

Rest, Friendships, and Healing



SABBATH—AUGUST 7

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Genesis 42:7–20; Genesis 42:21–24; Matthew 18:21–35; Luke 23:34; Genesis 50:15–21.

MEMORY VERSE: “ ‘Now don't be worried. Don't be angry with yourselves for what you did. It was God's plan for me to come here. I am here to save people's lives' ” (Genesis 45:5, ERV).



“ ‘ I forgive you.’ ”

A WOMAN accuses of man of a crime. She tells the police that the man forced her to have sex. Some people have questions about her story. But the woman points to the man in a police lineup. She says that he hurt her, for sure.

The man, Johnny, goes to prison. 14 years later, scientific tests prove Johnny did not do the crime. The woman, Joan, understands she blamed the wrong man.

Joan wants to meet Johnny after he is released from prison. What will Johnny do when he comes face-to-face with the woman who destroyed his life for so many years?

Joan waits in a room at the prison. When Johnny comes in, he and Joan look at each other. Joan starts to cry.

Joan tells someone later, “Johnny took my hands. He looked at me and said, ‘I forgive you.’ For 14 years I hated this man. I wanted him to die. But he told me he forgave me after I did him so much wrong. I cannot believe it! That is when I started to understand forgiveness. I started to heal and have real rest.”

This week we study the topic of forgiveness. We will learn how forgiveness can heal human hearts that need rest.

FACING THE PAST (Genesis 42:7–20)

Soon, the life of Joseph improves in big ways. Joseph gets out of prison after he tells Pharaoh, the king, the correct meaning of his dreams. Then Pharaoh puts Joseph in charge of the whole country (Genesis 41). Joseph marries Asenath, the daughter of an Egyptian priest, or holy leader. Joseph and Asenath have two sons. Thanks to Joseph, the warehouses in Egypt are full of food. Just as Joseph said, the food shortage starts. Then the brothers of Joseph come to Egypt.

Read about the first meeting between Joseph and his brothers in Genesis 42:7–20. Why does Joseph behave the way he does? What is he trying to do?

Joseph is now a powerful man. He can hurt his brothers if he wants to. He can get away with revenge, too. But Joseph does not choose revenge. He chooses mercy. He worries about his family at home. He worries about his father most of all. Is his father alive? And what about Benjamin, the younger brother of Joseph? Is Benjamin in the same danger that Joseph was in from their older brothers? Joseph now is powerful enough to look after the helpless members in his family. He can take good care of them. That is exactly what Joseph chooses to do.

We must act the same as Joseph. When our family members are harmed by other family members, we must not accept this behavior. Each of us is precious in the eyes of God. Jesus paid the price on the cross for us all.

Why does Jesus care so deeply about the pain we suffer? For the answer, read Matthew 25:41–46.

Jesus bought each one of us with His blood. We belong to Him. Anyone who attacks another person and hurts them really attacks the property of Jesus.

Forcing anyone to have sex is wrong. So is hitting or beating someone. When these two things happen in families, we need to get help. These problems are not private. You will need outside help. Are you or someone in your family being hurt or forced to have sex with another family member? Then please get help from a professional you can trust.

What are some Bible rules that you can follow to help you with whatever family problem you may have right now?



Joseph is now a powerful man. He can get even with his brothers if he wants to.

THE TESTS (Genesis 42:21–24)

Joseph forgives his brothers after they come to Egypt. For sure, Joseph never can be a success if he refuses to forgive. Why? Because the anger will eat away at his heart. Anger will hurt our friendship with God, too.

Studies show that people who heal from awful suffering do so because they forgive the ones who hurt them. When we refuse to forgive, our lives continue to be destroyed by our suffering. Forgiveness frees us from pain. So, we must ask God to help us forgive. Forgiveness is about our hearts and not about the person who hurt us.

Yes, Joseph forgives his brothers. But he is not willing to let things be the way they were in the past. So, Joseph must make sure his brothers really have changed.

What does Joseph hear his brothers say? For the answer, read Genesis 42:21–24. What does Joseph learn about his brothers from their conversation?



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The brothers are not aware that Joseph can understand anything they say. Joseph hears his brothers confess their sin against him. The brothers thought that by selling Joseph into slavery they will be free of his dreams, his bad reports about them, and watching their father show Joseph more love. Did they find the rest they wanted when they got rid of Joseph? Not at all. They have felt guilty all these years. Their evil act against Joseph has made them tired and worn out. They have been filled with awful fear that God will make them pay for what they did to Joseph. Joseph feels sorry for their suffering. He cries for them.

Joseph knows the food shortage will continue for several more years. So, he tells them to bring Benjamin with them the next time they come to buy food (Genesis 42:20). Joseph also keeps Simeon prisoner (Genesis 42:24).

When Joseph sees Benjamin alive, he holds a feast. At the feast, Joseph shows that Benjamin is his favorite person there (Genesis 43:34). This is a test. Joseph wants to see if his brothers will behave with jealous hearts the way they did in the past. They do not. But Joseph is not ready to trust his brothers. He knows how tricky they can be. They lied to a whole town, remember (Genesis 34:13)? Joseph knows they must have lied to their father about selling him into slavery (Genesis 37:31–34). So, Joseph will give them one more test (read Genesis 44).

FORGIVE AND FORGET? (Matthew 18:21–35)

What does forgiving other people do for us? For the answer, read Matthew 18:21–35.

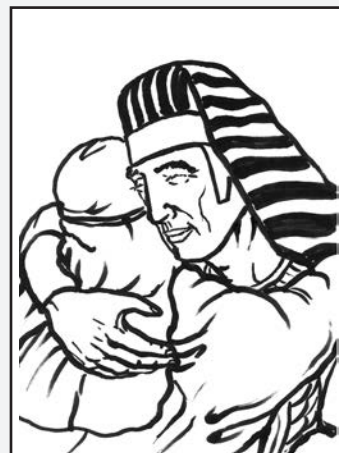
We must understand all the things that God has forgiven us for because of Jesus. This understanding is one of the most important parts of learning how to forgive other people. We all have sinned. We have sinned against other people and against God Himself.

Every sin is a sin against our Lord. But because of Jesus, we can ask God for full forgiveness for all our sins. We have done nothing to earn this precious gift from heaven. God forgives us because of His mercy. Not because of anything we do. When we understand these Bible truths, we can accept this perfect gift of forgiveness from God. Then we can forgive the ones who have hurt us, too. Why do we need to forgive them? Do we need to forgive others because they have earned forgiveness? No, we forgive the ones who wronged us because God forgives us. We all need forgiveness that we did nothing to earn.

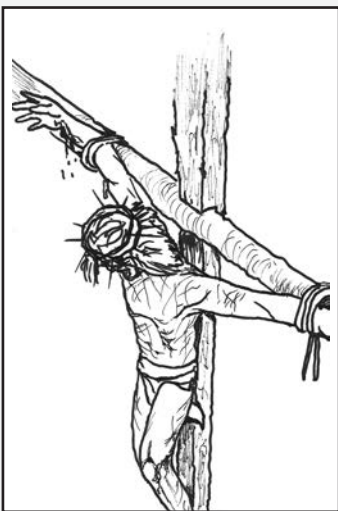
As we saw, Joseph offers a second chance to his brothers. Joseph feels no anger in his heart for the evil things his brothers did to him in the past.

In a family when we each become experts at how to hurt each other, can we have a new start? Difficult, but yes. We can start new with the help of God. Joseph does not hurt his brothers for all they did to him. Joseph does not try to get revenge against them. Joseph puts the past behind him. He moves on with life. He accepts his brothers and shows them love. What if Joseph had a different feeling in his heart? Then, for sure, this story will have a different ending, and not a happy one.

“ ‘It is a great [wonderful] blessing when people are forgiven for the wrongs they have done, when their sins are erased! It is a great blessing when the Lord accepts people as if they are without sin!’ ” (Romans 4:7, 8, ERV). What is Paul telling us in these verses about the gift God has given us in Jesus? How should this wonderful promise change our lives for the better? How should this promise help us show love and forgiveness to the people who hurt us the most?



Joseph feels no anger in his heart for the evil things his brothers did to him in the past.

MAKING FORGIVENESS PERSONAL (Luke 23:34)

The Cross is the best example of the price God paid to forgive us.

Do you need to forgive someone? Then here is what you must do. You must confess that you are hurt. This is not always easy to do. Sometimes we want to hide our feelings or behave as if no one hurt us. But telling God we are angry is fine. We see the writers in the psalms do this all the time. So, feel free to tell God you do not like what happened. Tell God that the way someone behaved hurts you, makes you sad, or angry.

In the story about Joseph, we see him cry when he meets his brothers again. For sure, in that moment, Joseph feels some of the pain from his past.

What does Jesus say on the cross? What do His words tell us about the best time to forgive someone? For the answer, read Luke 23:34.

Jesus did not wait for us to ask for His forgiveness. So, we do not need to wait for the person who wronged us to ask for forgiveness. We can forgive other people before they accept our forgiveness first.

What do Luke 6:28 and Matthew 5:44 teach us about how we should feel about the people who hurt us? What do we need to show them?

Forgiveness and love both start with a choice. They do not start with a feeling. We can make the choice to forgive people, even if we do not feel ready to forgive them yet. God knows “that is something people cannot do, but God can. He can do anything” (Mark 10:27, ERV). Jesus tells us to pray for those who hurt us. What if the person who hurt us already is dead? Then we can pray for God to heal our hearts so that we can forgive.

Forgiveness is not always easy. The pain that other people caused us can be awful. Our suffering can leave us hurt, broken, and with crippled hearts. Healing will come if we allow it. But we must not hold on to anger and hate. Anger and hate make healing harder. Healing may not be possible at all when our hearts are full of anger and hate.

The Cross is the best example of the price God paid to forgive us. He knew many people will reject Him. But the Lord went to the cross to die for us anyway. If the Lord can do that for us, we can learn to forgive other people.

FINDING REST AFTER WE FORGIVE (Genesis 50:15–21)

The family of Joseph finally arrives in Egypt. The brothers of Joseph must have explained to their father how they sold Joseph as a slave years ago. The son that Jacob thought wild animals killed is now in charge of Egypt!

What are the brothers of Joseph worried about in Genesis 50:15–21? Why do you think they are worried? What does this fear say about them?

The brothers of Joseph have been living in Egypt for 17 years now (Genesis 47:28). But when Jacob dies, the brothers are afraid Joseph will take his revenge on them. The brothers understand all over again how much they hurt Joseph. Joseph tells them again that he forgives them after their father dies. This experience of forgiving again is good for both Joseph and his brothers, for sure.

When someone hurts us deeply, we may need to forgive that person many times. When we remember the wrong, we must go to God right away in prayer. We must ask God to help us. We must make the choice to forgive many times.

Read Genesis 50:20. How does this verse help explain why Joseph is so willing to forgive his brothers for the wrong they did to him?

Joseph firmly believes that his life is part of the big plan that God made to help save the people on the earth from famine at that time. A famine is a food shortage. Joseph also believes that God chose him to help his family become a mighty and important nation. Joseph knows that God turned the evil plans of his brothers into something good. That is why Joseph can forgive his brothers for the sin they did against him.

The story about Joseph has a happy ending. How do we feel when the ending to a story is not so happy? When Jesus comes back a second time, He will put an end to sin. Jesus also will end the worldwide war between good and evil. Then we will have a real happy ending to everything bad that has happened on this earth. How does this hope help you to live with the experiences and stories in life that are not so happy now?



The son that Jacob thought wild animals killed is now in charge of Egypt!



Jesus showed tender mercy all His life.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Joseph shows us Jesus in many ways. “Joseph was sold by his own brothers to men who did not believe in God. Jesus was sold to His worst enemies by one of His own followers. Joseph was accused of something he did not do. Then he was thrown into prison because he refused to do wrong. In the same way, people hated and rejected Jesus because He was holy. Jesus was not guilty of doing any wrong. But He was sent to the cross anyway because false witnesses lied about Him. Joseph is patient and kind when people hurt him and are not fair to him. Joseph also is ready to forgive his brothers. His heart is filled with mercy for his brothers who should love him. But the hearts of his brothers are filled with hate for Joseph. This hate is not natural. Joseph shows us the Savior. Jesus did not complain when evil men hurt Him and were filled with hate against Him. Joseph shows us the forgiveness of Jesus for His killers. Joseph also shows us the forgiveness Jesus gives to all people who come to Him, confess their sins, and wish to be pardoned.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 239, 240, adapted.

“When someone shows no mercy to other people, he shows that he does not know anything about the mercy and forgiveness that come from God. When God forgives, the heart of the sinner comes close to the mighty heart of the One whose love has no limits. Love from God pours into the heart of the sinner. From the sinner, this love pours out to other people. Jesus showed tender mercy in His own life. We will see this mercy in the people who share in His loving-favor and forgiveness.”—Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 251, adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Someone said, “When we refuse to forgive someone, our behavior is the same as drinking poison and hoping the other person will die.” Do you agree? Why?
- ② Why do you think Joseph gave his brothers so many “tests” to pass before he told them who he really was? What did all these tests do for Joseph and for his brothers?
- ③ The manager of the house of Joseph must know some of the story about the brothers of Joseph (read Genesis 44:1–12). How do you think this experience of watching Joseph forgive his brothers changed the manager? How does your experience of forgiveness change the lives of people who watch you?

GET READY TO MEET YOUR GOD!

My six-year-old son, Asher, shared with me a wish in his heart. “Mom, I want to give people booklets about Jesus.”

We lived in Bangkok, Thailand. Asher wanted to give people in Bangkok a small booklet in the Thai language. The name of the booklet is “A Love Letter From Jesus.” I was so happy my little boy wished to share his love for Jesus. But it was Friday. Friday was not really a good day. I needed to get ready for Sabbath. Plus, most people stayed indoors because of COVID-19.

On Sabbath morning, I remembered Asher and his wish. I felt I should take Asher to hand out the booklets. But I did not.

Sabbath afternoon, I watched a sermon. The preacher ended his message with these words from Ellen G. White: “As a people, we believe Jesus is coming soon. God gave us a special message to share with other people: ‘Get ready to meet your God’” (Amos 4:12, [NLV]).—*Gospel Workers*, page 55, adapted. “That is exactly what I want to tell the Thai people!” I thought to myself.

Early on Sunday, I read the daily quote from the writings of Ellen G. White for my morning worship. Guess what that quote included? Amos 4:12! “‘Get ready to meet your God!’” The words cut into my heart.

At breakfast, I told Asher to get ready to hand out his booklets. Asher was so happy. He studied Amos 4:12 in Thai and said it again and again until he knew it by heart. Then we left.

My husband Brian and I needed to pick up some fresh bread from a bakery that morning. We helped start the bakery in Bangkok soon after we came to the city from our home in the United States. When Brian and I delivered the bread to people, Asher often rode his bike. But today he announced that he was too busy to ride his bike. “I will be handing out booklets.”

We walked from the bakery to the neighbor who bought the bread. The trip was one mile. Asher ran to everyone he saw. “Get ready to meet your God!” Asher said in Thai and handed each person a booklet. No one refused the gift from the little boy.

Asher was so excited when we got home two hours later. He handed out 100 booklets! “I want to do this every day!” he announced with a big smile.

God wants the big city of Bangkok to be ready for the coming of Jesus. As Ellen G. White said, “As a people, we believe Jesus is coming soon. God gave us a special message to share with other people: ‘Get ready to meet your God.’”

This story shows an important part of the “I Will Go” plan.

This plan encourages all church members to share Jesus with people in all parts of their life. Learn more about the plan at www.IWillGo2020.org.

INSIDE *Story*

by JESSICA CEBUHAR ATWELL



**“Get ready to meet
your God!”**

