

LESSON 7

JOSEPH'S BROTHERS GO TO EGYPT

BEFORE YOU TEACH

Famine

Egypt was famed for her great agricultural wealth, but she also suffered periodic famines. Famine was a catastrophe in ancient times, just as it still is in many parts of the world today. Almost perfect conditions were needed to produce good crops because there were no chemical fertilizers or pesticides. Any variances in rainfall or insect activity could cause crop failure and great hunger because the people relied almost exclusively on their own crops for food. Lack of storage, refrigeration, or transportation turned moderate famine into a desperate situation. The famine Joseph prepared for was severe. Without God's intervention, the Egyptian nation, along with the lands surrounding her, would have crumbled.

God Is Always in Control

God used Joseph as a tool to bring the brothers to repent and recognize the forgiveness they received, which led them to have a "change of heart." Throughout the Bible, we understand that God is always in control and that He has a higher purpose for us, His children, even when we encounter bad things. The following passages will help you as teachers to understand this concept.

Romans 8:28—And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

Proverbs 3:5-6—Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

Isaiah 42:16—I will bring the blind by a way they did not know; I will lead them in paths they have not known. I will make darkness light before them, and crooked places straight. These things I will do for them, and not forsake them.

Matthew 6:25—Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?

Philippians 4:6-7—Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

BIBLE TEXT

Genesis 42

BIBLE TRUTHS

1. God sometimes uses bad situations to remind us of our wrongdoing.
2. God is always in control.
3. God has a plan for our lives.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To be aware of what our conscience tells us.
2. To re-examine ourselves.
3. To repent of our wrongdoing.

MEMORY VERSE

"Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith."

(2 Corinthians 13:5a)

PRAYER

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we pray. Lord, we praise You because not only are You our God, You are also our Father. You love us so much that when we do what is wrong, You correct us. Please help us to understand when we do something wrong and correct it. We pray that Your Spirit will guide today's class. Hallelujah! Amen.

The Meanings of Prayer

God gave each of us a conscience to know when we have done something wrong. When we do wrong, we need to confess our sins to God and ask for forgiveness in prayer. You can do this on your own before you teach or you can explain this to the students during the life application section. Write a prayer that will remind the students or yourself of the teachings in this lesson. Use the acronym ACTS as a sample below.

A (acknowledge to whom you are praying)

Example: Dear loving, faithful, and just Lord Jesus Christ...

C (confess)

Example: I want to confess that I have done wrong and

that I want to be right in Your eyes.

T (thanks)

Example: I praise You for Your love for saving me and shedding so much blood on the cross so that I can go to the heavenly kingdom. Please forgive my sins and cleanse me. I want to be right with You and I want to listen to and obey my parents.

S (supplication; ask)

Example: Please grant me the Holy Spirit to help me be strong. Without the Holy Spirit, I can't go to heaven. Please help me to always do the right thing, keep the Ten Commandments, and be a God-fearing person. In Jesus' name, I pray.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS

In lesson four, we discussed how God sometimes lets good people suffer. Indeed, that does sometimes occur, but other times, bad things happen as a consequence of our own actions. God sometimes allows bad things to happen to remind us of what we have done wrong so that we can learn from it. For example, Mom told us to clean up our room and put away our skates. But because we didn't, our little brother slipped on them and hurt himself. That probably taught us to keep our room clean and to listen to Mom when she tells us to do something.

God has also done something else to remind us of when we've done something wrong—He's given us a conscience. Explain to the students that we can't see or

hear our conscience, but we can feel it. You can ask the students how they feel after they do something wrong. They probably feel pretty bad deep down inside. Our conscience tells us when we've done something wrong. The consciences of Joseph's brothers reminded them of the terrible thing they had done to Joseph.

When our conscience is bothering us, we should stop and examine ourselves. If we have done something wrong, we should go and ask for God's forgiveness. Only when we have repented of our sin can we receive God's wonderful forgiveness. Then we can begin to live a new and better life for Christ.

VOCABULARY

famine: a serious shortage of food resulting in widespread hunger

accuse: to blame someone for doing something wrong

REVIEW

In the last lesson, we learned about Jacob's favorite son, Joseph. Do you remember what Jacob gave Joseph to show how much he loved him? Right, a colorful robe! Because Jacob loved Joseph more than all of his other sons, they became jealous. What did they do to Joseph one day? (They threw him into a pit and sold him to merchants.) Joseph ended up in Potiphar's home. What happened while Joseph was there? (God blessed him and he was put in charge of the whole house.) Why was Joseph put in prison? (Potiphar's wife lied about him because he refused to sin against God with her.) In prison, the chief cupbearer and chief baker found out that Joseph could interpret dreams through the wisdom of God. Pharaoh had a dream one day, and who did he send for? Right, Joseph! After Joseph had interpreted the dream, Pharaoh was so pleased with him that he made him ruler over all of Egypt; only Pharaoh was more powerful than Joseph.

BIBLE STORY

Famine Throughout the Land

Do you remember the dream Pharaoh had? (He dreamt that seven skinny cows ate up seven fat ones, and that

seven thin heads of grain ate up seven healthy ones.) Do you remember what those dreams meant? (They meant that there would be seven years where there would be

plenty of food in Egypt, but then after that, there would be seven years where there would be no food.) Joseph was put in charge to gather up all the extra grain during the first seven years, so they would have enough in the seven years of famine.

When the famine came, it struck many places, including Canaan. Canaan was the place where Joseph's family lived. God had given Joseph the wisdom to store up plenty of grain, so many people came to Egypt to buy food so they could live.

Joseph's Brothers Go to Egypt

Back home, Joseph's family was also running out of grain. His father Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, so he told his sons, "Go to Egypt and buy some grain so that our family will not starve." Jacob sent his ten older sons to Egypt, but he kept his youngest son Benjamin at home. He loved Benjamin dearly and did not want anything to happen to him.

When the ten brothers finally reached Egypt, they had to go to Joseph because he was the ruler of the land. Joseph had already grown up, so his brothers didn't recognize him. They had sold Joseph as a slave when he was only seventeen—they surely didn't think that he would become the ruler of Egypt!

Joseph Tests His Brothers

When the ten brothers came and bowed before Joseph, he recognized them. After more than ten years, they met again. He wondered if they were as cruel now as they had been before. He wondered if they had learned from their mistakes and had become better people. So Joseph decided to test them. Instead of revealing himself to them, he spoke in a stern tone. "Where are you people from?" Joseph asked.

They told him that they had come from the land of Canaan to buy food, but Joseph pretended that he didn't believe them. He said, "You are spies! You have come to see if our land can be attacked!"

They said, "No, my lord. We really have come to buy food. We are honest men. We are twelve brothers—our youngest one is at home with our father, and one is no longer with us."

Joseph said, "Prove to me that what you say is true. One of you must go back to get your brother, and the rest of you must stay here in prison. If you don't, then I will know that you are spies!"

So Joseph put all of them in prison for three days to test them. Boys and girls, how do you think the brothers felt? Do you think they were scared? Do you think they were surprised about the way they were being treated? Let's find out!

Joseph's Brothers Are Sorry

After the three days, he said to them, "Because I fear God, I will do this for you: one of you must stay here, but the

rest can go and take food back to your home. But you must bring your youngest brother here, or else I will know that you are spies, and you will die."

The brothers began to speak to one another in their own language, thinking that Joseph couldn't understand them. They said, "We're being punished for what we did to Joseph! He begged us for his life, and we didn't listen. That's why this is happening to us!" Boys and girls, have you ever felt sorry about something you've done wrong? What reminded you of it? Was it something bad that happened? Did you feel sorry about it in your heart, or hear a voice in your mind that told you there was something wrong? Do you know what that voice or feeling is?

How many of you have heard the word "conscience" before? [Call on any students to explain in their words what it means.] God gave each of us a conscience so that we know when we have done something wrong. Joseph's brothers' consciences were reminding them that they had done something terrible to Joseph a long time ago.

Reuben, the brother who wanted to save Joseph so long ago, said, "Didn't I tell you not to harm him? But none of you would listen! Now we have to pay for what we've done."

Joseph heard them, and he began to weep. He saw that his brothers still remembered him and were very sorry for what they had done. But he hid his tears and continued with his plan. He took his brother Simeon from them and tied him up.

Joseph's Brothers Go Home

Then Joseph ordered that all of their bags be filled with grain and he put back their money. He also gave them food for the journey back home. When all of this was put on the donkeys, the brothers started off for home.

When they got home, they told their father everything that had happened to them. They said that the ruler of Egypt had accused them of being spies and wanted them to bring back Benjamin. Simeon had to stay there as a prisoner until they brought Benjamin back. As they emptied all of their bags, each of them found their silver! When they saw the money, they were all frightened, because they knew that they would be accused of taking the grain without paying for it.

Their father Jacob said to them, "You have taken my children from me. First it was Joseph, then Simeon, and now you want to take Benjamin. Everything is against me!"

But Reuben said, "Please put Benjamin in my care, and I will take care of him. If I don't bring him back, you can kill both of my sons."

But Jacob refused. "Benjamin is not going down there with you. If anything happens to him, I will surely die in sorrow."

We will find out what happened to Joseph's brothers next week!

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. **In Egypt, what had Joseph become?** The ruler of all the land.
2. **Why did his brothers come to Egypt?** There was a famine in Canaan and they needed to buy grain.
3. **Why did Joseph treat his brothers harshly?** He wanted to test his brothers to see if they had changed.
4. **Who did Joseph want them to bring back?** Benjamin.
5. **Who had to stay there as a prisoner until Benjamin was brought back?** Simeon.
6. **Did Jacob allow them to take Benjamin to Egypt?** No.

MEMORY VERSE PRACTICE

Please reinforce the memory verse every week.
You can practice the memory verse with your students anytime during class.

"Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith." (2 Corinthians 13:5a)

HOMEWORK ANSWER KEY

1. True
2. False; he wanted to see whether they had changed.
3. B
4. Benjamin, Simeon
5. "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith." (2 Corinthians 13:5a)
6. A conscience
7. Refer to the dictionary
8. To examine ourselves means to check if what we said or did was wrong in the eyes of God.
9. God wants us to examine ourselves so that we can be right with God and right with people. God doesn't want us to harbor any sin, anger, bitterness, or unrepented deeds.
10. Answers may vary.

SPIRITUAL TEACHING & LIFE APPLICATION

1. God has given each of us a conscience to know when we have done something wrong.

Joseph's brothers felt bad about what they had done to Joseph. Have you ever felt bad about something you have done? What did you do about it?

All of the kids at church were having fun playing tag after Sabbath service while waiting for their parents who were practicing in choir. Suddenly, Hallie, who was It, tagged Buddy by surprise; he was not expecting Hallie to catch up to him. As everyone realized that Buddy was It now, Buddy threw a fit and hit Hallie really hard and made her cry. Some of the other kids went over to Hallie to ask if she was ok.

Girls and boys, if you were Hallie, how would you feel? If you were the other kids playing, how would you feel? If you were Buddy, how would you feel? Why?

All of the adults were still inside the chapel singing. There were no grown-ups outside to tell Buddy that he had done something wrong. Buddy was still in a bad mood, but his conscience made him realize that he did something mean and wrong.

2. God wants us to examine ourselves to see if we're doing something wrong.

When Buddy felt bad about what he did, he knew that he had to do something about it. He knew that even though the grown-ups weren't watching, God was watching.

Girls and boys, if you were Buddy, what would you do? Read today's memory verse to see what God wants us to do. What does it mean to examine ourselves?

Buddy thought about what he had just done. "It wasn't right to hurt Hallie just because she tagged me," thought Buddy. "Plus, it's only a game. We're supposed to be having fun." He took a deep breath so that he would not feel as angry as he did before. Then he walked over to Hallie and said, "Sorry, I got a bit carried away. I didn't mean to hurt you."

The next time you feel bad about doing something wrong, what will you do?

3. The reason why God wants us to examine ourselves to see if we have done anything wrong is because He is our Father who loves us and wants us to become more perfect like Him (Heb 12:3-11).

Hallie, who felt better already, sniffled and said, "It's okay, let's forget about it and keep playing."

"I'll be It then," said Buddy, smiling to everyone now. "Ready, set, go!"

All of the kids laughed and started to run again as Buddy began to chase them.

Girls and boys, was this a happy ending? Was Hallie happy? Was Buddy happy? Were all of the kids happy? Do you think God was happy? Why do you think that this story ended with everyone getting along? What might have happened if Buddy had not examined himself? It is important to examine ourselves every day to see if we are doing what is right in the eyes of God.

Repentance

Repentance is so important in God's teachings. Follow these 3 steps to learn how to repent and receive forgiveness.

3 Steps of Repentance

1. Feel godly sorrow

2 Corinthians 7:9

"Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing."

- The first step of repentance is to recognize that you've committed a sin against God's commandments.
- Feel true sorrow for what you've done and for disobeying the heavenly Father.
- Feel sorrow for any pain you may have caused toward other people.

2. Repent, confess to God, and ask for forgiveness

Psalms 51:17

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—These, O God, You will not despise."

- Pray to the heavenly Father and be honest with Him about your sins.
- Pray to God for His forgiveness. Forgive others who have hurt you.

3. Make a promise to God to forsake sin

Proverbs 28:13

*"He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and **forsakes** them will have mercy."*

- Make a promise to yourself and to God that you will never repeat the sin.
- Recommit yourself to obeying God's commandments.

*Don't hold onto your sin and the sorrow you've felt.
Let it go by truly forgiving yourself, just as the Lord has forgiven you.

ACTIVITIES

1

The Children of Jacob

- Objectives:** 1. To review the genealogy of Jacob.
2. To know that God changed Jacob's name to Israel, and that from his sons came the tribes of Israel.

Instructions

1. Before class, get a large piece of paper that is around 16 X 20 inches.
2. Write the "Rebekah" at the top right, "Isaac" at the top left, and "Jacob" underneath them.
3. Write these names underneath "Jacob" to show how many children he had, then post the paper on the board.
 - From Rachel: Joseph, Benjamin. Under Joseph, write Ephraim, Manasseh.
 - From Leah: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Dinah (Jacob's only daughter).
 - From Bilhah (Rachel's maid): Dan, Naphtali.
 - From Zilpah (Leah's maid): Gad, Asher.
4. Explain to the students that Jacob had 2 wives, Rachel and Leah (who were sisters, and first-cousins of Jacob), and 2 concubines, Bilhah and Zilpah, a common and accepted practice of the day. Rachel and Leah did not object to the other two women because it was their idea to have more children with them (Gen 30:3, 9).
5. Review the names and remind the students that God had a great plan for Jacob and that through his children came the tribes of Israel.

A. Rachel: She was Jacob's favorite wife. She died while giving birth to Benjamin and was buried at Bethlehem. Her children were Joseph and Benjamin. Joseph was the 11th-born overall. When he was in Egypt, Joseph had 2 sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who were made into individual tribes of Israel to bring the number back to 12—the priestly tribe of Levi was not counted as a separate tribe.

- Joseph—11th-born overall. His ten older brothers were only his half-brothers who shared the same father, Jacob. Technically, Benjamin was his only real brother.
 - Manasseh—1st-born of Joseph; he was prophesied to become a great single nation.
 - Ephraim—Younger than Manasseh, he was nevertheless ranked higher in the family structure (Gen 48:19). His descendants were to become a great future group of nations.
- Benjamin—The youngest of the 12 sons. Rachel died while giving birth to him. The apostle Paul, who wrote much of the New Testament, was descended from Benjamin.

B. Leah: Jacob really had a great deal of love for Rachel and therefore, it seems that Leah was not really loved.

Nevertheless, Leah was the mother of the greatest number of the tribes of Israel, and was buried with Jacob (along with Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah) in the tomb of the patriarchs in Hebron.

- Reuben—1st-born overall. [Note: Do not need to explain to students at this age that Reuben was disqualified from his position as eldest son when he committed an act of sexual immorality with Jacob's concubine Bilhah (Gen 35:22).]
- Simeon—2nd-born overall.
- Levi—3rd-born overall. From Levi came the Levites who were dedicated to God's service. As such, they were later not counted as a separate tribe. Moses, Aaron, and John the Baptist were descended from Levi.
- Judah—4th-born overall. It was from Judah that the Jews were descended.

- Issachar—9th-born overall.
- Zebulun—10th-born overall.
- Dinah—Israel's only daughter.

C. Bilhah (Rachel's maid): It was Rachel's idea that Jacob have children with her (Gen 30:3-8).

- Dan—5th-born overall.
- Naphtali—6th-born overall.

D. Zilpah (Leah's maid): It was Leah's idea that Jacob have children with her (Gen 30:9).

- Gad—7th-born overall.
- Asher—8th-born overall.

E1 Year 1 Book 2 Lesson 7—Joseph's Brothers Go to Egypt

Homework Assignment

Name: _____ Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

Bible Truths: 1. God sometimes uses bad circumstances to remind us of our wrongdoing.
 2. God is always in control.
 3. God has a plan for our lives.

Lesson Objectives: 1. To be aware of what our conscience tells us.
 2. To re-examine ourselves.
 3. To repent of our wrongdoing.

Bible Reading: Please put a checkmark in the space when you complete the reading each day.

Prayer: Please put a checkmark in the space on the days you prayed to God.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Bible Reading							
Prayer							

Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse.

(2 Corinthians 13:5a)

What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Homework Assignment

Understanding What You Have Learned

True or False

1. Joseph had become the ruler of all the land of Egypt. _____
2. Joseph treated his brothers harshly because he wanted to pay them back for what they did to him. _____

Multiple Choice

3. _____ : Why did his brothers come to Egypt?
 - a. They wanted to visit Joseph.
 - b. There was famine in Canaan and they needed to buy grain.
 - c. They heard the grass was greener in Egypt and wanted to feed their sheep there.

Fill In the Blank

4. Joseph told his brothers to bring back their youngest brother _____ while he kept his brother _____ in prison.
5. Write out the memory verse without looking.

Life Application

6. What has God given each of us to let us know when we have done something wrong?

7. Look up the word "examine" in the dictionary. Write down the definition.

8. What does it mean to examine yourself?

9. Why does God want you to examine yourself if you have done something wrong?

10. Read Psalm 51 with your mom or dad. This was a psalm that David wrote when he did something wrong and examined himself. Share with your parent what you think of this psalm. Write down a summary of your sharing.

