

# Bible Stories for Adults

## Joseph Forgives His Brothers

Genesis 42 - 50

### Opening

- Gathering: Tell of how God has used turned bad experiences in your life to His good.
- Today's Focus: To recognize that God can use even the evil things in life to accomplish His good.
- Key Verses: *It was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. ... It was not you who sent me here, but God.* Genesis 45:5, 8
- You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.* Genesis 50:20
- We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.* Romans 8:28

Opening Prayer

### Lesson

Brotherly Love (*Genesis 37*)

- . How well did Joseph get along with his brothers? = special tunic reached to palms & soles  
Genesis 37:3-4 = They hated him because Jacob loved him more
- . How did Joseph contribute to this animosity? = They hated him even more  
Genesis 37:2, 5-11 = Joseph squealed on them and dreamt twice they'd bow to him
- . How did the brothers take out their anger towards their spoiled brother?  
Genesis 37:23-24, 28 = Sold him as a slave to traders going to Egypt
- . What did the brothers tell their father and how did Jacob respond?  
Genesis 37:31-34 = Gave robe with goat's blood to Jacob, he grieved a long time

Good News / Bad News (*Genesis 39-41*)

- . How did things go for Joseph in Egypt?  
Genesis 39:2-4 = God gave Joseph success in everything, put in charge of household
- . How did Joseph's situation change in a way that may have seemed that God deserted him?  
Genesis 39:7, 10, 14, 20a = After refused by Joseph, Potiphar's wife cried rape, he went to jail
- . How did God remember Joseph in prison?  
Genesis 39:21-23 = God gave Joseph success in everything, put in charge in jail
- . What happened some time later that seemed like a way out for Joseph?  
Genesis 40:2, 4, 8, 14 = He revealed dreams to trusted servants of Pharaoh
- . Did the cupbearer work for Joseph's release when he was restored as Joseph had foretold?  
Genesis 40:23 = No, he forgot Joseph
- . How did this actually lead to Joseph's release in an entirely unexpected way?  
Genesis 41:1, 8-9, 12, 14 = Pharaoh sent for Joseph to interpret two dreams
- . What happened after Joseph said that the dreams foretold 7 abundant & 7 famine years?  
Genesis 41:39-41 = Pharaoh put him over all Egypt to gather & distribute food

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### Seven and Seven (*Genesis 41:46-57; 47:13-26*)

How did Joseph spend the first seven years of his job for Pharaoh?

Genesis 41:47, 49 = Gathered & stored grain throughout Egypt, beyond measure

How did Joseph know when to stop collecting and to start distributing the grain?

Genesis 41:55 = When the people ran out of their own food & came to Pharaoh

How did Joseph distribute the grain? Did he give it to the Egyptians?

Genesis 41:56-57 = Sold it to anyone who came paying, Egyptian or otherwise

What happened when the people ran out of money?

Genesis 47:14-16 (13-17) = Joseph took all of the livestock as payment for Pharaoh

What happened when the people ran out of livestock?

Genesis 47:18-21 (18-22) = Joseph took all of the land and people as payment for Pharaoh

What happened when the famine was over?

Genesis 47:23-24, 26 (23-26) = Joseph gave seed to plant and set a law that 20% is Pharaoh's

### Interesting, But Is It Pertinent? (*Genesis 42:1-8*)

What do all of these stories about Joseph in Egypt have to do with God's people in Canaan?

Genesis 42:1-5 = Famine was severe in Canaan, Jacob sent sons to buy grain in Egypt

Did Jacob's sons get to see their long-lost brother when they went to Egypt?

Genesis 42:6-8 = Yes, but they didn't recognize him

Why didn't they recognize their own brother? = 17 when sold as slave, now upper 30s

Genesis 41:45; 42:23 = Never expected brother to be Egyptian governor, different name

### Spies From Canaan (*Genesis 42:9-24*)

Did Joseph take advantage of the situation and take revenge against his brothers?

Genesis 42:9-14 = Looks like it at first glance, accused them of being spies

If not taking revenge, what was Joseph doing through these accusations?

Genesis 43:7 = An excuse for asking questions to get updated on family situation

How did Joseph build on this to see if his brothers had changed? = In prison 3 days without hope

Genesis 42:15-20 = Would they stand by their brother or save their own skin

Why did the brothers think this was happening to them?

Genesis 42:21-22 = Punishment for what they had done to Joseph 20 years before

Did Joseph get a chance to hear his brothers' remorse? = Simeon 2<sup>nd</sup> oldest; Reuben saved J's life

Genesis 42:23-24 = They spoke in front of him in Hebrew, he continued with his plan

### Another Difficult Message for Dad (*Genesis 42:25-38*)

How did it become clear that Joseph had forgiven his brothers & wasn't seeking revenge?

Genesis 42:25-26 = He filled their grain orders and returned their silver payment

What did the brothers think when they found the silver in their packs? = v11, we are honest men

Genesis 42:27-28 = Afraid they would be considered thieves, more punishment

How did Jacob respond when the brothers told him their story?

Genesis 42:29, 36 (29-36) = Afraid of losing his youngest & now favorite son, Benjamin

How did Reuben try to get Jacob's confidence, and did it work?

Genesis 42:37-38 = Offered his sons as collateral, Jacob said no way

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When Ya Gotta Go... (Genesis 43:1-14)

What made Jacob reconsider his decision not to let Benjamin go to Egypt?

Genesis 43:1-3 (1-5) = They ran out of food again and had to go buy some more

Who put his own neck on the line to convince Jacob to send Benjamin?

Genesis 43:8-9 (6-10) = Judah - *you can hold me personally responsible for him*

What did Jacob decide? = Asked God for safe return of his sons – *If I am bereaved, I am bereaved*

Genesis 43:11a, 12-14 (11-14) = Sent them with gifts for the gov & double silver for payment

A Confusing Fellowship Meal (Genesis 43:15-34)

What happened as soon as the brothers reached Joseph? = Hadn't seen Ben since 1 yr old, now >20

Genesis 43:15-17 = Without explaining, Joseph had brothers taken to his house

What did the brothers think about being taken to Joseph's house?

Genesis 43:18 (18-22) = They thought they'd be taken as slaves for stealing the silver

How did Joseph's steward calm their fears?

Genesis 43:23 = Said payment was credited in full, not stolen, released Simeon

How did the brothers respond when Joseph arrived for lunch?

Genesis 43:24-26 = They bowed down to him (dreams fulfilled) & presented gifts

What was the most valuable gift Joseph received from them?

Genesis 43:27-30 = Good news of his father's health & seeing his only full brother

How did this lunch become even more confusing?

Genesis 43:31-33 = They had been seated in order of age - how did they know?

What other strange thing did the brothers see at this meal?

Genesis 43:34 = Benjamin was given 5 times as much food

Stolen Silver (Genesis 44)

Did Joseph let the brothers go home, never to see them again or did he reveal himself to them?

Genesis 44:1-5 = He carried out another "silver in the pouch" plan

How did the brothers respond to accusations of stealing the governor's silver cup?

Genesis 44:7, 9-10 (6-10) = They wouldn't do such a thing, guilty one would become slave

What happened when the sacks were searched?

Genesis 44:11-12 = It was found in Benjamin's sack

What did the brothers do with the prospect of telling Jacob that Benjamin was a slave?

Genesis 44:16 (13-16) = Returned to Joseph & offered selves as slaves (bowed again)

Did Joseph accept this?

Genesis 44:17 = No, only the guilty one would become his slave, rest are free

Who stepped up on Benjamin's behalf?

Genesis 44:18, 27-31, 33 (18-34) = Judah pled with Joseph to take him as slave instead

Luther: *What would I not give to be able to pray before the Lord as Judah here interceded for Benjamin, for it is a perfect model of prayer, nay, of the strong feeling which must underlie all prayer.*

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### Joseph Exposed (*Genesis 45*)

How much further did Joseph continue to push things? = Shown repentance for wrongs to Joseph

Genesis 45:1-3 = He stopped here; he broke down and told them who he was

How did Joseph make it clear to them he had forgiven them and held no grudges?

Genesis 45:5 (4-7) = God allowed it all so Joseph could save them from famine

What further plans did Joseph have?

Genesis 45:9, 11 (8-24) = To have Jacob and the entire family move to Egypt

How was Joseph seeing part of God's plan, but missing the bigger part?

Genesis 15:13-14 = God was bringing His chosen people to Egypt for 400 yrs preparation

### Retiring in the Land of Goshen (*Genesis 46-50*)

How did the 130 year old Jacob respond to the idea of moving to Egypt?

Genesis 45:26, 28 (25-28) = He was thrilled at seeing Joseph again

How did he know it was okay with God to leave Canaan and move to Egypt?

Genesis 46:1-4 = God told him to go, become a great nation, God would be with them

Did Jacob plan to move to Egypt or just visit? = 66 people + 3 in Egypt + Jacob = 70

Genesis 46:6, 26-27 (5-27) = He took everything and everyone, a permanent move

How large did this family of 70 grow over the next 430 years?

Exodus 12:37, 40 = 600,000 men + women + children + others left in Exodus

How did Jacob react when he saw Joseph for the first time in 20 years?

Genesis 46:29-30 (46:28-47:12) = Emotional reunion, Jacob felt his life was now complete

What promise did Jacob ask of Joseph?

Genesis 47:29-30 (27-31) = To bury him in Abraham's cave, not in Egypt

Did Joseph fulfill this promise?

Genesis 50:7, 13 (49:29-50:14) = Yes, went with all of the family and many Egyptian officials

### God Intended it for Good (*Genesis 50:15-21*)

What concerned Joseph's brothers after their father died?

Genesis 50:15-18 = Joseph might now take revenge in them, offered as slaves

How did Joseph respond to their fears?

Genesis 50:19-21 (19-26) = **You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good...**

### Closing Prayer

### Response

1. How have I responded when entrusted with large responsibilities?  
(*Genesis 41:41-57; 1 Samuel 15; 18:12-16; Luke 12:42-48; 16:10-13; Romans 14:10; Titus 2:10*)
2. How does it feel when I experience the consequence of doing something wrong?  
(*Genesis 42:18-24; 44:14-34; Lev. 26:14-17; Psalm 38:1-4; Proverbs 10:24; 29:6; Romans 13:3-4*)
3. When have I had opportunity to take revenge on someone? What did I do?  
(*Genesis 44-45; 50:15-21; Leviticus 19:18; Proverbs 20:22; 24:29; Romans 12:17-21*)
4. How does it feel when I am forgiven by others? When I forgive others?  
(*Genesis 45:4-8, 14-15; Matthew 6:12-15; 18:21-35; Luke 7:44-50; 2 Cor. 2:5-11; James 2:12-13*)
5. How has God worked His good through bad situations that have happened in my life?  
(*Genesis 45:5-8; 50:20; Esther 4:7-16; Jeremiah 29:10-11; Romans 8:28; Philippians 1:12-14*)