

INTERACTIVE TEACHING/LEARNING GUIDE
Week 19

SESSION TITLE: "Recovery: Who Can Come Back Home"

FOCAL PASSAGE: (Genesis 44:1-34)

Central Teaching/Learning Aim: To help the learner determine to accept God's forgiveness and extend God's forgiveness to help restore others in need.

I. Creating Interest in the Series (Hook)

A. Share the following information:

The wedding plans were set. Over 600 invitations were sent out. There were 28 attendants for the wedding party. It would be a lavish wedding with all of the bells and whistles, but days before the wedding Jennifer Wilbanks got cold feet and went on a cross-country trip without telling anyone. This set off a massive search party consisting of 100 police officers and hundreds of volunteers searching for her. Obviously, this created a very distraught family and especially the groom to be.

A few days later Jennifer called from New Mexico to tell the police that she had been kidnapped but was okay. Later when she was questioned more she admitted that the entire trip was her idea. She just suffered from a severe case of cold feet.

Ask – If you were one of the volunteers who gave of your time searching for Jennifer how would you feel upon learning it was a hoax? What emotions would you feel if you were her parents? How would you respond if you were John Mason, her husband to be?

State – Listen to John Mason's comments about the situation: "Haven't we all made mistakes?" "Just because we haven't walked down the aisle, just because we haven't stood in front of 500 people and said our I do's, my commitment before God to her was the day I bought that ring and put it on her finger, and I'm not backing down from that."

Associated Press May 4, 2005

State – In today's passage we see a tremendous story of forgiveness and recovery. We discuss how to forgive and restore a Christian brother or sister or family member in love.

B. Optional Method – Movie Clip “50 First Dates”

Start: 22:45

Stop: 24:45

DVD: Chapter 5

Synopsis – Sue tells Henry about Lucy’s car accident. She explains that Lucy lost her short-term memory and now every day is Sunday, October 13th to her.

Ask – Why is it so difficult to forget the mistakes we’ve made? Does this fact make it difficult to believe that your friend’s or family really forgive when you mess up? How forgiving are you when someone seeks forgiveness?

Summarize today’s passage highlighting the things that Joseph had to forgive and forget.

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II. Book

A. **Utilize** the discussion guide to examine the Scripture passages.

III. Look

A. **Distribute** the handout “Steps to Restore a Believer” and guide members through it.

Display – The acrostic and work through each step.

Respect all believers
Examine your own life
Serve sacrificially
Talk unconditionally
Offer accountability
Renew the relationship
Encourage right living

IV. Took

A. **Place** members into groups and have them follow the prayer guide. Ask them to leave the room quietly when their groups finish praying.

B. Optional Method – Share the following humorous story:

Dr. Anthony Evans tells of a day when two monks were walking through the countryside. They were on their way to another village to help bring in the crops. As they walked, they spied an old woman sitting at the edge of a river. She was upset because there was no bridge, and she could not get across on her own. The first monk kindly offered, "We will carry you across, if you would like."

"Thank you," she said gratefully accepting their help. So the two men joined hands, lifted her between them and carried her across the river. When they got to the other side, they set her down, and she went on her way.

After they had walked another mile or so, the second monk began to complain. "Look at my clothes," He said. "They are filthy from carrying that woman across the river. And my back still hurts from lifting her. I can feel it getting stiff." The first monk just smiled and nodded his head. A few more miles up the road, the second monk griped again, "My back is hurting me so badly, and it is all because we had to carry that woman. I cannot go any farther because of the pain." The first monk looked down at his partner, now lying on the ground, moaning. "Have you wondered why I am not complaining?" He asked.

Your back hurts because you are still carrying the woman. But I set her down five miles ago."

This is what many of us are dealing with in our family relationships. We are the second monk who cannot let go. We hold the pain of the past over our loved ones' heads like a club, or we remind them every once in a while, when we want to get the upper hand, of the burden we still carry because of something they did years ago."

(Dr. Anthony T. Evans, Guiding your Family in a Misguided World)

State – Some of us need to lay down the baggage we are carrying around. We need to accept God's forgiveness and move on. We need to extend God's forgiveness and help recover a fallen brother or sister in Christ. What will you do this week?

Close in prayer.

Group Prayer Guide

First, praise God for His sacrificial love and the forgiveness that is ours through Christ.

Second, pray for the people in your life that need to experience forgiveness.

Third, pray for the courage to approach them to discuss the forgiveness that is available to them.

Finally, pray for an humble spirit and to avoid being judgmental.

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DISCUSSION GUIDE
(Teacher's Copy)

1. What did Joseph tell his steward to do and why? (Gen. 44:16)
(He told him to fill the brothers sacks with food but in Benjamin's sack to plant a gold cup to test how repentant the brothers were.)

2. How did the brothers try to defend themselves? (vs. 7-9)
(They said even the money in their sacks they brought themselves and if the cup was found that the one who took the cup should die and they would be slaves of Joseph's.)

3. How did the response of the brothers show that they had, had a change of heart? That they were repentant?

4. What confession did the brothers offer as a result of their feelings of guilt? (v. 16)
(Judah admitted their guilt in the past and volunteered to all be slaves to Joseph.)

5. What did Judah offer to do in place of Benjamin and why did he make the offer?
(He offered to take his place and pay for his sin. He knew his father would not live if Benjamin did not return home.)

6. How is this a picture of what Jesus has done for you?

7. If you have experienced forgiveness, do you have the right to hold a grudge?

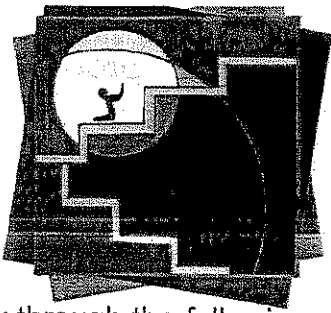
8. Is there anyone in your life that you need to forgive to help restore them?

9. Is there anyone in your life in which you should seek forgiveness?

10. What steps do you need to take this week?

DISCUSSION GUIDE
(Student's Copy)

1. What did Joseph tell his steward to do and why? (Gen. 44:16)
2. How did the brothers try to defend themselves? (vs. 7-9)
3. How did the response of the brothers show that they had, had a change of heart? That they were repentant?
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5. What did Judah offer to do in place of Benjamin and why did he make the offer?
6. How is this a picture of what Jesus has done for you?
7. If you have experienced forgiveness, do you have the right to hold a grudge?
8. Is there anyone in your life that you need to forgive to help restore them?
9. Is there anyone in your life in which you should seek forgiveness?
10. What steps do you need to take this week?



Steps to Restore a Believer

Work through the following steps to build a strategy to help restore a fallen brother or sister in Christ.

Respect all believers

You must have a Christ-like respect for others realizing that all can be caught up in sin. Who do you know that has fallen away from Christ and is in need of restoration?

Examine your own life

What is your current spiritual condition? Circle one

Caught in sin

Luke warm

Growing spiritually

How can you approach another believer in humility?

Serve sacrificially

If you are serving others, you will not become arrogant or judgmental.

How can you serve other believers?

How can you restore a believer through sacrificial service?

Talk unconditionally

You must confront with unconditional love and humility.

How can you gently confront a believer?

Offer accountability

Offer to work with the fallen believer for mutual accountability.

Have a plan in mind.

Renew the relationship

Make sure the believer knows of your humble love for him/her.

Confirm that there are no hurt feelings.

Encourage right living

Help the brother for the long haul.

Ask for help from them to help walk on the right path.

THE Word For The Week

Genesis 50:14-21

“Forgiveness: Why Grace Works”

Monday – Read Genesis 50:14-21

- This passage is a beautiful picture of God's grace and forgiveness.
- Did Joseph's brothers deserve to be forgiven?
- How hard is it for you to forgive?
- This week ask God to show you who you need to forgive whether they deserve it or not. Begin asking God to give you the desire to forgive.

Tuesday – Read Matthew 18:21-35

- God says to always be willing to forgive.
- How does not forgiving affect you and those around you?
- According to this passage why should you be quick to forgive?
- God's warning in verse 35 should be a warning to us. Is there anyone you need to forgive today?
- Ask God to forgive you and show you grace in the process.

Wednesday – Read Genesis 50:19-20

- These verses talk about how God can take something evil and use it for good.
- What have you learned about your own spiritual conditions when you have been wronged?
- Has God ever taken something “evil” and used it for good in your life?
- How can you limit God by holding a grudge?
- Ask God to show you who you need to forgive today.

Thursday – Read Genesis 50:17

- Why is it so hard to forgive those closest to us sometimes?
- Joseph forgave his brothers in spite of all they had done to him. Would you agree that sometimes family members are the hardest to forgive and show grace to?
- Joseph was broken when he heard his father's request. How is your family? Do you need to seek forgiveness or give forgiveness?
- Why not allow God to speak to you today about this.

Friday – Read Genesis 50:14-21

- All week we have read about forgiveness. Along with forgiveness comes grace. Do you need to extend grace to anyone?
- If you are having trouble take some time and meditate on what grace God has extended you.
- Thank God for the forgiveness and the grace you have received from Him.

Ancient/Future - A Journey through Genesis
"Recovery: Who Can Come Back Home"
Genesis 44:1-34

(Exegetical . . . What it meant to Israel back THEN)

JUDAH'S REQUEST OF JOSEPH

IN RESPONSE TO BENJAMIN'S BEING FRAMED FOR THEFT
AND SENTENCED TO SLAVERY

IMPLORED JOSEPH TO ENSLAVE HIMSELF IN BENJAMIN'S PLACE.

- I. Joseph's testing of his brothers, by framing Benjamin in the theft of his cup, first elicited the brothers' defense of innocence (in stealing the cup) and then their acknowledgment of guilt (in selling Joseph into slavery) before God, (1-17).
 - A. Joseph's instructions to his steward (to test the brothers) set up Benjamin for an accusation of returning good for evil by stealing Joseph's cup, (1-6).
 1. Joseph's instructions to his steward, which were carried out as instructed, were to fill the brother's sacks full of grain, to place their silver back in their sacks, and to plant his personal silver cup in Benjamin's sack, (1-2).
 2. After the eleven brothers had started out for home, Joseph's instructions to his steward, which were carried out as instructed, were to overtake the brothers and accuse them of returning evil for good by stealing Joseph's cup, an evil thing, (3-6).
 - B. The steward's accusation of the brothers (to test them) elicited their unified and vehement defense and vow, which was to no avail once the cup, was found in Benjamin's sack, (7-13).
 1. The brothers' defense against the steward's accusation vehemently denied the theft, recalled their faultless financial integrity, and vowed that the brother found guilty of the crime could be put to death and the rest enslaved, (7-9).
 2. The steward's modification of the brothers' vow established that the brother found guilty of the crime would become a slave, but the others would be free of guilt, (10).
 3. The steward's search of the brothers' sacks, from the oldest to the youngest, found the cup in Benjamin's sack, (11-12).
 4. The brothers' response to Benjamin's being found with Joseph's cup was to grieve, to load up their beasts, and to return to Joseph's city, (13).
 - C. Joseph's accusation against his brothers (to test them) evoked their acknowledgment of guilt before God and sentenced Benjamin to slavery, (14-17).
 1. After the brothers had returned to Joseph's house, bowing before him, Joseph's accusation challenged the brothers' foolishness in stealing from one who could discover such things, (14-15).
 2. The brothers' admission that they had no defense to prove their innocence (of stealing the cup) since God had found out their guilt (in selling Joseph into slavery) consigned each of them to slavery, (16).
 3. Joseph's vehement rejection of their proposal demanded instead that only the one found with the cup (Benjamin) would be consigned to slavery while the others were free to return home in peace, (shalom), (17).

- II. Judah's request of Joseph, in response to Benjamin's being sentenced to slavery, a fate the family had feared from the beginning, implored Joseph to set Benjamin free and to take himself (Judah) as a slave in Benjamin's place, (18-34).
 - A. Judah's request to Joseph, demonstrating great respect, petitioned Joseph to listen to his speech, (18).
 - B. Judah's appeal to Joseph presented the background and consequences of Benjamin's not returning home to his grieving father, (19-32).
 - 1. Judah's appeal to Joseph recounted their first meeting and the demand of Joseph to bring Benjamin before him, a demand they faithfully relayed to their father, (19-24).
 - 2. Judah's appeal to Joseph recounted the brothers' recent persuasion of their father to let Benjamin go down to purchase grain, a demand that their father accepted only with great grief, fearing the loss of his only living favorite son, (25-29).
 - 3. Judah's appeal to Joseph presented the consequences of Benjamin's not returning to his father, who would surely die, and the promise that Judah had made to his father, (30-32).
 - C. Judah's request of Joseph implored Joseph to allow him (Judah) to remain in Joseph's custody as a slave while sending Benjamin home to his father, whom he (Judah) could not face without Benjamin, (33-34).

(Theological . . . What it means to believers **ALWAYS**)
**GOD'S TESTING TO UNCOVER PAST SIN
 PREPARES REPENTANT BELIEVERS FOR FUTURE BLESSING.**

- I. God's testing His people in areas of past evil seeks their restoration, (1-17).
 - A. New accusations of evil persist against God's people, (1-6).
 - B. Honest claims of present innocence never eliminate past guilt, (7-13).
 - C. God's pressure in testing evokes confessions of guilt, (14-17).
- II. Genuine repentance of past evil demonstrates itself in changed behavior, (18-34).
 - A. Genuine repentance recalls the events and consequences of past guilt, (18-19).
 - B. Genuine repentance demonstrates itself in changed behavior, (30-34).

(Pedagogical . . . What it means to us **NOW**)
GO FORWARD TO BLESSING.

- I. Deal with your unresolved past.
 - A. You may need to feel the pressure of God's test, (1-6).
 - B. You may justly defend your present innocence, (7-13).
 - C. Deal with your unresolved past, (14-17).
 (Acknowledge your past guilt before God and the offended parties.)
- II. **Go forward to blessing.**
 - A. Recognize the consequences of your past, (18-29).
 - B. Demonstrate a new character of godliness, (30-34).
 - C. Prepare for God's blessing as you live for him.