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GENESIS

EXPERIENCE

Session 14/Genesis 45

Group Ice Breaker: When you look at the life of Joseph, in Genesis 45, what are the parallels you see with the life of Jesus?

JOSEPH	JESUS
Sold out by his brothers - 45:5	Matt 26:14-16
Sent by God – 45:5,7,8	John 3:16
Sent to preserve life - 45:5,7	Sent to offer eternal life – John 11:26
God made him lord of Egypt – 45:8	Philippians 2:11
Promised to give his family all his riches and to provide – 45:18-20	Ephesians 1:18
Promised his family a new land – 45:20	John 14:2-3
Given a place of honor – 45: 13	Philippians 2:9
Appeared before brothers showing that he was alive – Genesis 45:3	John 20:20-21
Joseph forgives his brothers	Luke 23:34

Read Genesis 45:1-28

Discussion

1. One of the major themes of this chapter is forgiveness. How would you define forgiveness? (see sample forgiveness definitions listed below)
2. Joseph had no assurance he'd see his brothers again, but yet he did the work of forgiving them. Why would he be compelled to do this?
3. Take note of how Joseph speaks to his brothers. How does Joseph love his brothers in the midst of forgiving them?

4. What are the benefits of forgiveness in this story?
5. True forgiveness is reflected when we desire the best for those we have forgiven. Do you have an example of this type of forgiveness?

Forgiveness Definitions

Rick Warren's Definition of Forgiveness:

Forgiveness is remembering how much you've been forgiven. (Ephesians 4:32)

Forgiveness is relinquishing your right to get even. (Romans 12:19)

Forgiveness is responding to evil with good. (Luke 6:27-28)

Forgiveness is repeating the process as long as necessary. (Matthew 18:21-22)

Tim Keller's Definition: Forgiveness means giving up the right to seek repayment from the one who harmed you. ("Forgiveness is granted before it is felt.")

Lewis Smedes' Definition: Forgiveness is an inner response to evil that (when possible) finds fulfillment in outward reconciliation.

Inductive Study Questions

1. Think about Jacob's life in Genesis. What lessons did he learn?
2. How would you describe his relationship with God?
3. What did you learn about yourself through the life of Jacob?

Prayer Exercise

In his book *Pivotal Praying*, Tim Elmore states, "Prayer is the best place to launch forgiveness. Prayer molds us so that we can experience forgiveness. Does this mean that when you pray, all the pain of the past will go away? No. There may always be scars from the relationship. But through prayer and forgiveness that scar can become a brilliant reminder of the grace of God."

Take a moment and recognize the experiences where you have a hard time forgiving someone. Allow group members to have a moment of silent prayer for the matters that come to mind.

Use this suggested prayer by inserting the names of individuals as a way to open yourself to the touch of God in your life.

Father, I am angry at _____. Praying for _____ is very hard. I am hurt by what this person has done, but I don't want to live my life in bitterness. So I lift _____ before You and ask that You will change my heart. Help me to forgive. Help me to let go. Amen.

Offer members a chance to share what they experienced when expressing that prayer. Was it easy or difficult? What did you sense God doing in your heart?

Close the group in prayer.