#TargetPractice: How did Judah's heart change?

Have you ever done something that you felt bad about later? How did it make you feel? Did you feel like you would never be able to be forgiven or trusted again?

How does it make God feel when we make a mistake? Does that mean we will never get to do anything for God again?

We are going to learn about a man in the Old Testament who made some bad choices but because his heart changed, God honored him and his family. But before we can talk about him, we need a little background information starting with Joseph. He is commonly talked about, so what do you remember about Joseph?

Now, let's watch a short video to see where Judah comes in.

Joseph and His Coat (Genesis 37) (start at 1:58)

While selling Joseph saved his life, Judah didn't suggest that to save Joseph. He was being a little more selfish than that. If they sold Joseph, they wouldn't be responsible for his death and they could also get some money out of the deal as well.

The brothers took Joseph's coat back to their father after ripping it and dipping it in blood. Their father, Israel, believed that Joseph had been killed by a wild animal. It broke his heart.

Judah didn't consider how selling Joseph would affect their father. He just wanted to be rid of Joseph and gain some money. He was acting very selfishly.

Judah's actions also greatly affected Joseph. He worked as a slave for years. Then he was falsely accused and sent to jail. I can imagine that jail in Egypt was not a pleasant place. Joseph was there for years before being released.

Joseph interpreted a dream about a famine coming to the land. He was put in charge of storing grain to prepare for the famine.

(175) Joseph Forgives (Genesis 42-45) - YouTube (start at 1:00)

Joseph gave tests to his brothers to see if they had really changed. It didn't mention it in the video, but when Benjamin went to Egypt, Judah promised their father that Benjamin would be safe. In fact, Judah promised that anything happened to Benjamin, he would take the blame and be punished.

Then when the silver cup was found in Benjamin's sack, Judah offered to take the punishment for Benjamin. This is when Joseph realized that Judah had changed. Judah was now willing to

take the place of his youngest brother when he was the one who had wanted to sell Joseph years before.

How do we know Judah's heart changed?

Because Judah's heart changed and he was willing to put himself in his brother's place, God used Judah's family to bring us Jesus, the Messiah. That is why Jesus is referred to as the 'lion of Judah' sometimes. He is from Judah's family.

In fact, Jesus did the same for us as Judah did for Benjamin. He was willing to take our place and take the punishment we deserve.

Jesus wants us to do the same for those we love. True love sometimes means giving up what we want for someone else.

What could that look like?

When have you had to choose between what you want and what another person needs?

What does it mean to be "selfless"?