

## LESSONS ON THE FAMILY

### From the Life of Joseph – Part 2

#### *Leader's Notes*



In our previous study we looked at Joseph's relationships with his family – with his father and brothers. We saw the result of the brother's jealousy and animosity towards Joseph. They sold him into slavery! The story could have had a tragic ending, but God used this situation to bring about his redeeming purposes. Let's see now how God worked in the lives of this family and turned things around.

- ✦ How did the father's attitude change towards the elder brothers later in life? Compare Genesis 42:36-38 with Genesis 49:28.

*(Joseph's father, Jacob, had been deeply hurt by the loss of Joseph and feared he would lose Benjamin too. It seems he was resentful towards his elder sons as he said, "You have deprived me of my children." However at the end of his life he had softened towards them.)*

#### Share

Do you feel that your father or mother favored one of your siblings more than you? Share. Rather than holding it against your parents, choose to forgive them, and realise they are not perfect. As we can see from this story, God is at work in all of us.

- ✦ After Joseph had been taken to Egypt, his parents, Jacob and Rebecca, had another son they called Benjamin. What was the attitude of the elder brothers towards him? Genesis 42:36-37; 43:8-9  
*(Their attitude towards Benjamin was very different to what it had been like towards Joseph. They were protective of Benjamin and promised to take care of him.)*

#### Share

What is your relationship with your brothers and sisters like? Share. God wants to change our attitudes towards them too. Instead of being jealous of the attention they receive, to be kind towards them.

Many years had gone by and there was famine in the land. Jacob had sent his sons down to Egypt to buy grain. Joseph was now the governor of Egypt and immediately recognized his brothers when they came to him, however he did not tell them who he was. He wanted to know if they had changed and requested that they return with their youngest brother. When they did, Joseph revealed to them who he truly was.

### Scripture Reading: Genesis 45:1-15

- ✦ How did Joseph react towards his brothers when he met them this second time in Egypt? Genesis 45:2, 4-5, 14-15, Genesis 47:11-12. What does this show us about Joseph?  
*(He wept loudly and told them not to be angry with themselves for what they had done to him, then he embraced and kissed them. Not only that, he promised to provide for them. This shows that Joseph had forgiven them for what they had done, and could see that God had used the situation for good in the end.)*



Have you been hurt by one of your brothers or sisters? Share. What can you learn from Joseph's example?



Spend time praying about the things you have shared with one another. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit. Allow him to minister to any who have hurts or rejection, and encourage these ones to forgive their parents or siblings.

## **Conclusion**

Our family is important to us. It's the place where we belong, but it's also the place where we can be hurt and feel rejected the most. Families are important to God too, not just some families, but every family. He wants to heal the hurts in our families and restore our relationships. You can't change the other members of your family, but you can begin by asking God to change you. Choose to forgive, choose to be kind, and pray for your family. Look what he did in Joseph's family!