

Restore Our Vital Relationships Through Forgiveness

Genesis 44-45

7 Signs Of Genuine Repentance (Genesis 42-43)

1. We Want To Be Fully Trusted Again (42:1-5)
2. We're Honest When Tested (42:6-20)
3. We Admit Responsibility For Our Sin And Punishment (42:21-25)
4. We Become Sensitive To The Danger Of Other Sins (42:26-38)
5. We'll Do The Right Thing When Desperate Because We Trust God Not Sin (43:1-14)
6. We Are Willing To Give Recompense For Our Sin (43:15)
7. We Realize There Will Be A Reckoning One Day (43:16-34)

I. When Repentance In Genuine, Forgiveness Can Be Completed (44:1-34)

- A. Genuine Repentance Welcomes _____ (44:1-13)
- B. Genuine Repentance Confesses _____ For Sin (44:14-17)
- C. Genuine Repentance Guards Itself From _____ A Sin (44:18-34)

II. When Forgiveness Is Completed, Relationships Are Restored (45:1-28)

- A. Forgiveness Frees The Offender From Destructive _____ (45:1-5a)
- B. Forgiveness Focuses On God's _____ Purposes, Not Particular Offenses (5b-8; cf. 50:19-21)
- C. Forgiveness Is Rewarded With _____ Relationships (45:9-15)
- D. Forgiveness Frees Us To Bless Those Who Previously _____ Us (16-28)

Conclusion:

1. Forgiveness Is A Cancellation Of A Debt Resulting From An Injury (Col 2:13-14)
2. Forgiveness Grants A Full Pardon, Not A Probation (2 Cor 2:7)
3. Forgiveness Must Occur So Frequently That We Become Known As Forgivers (Mt 18:21-22; Lk 17:3-4)
4. Forgiveness Comes In Two Stages
 - Positional Forgiveness (Mt 5:23-24; 18:15; Mk 11:25; Lk 6:28; Acts 7:60)
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I. When Repentance In Genuine, Forgiveness Can Be Completed (44:1-34)

- A. Genuine Repentance Welcomes Examination (44:1-13)**
- B. Genuine Repentance Confesses Responsibility For Sin (44:14-17)**
- C. Genuine Repentance Guards Itself From Repeating A Sin (44:18-34)**

II. When Forgiveness Is Completed, Relationships Are Restored (45:1-28)

- A. Forgiveness Frees The Offender From Destructive Emotions (45:1-5a)**
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- Beverly Engel, *The Power Of Apology*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., NY, NY, 2001 shares when it's time to forgive (from a secular perspective):
 - *The other person has given you a meaningful apology, but your pride or your stubbornness keeps rising up inside you telling you that he or she didn't apologize well enough or isn't sorry enough or didn't take enough of the blame*
 - *You know deep in your heart that the wrongdoer is truly sorry, whether or not he or she has had the courage to apologize*
 - *You know deep in your heart that you were both to blame*
 - *Your anger and stubbornness are causing you physical or emotional pain*
 - *Your anger and distrust are in the way of your loving and trusting others in your life*
 - *An estrangement is clearly hurting you more than it is the other person*
 - *Either you or the wrongdoer is getting old or is gravely ill, you love him or her, and you may not have much more time together*
- Elizabeth I (To the Countess of Nottingham): "God may forgive you, but I never can."

I. When Repentance In Genuine, Forgiveness Can Be Completed (44:1-34)

A. Genuine Repentance Welcomes Examination (44:1-13)

^{44:1} Then he commanded the steward of his house, "Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man's money in the mouth of his sack, ² and put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, with his money for the grain." And he did as Joseph told him.

³As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away with their donkeys. ⁴They had gone only a short distance from the city. Now Joseph said to his steward, "Up, follow after the men, and when you overtake them, say to them, 'Why have you repaid evil for good?' ⁵Is it not from this that my lord drinks, and by this that he practices divination? You have done evil in doing this.'"

⁶When he overtook them, he spoke to them these words. ⁷They said to him, "Why does my lord speak such words as these? Far be it from your servants to do such a thing! ⁸Behold, the money that we found in the mouths of our sacks we brought back to you from the land of Canaan. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord's house? ⁹Whichever of your

*servants is found with it shall die, and we also will be my lord's servants."*¹⁰ He said, "Let it be as you say: he who is found with it shall be my servant, and the rest of you shall be innocent."¹¹ Then each man quickly lowered his sack to the ground, and each man opened his sack. ¹²And he searched, beginning with the eldest and ending with the youngest. And the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. ¹³Then they tore their clothes, and every man loaded his donkey, and they returned to the city.

- Joseph's final test of integrity: fill bags with grain, put money in each man's sack and the silver cup belonging to Joseph in Benjamin's
- The steward would follow them asking who has the cup – they searched the bags
- Because the brothers had integrity, they were **open to examination**

- When we come to a reality that we're sinners – we don't need to act guarded

- V. 7 - The brothers were in shock that they would be charged with any impropriety – "Why does my Lord speak such words as these? Far be it from your servants to do such a thing!"

- V. 8 – We proved our integrity earlier – returning the money found in our bag

- V. 9 – whoever of us is found guilty shall die and the rest of us becomes your servants
 - These guys were so confident in their innocence that they were willing to pay the ultimate price to prove their integrity

- James Boice: *Look at these men as the steward begins to search their sacks. Study their faces. Here is Judah, proud of his integrity. Here are Reuben and Levi, confident that their word will again be vindicated. See their confidence grow as the bundles are systematically opened, beginning with the sack of the oldest. Reuben did not take the prime minister's cup. Simeon does not have it. Levi and Judah are guiltless. Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher, Issachar and Zebulun are innocent. At last the steward comes to the sack of Benjamin. Who is worried now? Nobody! Benjamin of all persons could not be guilty of wrongdoing; he was not even in on the plot to sell Joseph. The sack is opened. The grain is sifted. Suddenly the bright Egyptian sun flashes on metal. What? Is there something silver in the sack? Slowly the steward draws forth the special cup. The cup!
How did it get there? No matter! The cup is there in spite of all the men's protestations. Who is guilty? Benjamin? Someone else who had hidden the stolen object in the baggage of the least suspicious person? No matter again! The truth is that they were all guilty of a far more blameworthy sin, and it was that sin that God was now uncovering and for which he was exacting vengeance. (Genesis: An Expository Commentary, Vol. 3, p. 1039)*

- V. 12 – everyone tore their clothes in remorse – most likely including Benjamin
- We're all guilty of sin and need to come before the cross

B. Genuine Repentance Confesses Responsibility For Sin (44:14-17)

¹⁴When Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, he was still there. They fell before him to the ground. ¹⁵Joseph said to them, "What deed is this that you have done? Do you not know that a man like me can indeed practice divination?" ¹⁶And Judah said, "What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how can we clear ourselves? God has found out the guilt

*of your servants; behold, we are my lord's servants, both we and he also in whose hand the cup has been found."*¹⁷ *But he said, "Far be it from me that I should do so! Only the man in whose hand the cup was found shall be my servant. But as for you, go up in peace to your father."*

- Being caught with the cup brought an admission of guilt
- Judah may be linking their current trials as punishment to what they did to Joseph in the past: "God has found out the guilt of your servants"
- Instead of the brothers pointing fingers, they are accepting co-responsibility with Joseph
- C.S. Lewis: "Fallen man is not simply an imperfect creature who needs improvement; he is a rebel who must lay down his arms....This process of surrender – this movement full speed astern – is what Christians call repentance. Now repentance is no fun at all. It is something much harder than merely eating humble pie. It means unlearning all the self-conceit and self-will that we have been training ourselves into for thousands of years. It means killing part of yourself, undergoing a kind of death."

C. Genuine Repentance Guards Itself From Repeating A Sin (44:18-34)

¹⁸ Then Judah went up to him and said, "Oh, my lord, please let your servant speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not your anger burn against your servant, for you are like Pharaoh himself. ¹⁹ My lord asked his servants, saying, 'Have you a father, or a brother?' ²⁰ And we said to my lord, 'We have a father, an old man, and a young brother, the child of his old age. His brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother's children, and his father loves him.' ²¹ Then you said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me, that I may set my eyes on him.' ²² We said to my lord, 'The boy cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die.' ²³ Then you said to your servants, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall not see my face again.'

²⁴ "When we went back to your servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. ²⁵ And when our father said, 'Go again, buy us a little food,' ²⁶ we said, 'We cannot go down. If our youngest brother goes with us, then we will go down. For we cannot see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us.' ²⁷ Then your servant my father said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me two sons. ²⁸ One left me, and I said, "Surely he has been torn to pieces," and I have never seen him since. ²⁹ If you take this one also from me, and harm happens to him, you will bring down my gray hairs in evil to Sheol.'

- While it is true, these brothers sold out Joseph to slavery – now Judah is willing to take the blame to protect Benjamin
- Judah was concerned for his heart broken father – the heart that Judah and his brother's broke
- Judah didn't want to see a repeat of that

II. When Forgiveness Is Completed, Relationships Are Restored (45:1-28)

- Stephen in Acts 7:60 when he was being stoned to death "Lord do not charge them with this sin." He called it a sin, but released them from the debt

- "Forgiveness is taking seriously the awfulness of what has happened when you are treated unfairly. Forgiveness is not pretending that things are other than the way they are." (Archbishop Desmond Tutu)
- "Forgiving doesn't mean ignoring an injustice or letting someone treat you badly. Remember that it's not a wimp's response. It takes a strong, courageous effort to make that move. Letting go of your grudges takes a great deal of moral muscle." (Charlotte vanOyen Wilvliet, Psychology Professor, Hope College, quoted in Zest Magazine, October 2000)

A. Forgiveness Frees The Offender From Destructive Emotions (45:1-5a)

45:1 Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him. He cried, "Make everyone go out from me." So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. 2And he wept aloud, so that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. 3And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence. 4So Joseph said to his brothers, "Come near to me, please." And they came near. And he said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. 5aAnd now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here,

Ie/ There's a Spanish story of a father and son who had become estranged. The son ran away, and the father set off to find him. He searched for months to no avail. Finally, in a last desperate effort to find him, the father put an ad in Madrid newspaper. The ad read: "Dear Paco, meet me in front of this newspaper office at noon on Saturday. All is forgiven. I love you. Your Father."

- On Saturday 800 Pacos showed up, looking for forgiveness and love from their fathers.
- "Karl Menninger, the famed psychiatrist, once said that if he could convince the patients in psychiatric hospitals that their sins were forgiven, 75 percent of them could walk out the next day!" (Today in the Word, March, 1989, p. 8)

B. Forgiveness Focuses On God's Sovereign Purposes, Not Particular Offenses (5b-8; cf. 50:19-21)

5b for God sent me before you to preserve life. 6For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. 7And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. 8So it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt.

Genesis 50:19-21 ¹⁹But Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? ²⁰As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. ²¹So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones." Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

C. Forgiveness Is Rewarded With Restored Relationships (45:9-15)

⁹ Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; do not tarry. ¹⁰ You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, and your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. ¹¹ There I will provide for you, for there are yet five years of famine to come, so that you and your household, and all that you have, do not come to poverty.' ¹² And now your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see, that it is my mouth that speaks to you. ¹³ You must tell my father of all my honor in Egypt, and of all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here." ¹⁴ Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept upon his neck. ¹⁵ And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them. After that his brothers talked with him.

- Ie/ Counseled a divorced couple looking at getting remarried – dealt with particular issues, but they saw it as something to grow on and strengthen their relationship

D. Forgiveness Frees Us To Bless Those Who Previously Hurt Us (16-28)

¹⁶When the report was heard in Pharaoh's house, "Joseph's brothers have come," it pleased Pharaoh and his servants. ¹⁷And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Say to your brothers, 'Do this: load your beasts and go back to the land of Canaan, ¹⁸and take your father and your households, and come to me, and I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you shall eat the fat of the land.' ¹⁹And you, Joseph, are commanded to say, 'Do this: take wagons from the land of Egypt for your little ones and for your wives, and bring your father, and come. ²⁰Have no concern for your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.' "

²¹The sons of Israel did so: and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the command of Pharaoh, and gave them provisions for the journey. ²²To each and all of them he gave a change of clothes, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred shekels of silver and five changes of clothes. ²³To his father he sent as follows: ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and provision for his father on the journey. ²⁴Then he sent his brothers away, and as they departed, he said to them, "Do not quarrel on the way."

²⁵So they went up out of Egypt and came to the land of Canaan to their father Jacob. ²⁶And they told him, "Joseph is still alive, and he is ruler over all the land of Egypt." And his heart became numb, for he did not believe them. ²⁷But when they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said to them, and when he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of their father Jacob revived. ²⁸And Israel said, "It is enough; Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."

- On 2/9/60, Adolph Coors III was kidnapped and held for ransom. Seven months later, his body was found, shot to death, in a remote hillside. Adolph Coors IV, then 15 yrs old, not only lost a father but his best friend. For years, young Adolph Coors hated Joseph Corbett, the man sentenced to life for slaying his father

In 1975 , Adolph Coors became a Christian and sold out his interest in the family beer business. But his hatred towards his father's murderer so consumed him that it stunted his growth in the Lord. He prayed to God for help realizing his hatred for Corbett was keeping him from God and other people.

As God worked in his heart, Coors came to the point in obedience to the Lord. He went to the maximum security unit of Colorado's Canon City penitentiary and tried to talk with

Corbett. Corbett refused to see him. Then Coors left a Bible inscribed with this message: "I'm here to see you today and I'm sorry that we could not meet. As a Christian I am summoned by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, to forgive. I do forgive you, and I ask you to forgive me for the hatred I've held in my heart for you." Coors later confessed "I have a love for that man that only Jesus Christ could have put in my heart."

Conclusion:

1. Forgiveness Is A Cancellation Of A Debt Resulting From An Injury (Col 2:13-14)
2. Forgiveness Grants A Full Pardon, Not A Probation (2 Cor 2:7)
3. Forgiveness Must Occur So Frequently That We Become Known As Forgivers (Mt 18:21-22; Lk 17:3-4)
4. Forgiveness Comes In Two Stages
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1. Forgiveness Is A Cancellation Of A Debt Resulting From An Injury

Colossians 2:13-14 ¹³And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, ¹⁴having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

2. Forgiveness Grants A Full Pardon, Not A Probation

2 Corinthians 2:7 So that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow.

- There is a time to forgive. A lengthy period of unforgiveness causes grief and defeat in the offender.
- Once forgiveness is given, the offense is not brought up again.

3. Forgiveness Must Occur So Frequently That We Become Known As Forgivers

Matthew 18:21-22 ²¹Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" ²²Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

- "Forgiveness is not an occasional act; it is a permanent attitude." (Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.)
- In Matthew 18:21-22, Peter's comment demonstrated 2 problems in his heart:
 - 1) he was more concerned about other's sinning against him, not him sinning against others
 - 2) he attached a mathematical formula to forgiveness
- To understand where Peter was coming from, Jewish tradition only gave a person 3 chances
 - **Amos 1:3,9,11,13** - God gave 3 chances, not a 4th

- **Job 33:29** God works all these things, twice, in fact, three times with a man to bring back his soul from the Pit that he may be enlightened with the light of life.
- The Jews thought that if God forgives 3x, man cannot exceed God, but this is a misinterpretation of God's divine mercy in national judgment.
- Peter thought he was generous to be more forgiving than the tradition of the day - by doubling the standard and adding one. Peter expected a compliment, but he got a shock instead.
- Jesus responds with 70X7 blowing Peter away. Jesus isn't limiting it to 490 - but is expressing that forgiveness is unlimited. There is no magical formula.

Luke 17:3-4 "Take heed to yourselves. If your brother trespass against you, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent', you shall forgive him."

- If 1 Corinthians 13 instructs us that love keeps no record of wrong, then we should not be counting to 490 offenses and forgiveness before you stop. You'd have to hire an accountant to keep that kind of record. Forgiving love keeps no record of wrong.

ie/ A friend of Clara Barton, the founder of the American Red Cross, once reminded her of a cruel thing done to Clara years before. After Miss Barton was not recalling the incident, the friend queried "Don't you remember it?" "No" Barton replied, "I distinctly remember forgetting it."

4. **Forgiveness Comes In Two Stages**

- a. **Positional Forgiveness:** "Positional forgiveness is unconditional and is a commitment you make to God." (Sande, p. 190)

Mark 11:25 And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.

Luke 6:28 Bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you.

Acts 7:60 Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

- "You promise to strive to maintain a loving and merciful attitude toward someone who has offended you. It is a decision to make the first promise of forgiveness, which means you will not dwell on the hurtful incident or seek vengeance or retribution in thought, word, or action. Instead, by God's grace you will keep yourself in a 'position of forgiveness' in which you pray for the other person and are ready to pursue complete reconciliation as soon as he or she repents. This attitude will protect you from bitterness and resentment, even if the other person takes a long time to repent." (Sande, pp. 190-191)

- b. Transactional Forgiveness:** "Transactional forgiveness is conditional on the repentance of the offender and takes place between you and that person." (Sande, p. 191)

Luke 17:3-5 ³Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. ⁴And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him." ⁵And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith."

- "Both stages of forgiveness were vividly demonstrated by God. When Christ died on the cross, he took on the position of forgiveness, maintaining an attitude of love and mercy toward those who put him to death. 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.' (Luke 23:34). At Pentecost, the Father's answer to Jesus' prayer was revealed. Three thousand people heard Peter's Pentecost message...as they repented of their sin, the transaction of forgiveness was completed, and they were fully reconciled to God. (Acts 2:36-41)." (Sande, p. 191)

ie/ George Wilson, a postal clerk, went "postal" – he robbed a train and killed a guard. He was arrested, convicted and condemned to hang. With some lack of solid evidence hanging over the case, President Jackson entered into the picture. Upon reviewing the case, he offered a pardon.

George Wilson was a bitter man, hating even the President. So he refused the pardon. This was the first time anyone ever refused a Presidential Pardon, so it went to the Supreme Court to see if this could be done.

Chief Justice John Marshall read the following decision: "A pardon is a parchment whose only value must be determined by the receiver of the pardon. It has no value apart from that which the receiver gives to it." Thus, as Wilson's pardon was rejected, the transaction of the pardon could not be complete. Wilson was hanged for the full penalty of murder.