

FPFWC Christian Development



Struggles with Love

September 2020

Fall Quarter

September 19, 2020

Lesson #3 –Victorious Love

SCRIPTURE TEXT – Genesis 42:6-25

Key Verse- Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required.—Genesis 42:22

ICE BREAKERS

1. How would you counsel someone who seems to be mentally enslaved by guilt of a past misdeed?
2. What guardrails can we erect to keep from crossing the line between legitimate testing (evaluation) and desire for revenge?

LESSON BACKGROUND –

When the Egyptians began to feel the effects of the predicted famine (see lesson 2), they cried out to Pharaoh for relief. Pharaoh sent them to Joseph (Genesis 41:55), whom he had appointed to prepare Egypt for the years of famine. The famine, however, affected lands other than Egypt as well. As a result, “all countries” came to Egypt to buy food (41:57). Joseph’s homeland was among those, and Jacob urged his sons to travel to Egypt and purchase food (42:1-2). Exactly how much of the seven-year famine had occurred before the brothers went to Egypt is not clear. Later, when Joseph revealed his identity (see lesson 4), he told them that only two of seven total years had passed (45:6).

For the first journey to Egypt, Jacob did not permit Benjamin—one of two sons of Jacob’s beloved wife Rachel, the other son being Joseph (Genesis 35:24)—to go. Jacob had already lost his favorite son, Joseph; Jacob did not want to risk losing his second favorite, Benjamin (42:3-4). Thus 10 brothers traveled to Egypt without him.

LESSON COMMENTARY –

42:1-24. In chaps. 42-45 God “tied together” the various strands of circumstance that were spun in the previous five chaps. (from 37:2 onward), bringing the brothers face to face with their sin, for the purpose of reconciliation and refinement in godliness as He continued to mold them into the ideal covenant people that they would one day be in the prophetic future (cf. Dt 10:12-22; Isa 1:25-26; Mal 1:5). This denouement commenced when, as a result of the famine—which extended even to the land of Canaan (see 41:57)—Jacob sent the ten brothers of Joseph... to buy grain from Egypt (v. 3). When they arrived, though Joseph... recognized his brothers,... they did not recognize him (vv. 7-8). Joseph wisely exploited this situation, not to torture his brothers or to gain

vengeance but to test them in several ways, in order to determine whether their collective character had improved and they had moved beyond their predilection to deceitfulness. Joseph's began with a test of their collective consciences, to see if they were penitent about the evil they had done to him, their own flesh and blood.

Joseph first sought to test their consciences by making circumstances difficult for them, accusing them of being spies (v. 14). Joseph knew this was untrue and the brothers of course denied it, whereupon Joseph set a condition to determine whether the truth was really in them (v. 16). Though initially this condition was that one of them would return to bring their younger brother, Benjamin (v. 34), while the other nine remain confined (held as prisoners), Joseph compassionately mitigated this condition (he would not do to them, even for a much shorter period, what they did to him) and confined only one of them, Simeon (v. 24). It is at this point that Joseph, overhearing their discussion in Hebrew, understood that they did indeed feel guilt and regret for their behavior toward Joseph. They did not realize Joseph understood their words (v. 23) when they said, Truly we are guilty concerning our brother (v. 21), and Reuben declared, Now comes the reckoning for his blood (v. 22).

42:25-38. Then, while Simeon remained behind and the other nine returned to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan (v. 29), Joseph continued to test their consciences, but now with kindness. Next Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain and to restore every man's money... and to give them provisions for the journey (v. 25). Their response upon discovering this generous gift was not to bless God for His kind provision but instead to become distraught, asking, What is this that God has done to us? (v. 28), declaring their guilt once again for their treatment of Joseph. Plainly, more than 20 years later, Joseph's brothers were no longer the callous and heartless men they had been before. God was indeed bringing discipline to them by the hand of Joseph all these many years after their sin. However, when they returned home and told their father what had happened, Jacob refused to let Benjamin return to Egypt with them, lest harm should befall him and Jacob would thus go down to Sheol in sorrow (i.e., die of heartbreak; v. 38).

LESSON NUGGET – Guilt is so hard to get rid of. You may think you have successfully repressed it. You may think you've gotten it out of your mind and now you are free; but given the right set of circumstances, that haunting guilt is still there. But it is so important to get rid of guilt. The only thing I know that can effectively remove guilt is the blood of Jesus Christ. ***“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” (1 John 1:7).***

Sources: Moody Bible Commentary, Standard Lesson Commentary, and The Essential Everyday Bible Commentary