

Victorious Love

I told Marcio I was sorry,” Kolby said.

Leon looked at his 16-year-old son with patience. Kolby and Marcio, his best friend of eight years, had stopped speaking to one another. It was all because of Catlyn. She was beautiful but also, in Leon’s opinion, ruthless. She had played the best friends against each other for her affections. Kolby had won, but he had lost his best friend.

Kolby was enjoying the attention of the prettiest girl in the school and all the rep that went with it, but Leon sensed his son was beginning to see Catlyn’s true colors. With Kolby now being an officially licensed driver, Catlyn had kept him busy driving her around town. Homecoming was coming up, and Catlyn wanted a driving escort.

Kolby now looked pleadingly at his dad. “I realize what a good friend I had in Marcio.”

“You have to show Marcio you are sorry and want to restore the friendship,” said Leon.

For the next two weeks, Leon watched Kolby dial down his interactions with Catlyn. Kolby didn’t drive her around much, and he didn’t ask her to the homecoming dance.

Two weeks later, Leon saw Marcio pile out of Kolby’s car.

“Hello, Marcio,” Leon said smiling. “Where have you two been?”

“We were playing some basketball,” Kolby said. “Is it OK if we hang out downstairs for a while?”

“Certainly,” said Leon, as he continued staining the deck.

1. *Why do we hurt even those to whom we are committed?*

2. *How can you tell the difference between genuine repentance and fake repentance?*

3. *Why does fake repentance doom any relationship, particularly with God?*

Joseph Accuses His Brothers of Spying

Genesis 42:6-17, KJV

6 And Joseph was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land: and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth.

7 And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them; and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food.

8 And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him.

9 And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come.

10 And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come.

11 We are all one man's sons; we are true men, thy servants are no spies.

12 And he said unto them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land ye are come.

13 And they said, Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not.

14 And Joseph said unto them,

Genesis 42:6-17, NIV

⁶Now Joseph was the governor of the land, the person who sold grain to all its people. So when Joseph's brothers arrived, they bowed down to him with their faces to the ground. ⁷As soon as Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them, but he pretended to be a stranger and spoke harshly to them. "Where do you come from?" he asked.

"From the land of Canaan," they replied, "to buy food."

⁸Although Joseph recognized his brothers, they did not recognize him. ⁹Then he remembered his dreams about them and said to them, "You are spies! You have come to see where our land is unprotected."

¹⁰"No, my lord," they answered. "Your servants have come to buy food. ¹¹We are all the sons of one man. Your servants are honest men, not spies."

¹²"No!" he said to them. "You have come to see where our land is unprotected."

¹³But they replied, "Your servants were twelve brothers, the sons of one man, who lives in the land of Canaan. The youngest is now with our father, and one is no more."

KJV

That is it that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies:

15 Hereby ye shall be proved: By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither.

16 Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you: or else by the life of Pharaoh surely ye are spies.

17 And he put them all together into ward three days.

NIV

¹⁴Joseph said to them, "It is just as I told you: You are spies!

¹⁵And this is how you will be tested: As surely as Pharaoh lives, you will not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here. ¹⁶Send one of your number to get your brother; the rest of you will be kept in prison, so that your words may be tested to see if you are telling the truth. If you are not, then as surely as Pharaoh lives, you are spies!"

¹⁷And he put them all in custody for three days.

As the second-in-command in Egypt, for seven years Joseph collected the excess of large, abundant harvests (Gen. 41:47). Then came the famine, which God used to bring about a reunion of Joseph with his brothers. Yet, before Joseph disclosed his identity, he put his brothers through a series of tests to see whether they would abandon Benjamin as they had abandoned himself over 20 years earlier.

When the 10 brothers were escorted into Joseph's presence, they showed respect to the "governor" (vs. 6) by bowing. Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him, since Joseph would have shaved his head and beard, worn eye makeup, and put on expensive clothing.

Joseph then grilled his brothers with questions. They said they had come from Canaan to purchase grain. Joseph accused them of being "spies" (vs. 9), scouting the nation's defenses, but they said they had only come to "buy food." They told him about one other brother in Canaan and another presumed dead, but Joseph rejected their story. He swore an oath that nine brothers would remain in Egypt until their "youngest brother" (vs. 15) came back with the tenth sibling. In this way, he would assess whether they were "telling the truth" (vs. 16).

4. *In what way did Joseph treat his brothers?*

5. *What preceded Joseph accusing his brothers of being spies?*

6. *What response did Joseph's brothers give to the claim that they were spies?*

Joseph Tests His Brothers' Honesty

Genesis 42:18-25, KJV

18 And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live; for I fear God:

19 If ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison: go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses:

20 But bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so.

21 And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.

22 And 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.

23 And they knew not that Joseph understood them; for he spake unto them by an interpreter.

24 And he turned himself about

Genesis 42:18-25, NIV

¹⁸On the third day, Joseph said to them, "Do this and you will live, for I fear God: ¹⁹If you are honest men, let one of your brothers stay here in prison, while the rest of you go and take grain back for your starving households. ²⁰But you must bring your youngest brother to me, so that your words may be verified and that you may not die." This they proceeded to do.

²¹They said to one another, "Surely we are being punished because of our brother. We saw how distressed he was when he pleaded with us for his life, but we would not listen; that's why this distress has come on us."

²²Reuben replied, "Didn't I tell you not to sin against the boy? But you wouldn't listen! Now we must give an accounting for his blood." ²³They did not realize that Joseph could understand them, since he was using an interpreter.

²⁴He turned away from them

KJV

from them, and wept; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes.

25 Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way: and thus did he unto them.

NIV

and began to weep, but then came back and spoke to them again. He had Simeon taken from them and bound before their eyes.

²⁵Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain, to put each man's silver back in his sack, and to give them provisions for their journey.

After three days, Joseph released his 10 brothers from prison. By now, they were fearing for their lives. Joseph explained that he, like them, “fear[ed] God” (vs. 18), and if they were “honest men,” they would leave one brother in Egypt and return to Canaan with enough “grain” to feed their famished “households.” However, they also had to agree to return with their “youngest brother” (vs. 20) to prove their claims and prevent Joseph from executing them as spies. The brothers decided they were being “punished” (vs. 21) for selling Joseph. Reuben interjected that he told them not to “sin” (vs. 22) by harming Joseph, but they didn’t listen. Now they would pay the price for Joseph’s “blood.”

Joseph could see his brothers were sincerely grappling with the pain and consequences of their actions. He had to turn away so that they would not see him weeping. Then, after Joseph regained his composure, he directed his attendants to tie up Simeon (Jacob’s second-born son) and take him away. They should also place each brother’s “silver” (used in exchange for grain) back in their bags with enough grain and “provisions” (vs. 25) for their journey.

7. *How did Joseph treat his brothers after three days had passed?*

8. *What assumption did Joseph’s brothers make about the way Joseph had treated them?*

9. *What did Joseph’s brothers fail to realize about Joseph?*

Forgiveness and Remorse

“Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone,” wrote the apostle Paul. “Forgive as the Lord forgave you” (Col. 3:13).

This is easier said than done, especially if the other person admits no fault on his or her part or apologizes superficially. Being a disciple of Jesus, however, is far from easy when dealing with others, particularly those closest to us. Yet, God’s blessings are manifold when we forgive in the same way Christ forgave us, even if there is no reconciliation.

Jesus says to His followers, “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (John 15:13). And this is what the apostle Peter did for Jesus after the Resurrection. He expressed his love for his friend and master many times: when he preached about Jesus despite ridicule and scorn; when he was imprisoned for defending Jesus; and when he dedicated his life in service to Jesus.

These examples were not only expressions of his love but also indications of his deep and genuine remorse for having betrayed Jesus when the Sanhedrin arrested his friend. And Jesus did for Peter as He has done for all of us: He forgave him, as He has forgiven us. Moreover, Jesus asks that we do the same for others.

When we have been wronged, we must allow God’s Spirit to empower us with the love of Christ, and when we have wronged another, we must express our contrition in similar ways as Peter did. In other words, forgiving and repenting must truly come from our hearts if there is to be genuine reconciliation. And restoration is possible when we and the other person are both faithful to the lordship of Christ Jesus.

10. *Why is it important to God that His children have strong and healthy relationships?*

11. *Why is it easier to forgive when you know that God has forgiven you?*

12. *How does restoration of a relationship affect others?*

Restoring That Which Was Lost

When Joseph heard his brothers' remorse for having sold him into slavery, he wept. When someone hurts us deeply and unjustly as Joseph's brothers did him, and we see their genuine contrition as Joseph saw his brothers', hopefully we will be truly moved as Joseph was. When we love someone, we hope for their sincere expression of repentance, and when it is expressed, then reconciliation can occur.

► *Write a Bible verse here, other than John 15:13, that relates to reconciling relationships. Memorize the verse at the beginning of this coming week. Throughout the week and in your study book, write how this verse has affected your walk with Jesus and your relationships with others.*

KEY VERSE

And 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, KJV

Reuben replied, "Didn't I tell you not to sin against the boy? But you wouldn't listen! Now we must give an accounting for his blood." —Genesis 42:22, NIV

DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

September 21 through September 27

(See *The Quiet Hour* and *Cross* devotionals on these passages.)

- Mon.** Psalm 43—During Trouble, Maintain Hope in God.
- Tues.** Genesis 43:1-15—Benjamin Sent to Joseph with Gifts.
- Wed.** Genesis 44:1-13—Stolen Cup Found in Benjamin's Grain.
- Thurs.** Genesis 44:14-17—Brothers Offer to Become Slaves to Joseph.
- Fri.** Genesis 44:18-26—Judah Pleads with Joseph for Benjamin.
- Sat.** Genesis 44:27-34—Jacob Will Die Without Seeing Benjamin.
- Sun.** Genesis 45:1-15—Joseph and His Brothers Reconcile Their Differences.