

March 13/14, 2004

Study Questions
Fear or Faith (Part 2): A Study in the Life of Joseph
Quenching the Thirst for Revenge
Genesis 42:1-38
Pastor Andy MacFarlane

Opening Discussion

1. Have you ever been in a situation where you needed to forgive someone or let go of something but just couldn't seem to do it? What effect did it or does it have on you? How did you or will you resolve these feelings?
2. What would you do if a person who hurt you is at a point of need?

Bible Study

1. In Genesis 42 we see that Jacob's family needs the grain to live. Do you think the brothers see their desperate condition as a consequence of their sin against Joseph? Why or why not?

2. In verses 7 and 8 why do you think the author tells us twice that Joseph recognizes his brothers?

How would you have responded to your brothers if you had been in Joseph's situation? Why?

3. In verse 9 what is the importance of the fact that Joseph remembered his dreams?

Have you seen God use pain inflicted by other people to mold you and shape you? If so, how?

Does the fact that God uses painful experiences to bring about His purposes in your life quench your desire for revenge? Why or why not? If not, is there anything that can quench your desire for revenge against a particular person or people?

4. Why do you think Joseph accuses his brothers of being spies? What do you conclude from the brothers' conversation in verse 21? And Reuben's comments in verse 22? What do you conclude from the brothers' response to finding money in their bag in verse 28?

5. Do you think it is right that Joseph makes the brothers return to Egypt with Benjamin before he will release Simeon? Why or why not?

Why do you think Joseph does this?

6. According to verse 25, Joseph, in effect, gave his brothers their grain for free. What does this say about Joseph? Why do you think he does this?
7. According to verses 36 and 38, Jacob is willing to let the family starve and willing to let Simeon rot in prison, rather than risk Benjamin's life on a trip to Egypt. What does this say about Jacob? What kind of message do you think this sent to the other brothers?

How can we avoid playing favorites among our family and friends?

Application

1. Just as Joseph viewed his brothers as God's instruments, who are the people from your past that you need to view as God's instruments?

By faith, will you ask God to move in your life—that you will see those people who have caused you pain as God's instruments for working out His purposes for your life?

2. Are there any people who caused you pain that are in need? If so, if you are able, what can you do to meet that need?
3. How might you determine the present character of someone who has hurt you in the past? Ask God for wisdom in dealing with that person.