

=EVENTS FROM GENESIS=

Lesson 20

Joseph and His Family

AIM: to teach my pupils the proper relationship in the family.

POINT OF CONTACT: Ask the pupils how many brothers and sisters they have. See who has the most brothers, the most sisters, the oldest brother, the youngest brother, the oldest sister, the youngest sister, etc. This will get their minds on the subject of their families.

INTRODUCTION: Joseph is in Egypt. He has been raised to the seat of power. All of the resources of Egypt are at his disposal. There has come a famine in the land where his father and brethren dwell. They come to Egypt, not realizing that Joseph is there, and certainly not realizing that he has risen to such authority. The purpose of their visit to Egypt is to obtain food. Strangely enough, they come to Joseph asking food, though they do not know it is Joseph. He continues to conceal himself from them. Our lesson today begins with Joseph's brethren, who had plotted murder against him, hated him, and sold him into slavery, now coming before him in need. Let us notice the relationship that existed.

- I. JOSEPH FORGAVE THEM. In Genesis 45:15 the kiss meant that they were forgiven. This was the official sign of forgiveness and complete restoration. Think of the tremendous forgiveness that God provided for Joseph to give to his brothers! Rethink what his brethren had done unto him, and then think how marvelous this forgiveness must have been.

We must remember that they had not asked forgiveness. We must forgive even though forgiveness is not asked. When the Apostles asked Jesus how many times they should forgive, He suggested seventy times seven. Seven is the number of completeness. Actually, what is taught here is that we are to forgive until our forgiveness is complete, then start over again and forgive until our forgiveness is complete—we are never to stop forgiving.

- II. JOSEPH PROVIDED FOR HIS BRETHREN. Notice Genesis 42:25. His family ties were so great that he considered it his obligation to provide for his family.
 1. Parents should provide for their children.
 2. Husbands should provide for their wives.
 3. Children should provide for their aged parents. The Apostle Paul said one time that he who provideth not for his own is worse than an infidel. He was talking about aged parents.
 4. Brothers and sisters should provide for each other when the need arises. So often members of families will say, "I would provide for so-and-so, but I am having a hard time making it myself." Well, if we cannot provide, we can at least share and divide what we have with other members of our families.
- III. JOSEPH'S BRETHREN CONFESSED THEIR SINS. See Genesis 44:16. Someone has said the hardest words in the English language to say are, "I have sinned." Another has said the hardest words to say are, "I am sorry." Joseph's brothers made both of these statements to Joseph. Oftentimes we come to the place where we have wronged members of our family or members of the family of God or even people who are unsaved. When we have wronged them, we should be willing to go to them asking forgiveness.
- IV. JOSEPH SHOWED GRACE TOWARD HIS BRETHREN. This is found in Genesis 45:4, 5, 15. If God can forgive us all our sins and show us His grace in spite of all we have done against Him, certainly we should forgive those who come confessing their faults against us.
- V. JOSEPH HAD COMPASSION FOR HIS ENEMIES. Notice Genesis 45:1, 2. Joseph put himself in their place. There is probably no substitute for having been in another's shoes. The nearest thing to it is to try to put ourselves in another's shoes. The word "compassion" comes from two words meaning "with" and "to suffer." When we learn to suffer with people, putting ourselves in their shoes, sitting in their place, sharing in their sufferings, then we will have grace and forgiveness in our hearts.

- VI. JOSEPH'S FAMILY RELATIONSHIP WAS A TENDER ONE. Seven times we read of Joseph's weeping.
1. He wept when he listened to his brethren confessing their sins. See Genesis 42:24.
 2. He wept when he saw Benjamin. Notice Genesis 43:29, 30.
 3. He wept when he revealed himself to his brothers. See Genesis 45:1, 2.
 4. He wept when he was reconciled to his brothers. Notice Genesis 45:15.
 5. He wept over his father, Jacob. This is found in Genesis 46:29.
 6. He wept at the death of his father. See Genesis 49:33; 50:1.
 7. He wept when his brothers questioned his love for them. Notice this in Genesis 50:15-17. Joseph is shown in these verses as being tenderhearted. He was expressive of his love. This should certainly be a part of our family tie. Parents should make it obvious to their children that they love each other. The parents should make it obvious to the children that they love the children. The children should be taught expressions of love to the parents. The children should express their love one for the other. Tenderheartedness is not a sign of weakness, but a sign of strength!
- VII. JOSEPH ENJOYED HAPPINESS WITH HIS BRETHERN. See Genesis 43:33, 34. Joseph and his brothers knew what it was to be happy together. This should be true in our family relationships. We should find our happiness within the family circle. Our pleasures, our sports, our recreation, our activities, etc. may well be found inside the family. These are the days when the family circle is historical. Satan certainly must be pleased with this. What ever happened to family games, riding around in the car with the family, having hobbies together and picnics together?
- VIII. JOSEPH WANTED TO HAVE A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS BRETHERN. Notice Genesis 45:4. Here Joseph invited his brethren to come near unto him. He does not want any distance between them. There is a distance not measured on an odometer that can come between members of families. We should see to it that there are close ties existing in the family circle.
- IX. THE BIBLE CLEARLY TEACHES US CONCERNING FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS. It might be a thing of wisdom to close out this lesson with an exposition of Ephesians 5 and 6 and other related verses concerning family life. It also might be wise to list the following suggestions for families to do together:
1. Have grace at the table. Show the pupils how this is done.
 2. Have family devotions. Once again, one of the pupils could play father; one, mother; one, son; and one, daughter. You could actually have a brief family devotion to show the pupils how it is done.
 3. The family should play together. Have some suggestions from the class members as to what their families do together for fun. Ideas could be exchanged very profitably here.
 4. The family should eat together. Explain here that it is so important that the family spend time together. Since everyone has to eat anyway, why not eat together and share the joys of life one with the other?