

Living Beyond Your Circumstances

Lesson 5: Overcoming Bitterness

Scriptures: Genesis: 45:1-15

Background Scriptures: Genesis 42-44

Question: How would you describe the taste of bitterness?

Genesis 45:1-2

1 Joseph could stand it no longer. There were many people in the room, and he said to his attendants, “Out, all of you!” So he was alone with his brothers when he told them who he was.

2 Then he broke down and wept. He wept so loudly the Egyptians could hear him, and word of it quickly carried to Pharaoh’s palace.

Genesis 45:3-4

3 “I am Joseph!” he said to his brothers. “Is my father still alive?” But his brothers were speechless! They were stunned to realize that Joseph was standing there in front of them.

4 “Please, come closer,” he said to them. So they came closer. And he said again, “I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into slavery in Egypt.

Genesis 45:5-8

5 But don’t be upset, and don’t be angry with yourselves for selling me to this place. It was God who sent me here ahead of you to preserve your lives.

6 This famine that has ravaged the land for two years will last five more years, and there will be neither plowing nor harvesting.

7 God has sent me ahead of you to keep you and your families alive and to preserve many survivors.

8 So it was God who sent me here, not you! And he is the one who made me an adviser[b] to Pharaoh—the manager of his entire palace and the governor of all Egypt.

Genesis 45:9-11

9 “Now hurry back to my father and tell him, ‘This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me master over all the land of Egypt. So come down to me immediately!

10 You can live in the region of Goshen, where you can be near me with all your children and grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and everything you own.

11 I will take care of you there, for there are still five years of famine ahead of us. Otherwise you, your household, and all your animals will starve.’”

Genesis 45:12-15

12 Then Joseph added, “Look! You can see for yourselves, and so can my brother Benjamin, that I really am Joseph!

13 Go tell my father of my honored position here in Egypt. Describe for him everything you have seen, and then bring my father here quickly.”

14 Weeping with joy, he embraced Benjamin, and Benjamin did the same.

15 Then Joseph kissed each of his brothers and wept over them, and after that they began talking freely with him.

Live It Out

How can you incorporate forgiveness into your everyday life?

1. **Connect with family.** Take time this week to intentionally connect with a family member. Invest in your relationships as a preventative measure against bitterness and strife.
2. **Identify your hurts.** Think through the major pain points that cause you to harbor unforgiveness against others. Ask God to help you understand those hurts, but also to forgive even as we have been forgiven.
3. **Apologize when necessary.** If you’ve wronged someone, acknowledge it. Be bold in asking for forgiveness.



Application Questions

- How can we let go of the past without forgetting it?
- How did Joseph's actions in this story mirror God's actions toward us?
- What actions on our part begin and maintain the process of reconciliation?

Point to Ponder:

It's hard to let go of the hurt others have caused. Sometimes it seems nearly impossible. But it's worth the effort. Why? Because the taste of forgiveness is far sweeter than the taste of bitterness.