgive us of our sins.**
10. **Multiple choice: Forgiving means:**
 - a) Forgetting about what wrong someone has done to you.
 - b) Not being angry about the wrong someone has done to you.
 - c) Wanting to do wrong back to the person who hurt you.

Life Application Question

11. **Write a short letter to God telling Him how thankful you are that He died on the cross and forgave your sins.**

Dear God,
