

GENESIS

The Book of Foundations

Resilience in Difficult Times

Genesis 45-50

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Many trials await each one of us. We can safely get through these tests if we wait upon the Lord, look to Him for sufficient grace, and steadily get His will done. Joseph's many trials are spread out before us, giving us the opportunity to learn from his resilience—despite the disillusionment, temptations, despair, loneliness, and desperate situations that had to face.

Explain how the difficulties Jacob and Joseph met were different in character.

- Jacob's life shows the _____ of a Messiah.
- Joseph's life provides a _____ of the Messiah.

Joseph's Testings

"He sent a man before them, Joseph, [who] was sold as a slave. They afflicted his feet with fetters, He himself was laid in irons; until the time that his word came to pass, **the word of the LORD tested him**" (Psalm 105:17-19).

- **Test of Trust => betrayal & _____ (Genesis 37)**

How does Joseph bear the fact that his brothers sold him and almost killed him?

- Do you trust your past life to the Lord along with all the difficulties experienced? "Rejoice in the Lord always!" (Phil 4:4)

- **Test of Pride => Extreme Ups and Downs (Genesis 39-41)**

How does the 'blessed' Joseph deal with successive successes and injustice?

- How do you respond when you should be treated nicely but find yourself being treated terribly wrong?

- **Test of Compassion => Opportunity for Revenge (Genesis 42-50)**

How does the powerful Joseph treat his brothers before and after his father dies?

- How can God's grace help you conquer the corruption of power that comes with success and instead persistently carry out acts of kindness?

Why is Joseph's section (37-50) so long?

- Captivating
- Historical
- Gracious
- Faithful
- Pure
- Prophetical

Lessons of Life (Gen 45-50)

Genesis 45-50 entail some very confusing lifelong situations which went on for a long time without any real resolve—just like in real life. Let's look more carefully at six scenes to gain encouragement from Joseph's faith.

1) Genesis 45:4-5 Responding to Abusers

"Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come closer to me." And they came closer. And he said, "I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life" (Genesis 45:4-5).

- Joseph leaks out the secret
- Joseph withholds _____
- Joseph sends signs of genuine peace by mentioning God's greater purpose

2) Lessons From the Past (Genesis 45:26-27)

"And they told him, saying, "Joseph is still alive, and indeed he is ruler over all the land of Egypt." But he was stunned, for he did not believe them. When they told him all the words of Joseph that he had spoken to them, and when he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of their father Jacob revived" (Gen 45:26-27).

- Jacob was incredulous until he saw the _____
- Jacob finally learned the pain of deceit

3) Work Through Disappointment (Genesis 46:1-4)

"So Israel set out with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. And God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, "Jacob, Jacob." And he said, "Here I am." And He said, "I am God, the God of your father; do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you a great nation there. "I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will close your eyes" (Genesis 46:1-4).

- Israel (Jacob) returned to _____
- Beersheba was Abraham's worship place
- Why does it take so long to return to God?
- God was always close by, and Jacob could have trusted God with Joseph and God's promises.

4) Seek God's Best (Genesis 47:10-11)

"And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from his presence. So Joseph settled his father and his brothers, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had ordered" (Genesis 47:10-11).

- Jacob blessed Pharaoh; the greater blesses the lesser
- God's purposes for Jacob fulfilled by Joseph
- "Best of land" Israel became protected and _____
- Israelites remained free while Egyptians became serfs, losing all their property.

Notes on God's
sovereignty

5) Living Under God's Wisdom (Genesis 50:20)

"And as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive" (Gen 50:20).

- You could have taken advantage of those who hurt you.
- God's good providence includes even man's malice (Rom 8:28; e.g., Jesus' suffering)

6) The Breakthrough of Kindness (Genesis 50:21)

"So therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones. So he comforted them and spoke kindly to them" (Gen 50:21).

- Joseph could have ignored them but showed ongoing _____.
- The opportunity to show kindness to the mean-spirited is always before us (Luke 6:27-28).

"Joseph is truly a remarkable man; He was loved and hated, favored and abused, tempted and trusted, exalted and abased, Yet at no point in the 110-year life of Joseph did he ever seem to get his eyes off God or cease to trust Him. Adversity did not harden his character. Prosperity did not ruin him. He was the same in private as in public. He was a truly great man." (James M. Boice)

Discussion questions

1. Why is it so easy to get bitter and hardened rather than to forgive? Do you have a hard time forgiving others?
2. Can you accept how God works in your life or another, even though it might include the evil acts of others?
3. How did Joseph's and Jacob's faith in God differ? Why do you think so?