

NOT YOUR AVERAGE JOES

A study of the lives of Joseph, Jonah, and Job

Joseph - Genesis 42

Lesson 4

Genesis 42 takes place in the midst of a famine that covered the entire earth. Because of God's provision through the interpretation of Pharaoh's dream, Jacob sent his sons to Egypt for grain. The trip took an unexpected turn for Joseph's brothers as they unknowingly found themselves bowing before their brother, Joseph. That experience lead them to a gamut of emotions and false assumptions as they attempted to understand what was happening to them. May we learn from their mistakes.

OBSERVATION: Read Genesis 42

1. Read through this week's verses, preferably using the New King James Version Bible. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they are about?

2. List three things Genesis 42 reveals about:

Jacob

Joseph's brothers

Joseph

GOING FOR THE GRAIN: Read Genesis 42:1-5

1. Genesis 41 closed with the declaration that the *famine was severe in all the lands*. What did Jacob decide to do to provide *grain* for his family?

2. Who did Jacob *not send*?

a. Why? Verse 4

b. Jacob expressed the same concern in verse 38. What did he say?

1.) According to this verse, what did Jacob say would be the effects of such a *calamity*?

3. How can we know we are responding in proper concern rather than fear?

Challenge: Fear is often more easily apparent when one has already experienced pain through a circumstance that has gone differently than we expected or hoped. What are some painful times that Jacob experienced in his life?

a. Although trials can provoke painful memories and fears, what does Romans 5:3,4 teach that trials can *produce*?

1.) Share how you have observed this in your own life.

BEFORE THE GOVERNOR OF THE LAND: Read Genesis 42:6-20

1. *Joseph was governor of the land*. What was his responsibility? Verse 6

2. *Then Joseph remembered the dreams which he had dreamed about them* (verse 9). Refresh your memory of those dreams by reading and summarizing Genesis 37:7-10.

a. What action of the brothers is recorded in Genesis 42:6 that discloses the fulfillment of Joseph's *dreams*?

1.) It is a glorious thing to witness God performing His word. Share one example of a time when God did what He said He would do for you.

3. What accusations did Joseph make against his brothers?

a. Joseph knew they were not *spies*. Why do you think he used this tactic?

4. The brothers defended themselves. What did they say?

5. What *test* did Joseph propose to them to prove their innocence?

6. Joseph *put them altogether in prison for three days*. The Egyptians believed in many gods. Record the statement that he made in verse 18 that revealed his Hebrew beliefs.

a. Although Joseph had authority over his brothers, what warning is given to those who had slaves in Leviticus 25:43?

b. Describe a healthy, correct *fear of God*.

1.) How should a healthy *fear of God* effect the life of a believer?

7. Using Genesis 42:19,20, describe Joseph's remedy if they desired to prove their *honesty*.

GUILT MANIFESTED: Read Genesis 42:21-23

1. What was Joseph's brothers' response to the *distress* that had *come upon* them?

2. Define the word *guilt*.

a. What is the opposite of *guilt*?

b. How can we move from *guilt* to *innocence*?

1.) Record the glorious promises of the following verses:

Isaiah 1:18

Isaiah 44:22

John 3:16

3. Why do you think even Christians fall prey to *guilt* when bad things happen to them?

4. What memory of Joseph plagued them? Verse 21

5. Reuben attempted to justify his actions. What did he say to his brothers?

a. Reuben was referring to his actions recorded in Genesis 37:21,22. What did he do?

1.) Nonetheless, Reuben knew he was also guilty. What did he declare at the end of Genesis 42:22?

6. Unknown to the brothers, Joseph *understood them*. What do you think it was like for Joseph to hear them confess their *guilt* to one another? Use the first part of verse 24 to help determine your answer.

GOING BACK HOME MINUS ONE BROTHER: Read Genesis 42:24-28

1. After listening to their admission of guilt, Joseph *talked with them* through his interpreter. Using verses 24,25, what did Joseph do next?

2. Summarize what happened after *they loaded their donkeys with grain and departed*.

a. What was Joseph's brothers' reaction to finding that *his money had been restored*?

1.) What do you think you would have done if you were in their situation?

3. Notice the phrase in verse 28, *then their hearts failed them*. Using your own words, describe what that is like?

4. What did they say to one another?

a.) What are some things about God that we sometimes have forgotten when we make statements like this?

b.) What are some truths about God that would be helpful to know in times when we think He has purposed to make us pay?

BREAKING THE NEWS TO DAD: Read Genesis 42:29-39

1. *Then they went to Jacob their father in the land of Canaan and told him all that had happen to them...* Using verses 30-35, summarize what they said to their father.

2. Although Rueben offered his own sons as guarantee, how did Jacob respond? Verses 36,38

3. What was Jacob's conclusion at the end of verse 36?

a. Jacob was not alone in his cry of despair. Record the statements of David and Job.

1 Samuel 27:1

Job 7:7

b. Jacob said, *all these things are against me*. Yet, Jacob was about to experience a great blessing. He was going to discover that his beloved son was alive. What lesson can we learn from this?

REVIEW: Read Genesis 42

1. What did you learn from the behavior of the following men?

Jacob

Jacob's sons/Joseph's brothers

Joseph

2. What did you learn from this study that personally provoked you to consider your own reactions to trials?

*For our light affliction, which is but for a moment,
is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,*

- 2 Corinthians 4:17