

## FORGIVE THEM

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Genesis 50:15-21 **15** When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "It may be that Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him." **16** So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this command before he died: **17** 'Say to Joseph, "Please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil to you.'" And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. **18** His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, "Behold, we are your servants." **19** But Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? **20** As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people<sup>b</sup> should be kept alive, as they are today. **21** So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones." Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

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- One of the greatest examples of forgiveness in the scripture is found in the life of Joseph. He was given the gift of dreams and interpretation. I was beloved by his father Jacob; however, he was hated by all of his Elder brothers, who ultimately conspired against him to have him removed from their family dynamic after being sold into slavery and imprisoned. He ultimately rose to become the second-in-command of Egypt. While there are many unique abs and flows in the life of Joseph, there are some cornerstone principles that should be observed if we seek to be forgiving people as well. (Read Genesis 37 through 49 for the full story on Joseph.)
  - Even after being left for dead, Joseph kept living. If you still have life, it is your responsibility to live.
  - Even when Potiphar's wife solicited him, he remained integral. Other people's wrongdoing is not a good enough reason to lose your integrity.
  - Even though the cupbearer forgot about him, he did not stop interpreting dreams. Continuing in your calling is your responsibility.
- As we approach our text of focus, over 17 years have passed since his brother stole his code, threw him in a pit, and sold him into slavery.
- Jacob, the father of Joseph, has now died, and his surviving brothers are fully convinced that now that Joseph is in power, he is going to rain down complete vengeance on them because

of what they did to him. However, Joseph's response gives us our playbook to forgiving them, whoever they may be, no matter what they've done...

- V 17. Joseph wept - **BKH** (HB.) To cry freely and profusely from sadness or distress.
  - We must come to grips with the offense's emotional implications. Your lament serves as the release valve for all the negative emotions the offense triggered within you.
- V19 - Recognize that in any scenario, whether offended or offender, neither is God. He is the only one who can sit as the righteous judge. Express what hurt you, but stop condemning people to hell.
- V20 - Detestable deeds don't derail divine design. Recognize that in whatever they did to you, it still could not stop God's destiny coming through you.
- V21 - The actual test of forgiveness is when you enter into your destiny, you reach back and bless those whom you have forgiven.

#### ***Forgiveness Prayer***

*Lord God, I thank you for the forgiveness that you have freely given me through the finished work of Jesus Christ. Please help me to recognize that the same forgiveness is available for everyone else, too. Lord, give me a heart that forgives even when it's hurt, and help me live beyond the places where people have left me.*

*Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
In Jesus' name, amen.*