

MAIN POINT

As we submit and trust, God restores relationships and reconciles the past for His glory.

INTRODUCTION

When someone openly admits a fault, confessing they have done wrong, how much more likely are they to receive forgiveness and understanding?

How do we judge whether someone's apology is sincere?

Although God calls us to forgive all who wrong us, we often find it is easier to forgive those who openly admit their mistakes with remorse and show signs of change. However, with or without receiving this confession, we should still be eager to forgive, just as Christ has forgiven us—leaving a legacy of love, compassion, and grace as we do.

DISCUSSION

> READ OR SUMMARIZE GENESIS 42-45.

Why did Joseph accuse his brothers of being spies? In what ways might he have been trying to test them?

Consider the burden the brothers felt, both from their initial jealousy of Joseph and the subsequent guilt. What does this indicate about the weight and implications of harbored, unconfessed sin in our hearts and lives?

In what ways does Joseph's generosity and undeserved covering of the brothers' debt—both in blood (42:22) and in money (43:23)—foreshadow Christ's grace to us?

How does the brothers' willingness to take personal accountability for what happened to Benjamin (43:9) contrast with the way they treated Joseph? What does it indicate about the change that had taken place within them?

Do you think Joseph imagined God's promise being fulfilled in this way? Was it anything Joseph could have orchestrated himself?

Take a minute to read 1 Peter 4:8. In what ways does Christ's love cover our sin? In what way did Joseph's love cover over the sins of his brothers?

What might the brothers have felt in response to Joseph's compassion and grace? Did they do anything to earn it? Was there any use in resisting it?

In Genesis 45:8, what do we learn about how Joseph used his faith in God's sovereignty to overcome temptations of bitterness, resentment, or blame?

APPLICATION

Is there anyone in your life that you need to forgive right now? What is keeping you from granting forgiveness?