



“If you forgive..., your heavenly Father will also forgive you.” Matthew 6:14

Bible Study:

Read Genesis 44 and 45. Consider the great power of God's Spirit in Joseph's life in that he was willing to forgive his brothers for their earlier evil acts. And consider the ultimate transformation displayed in Judah's actions; he was willing to lay down his life for his brother Benjamin.

The gospel in the story:

A forgiving heart is a godly heart. Though we are born with hearts that are selfish and unforgiving, Jesus' sacrifice on the cross demonstrates the ultimate in forgiveness in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Jesus' sacrifice rescued us out of that sinful nature, to give us loving and forgiving hearts. Jesus' parable of the unmerciful servant puts it into perspective. In that parable, a servant who was forgiven a MASSIVE debt, turned around and demanded full payment of a small insignificant debt from a fellow servant.

*Application**Head:* **What did we learn?**

Q: What was the final test Joseph devised for his brothers?

A: To see their reaction when Benjamin was accused of stealing.

Q: How did the brothers respond when Benjamin was accused of stealing?

A: They were greatly distressed!

Q: How did Judah respond?

A: He was greatly worried how the news would affect their father Jacob, and he offered to take Benjamin's place.

Q: How did Joseph respond to Judah and his brothers?

A: He wept with joy and revealed his true identity to them.

Hands: **How does this affect the way I live?**

Forgiveness should come quickly and naturally for Jesus' followers.

Home: **How does this affect my household?**

God desires the type of unity displayed in Judah's defense of Benjamin, and in Joseph's forgiveness. Jacob's sons had matured to the point that they were willing to care for one another against all odds.

Heaven: **How does this help me share my faith?**

Just as households unified in Jesus are strong and beautiful, Church families unified in Jesus that routinely and openly demonstrate forgiveness are equally beautiful and a compelling witness to those who don't yet know Jesus.

Heart: **Memory verse**

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