

March 20/21, 2004

Study Questions
Fear or Faith (Part 2): A Study in the Life of Joseph
Reluctant Steps of Faith
Genesis 43:1-34
Pastor Bryan Clark

Opening Discussion

1. Share a time in your life when circumstances forced you to take steps of faith you otherwise might not have taken. What was the result?
2. Share a time in your life when circumstances forced you to address issues in your life that you were trying to avoid addressing. What was the result?
3. Why is it necessary for God to force us at times to face issues in our lives we otherwise would like to avoid? Why does God press the issue?

Bible Study

1. Review the plotline from Genesis 42. Read 43:1-15.
2. Why is Jacob called “Jacob” in chapter 42, but “Israel” in chapter 43? Describe Jacob in Genesis 43.

Do you get the impression Jacob has lived the last 20 years as a hero of faith trusting God, or in despair and fear clinging to Benjamin? Why?

3. What did it take for Jacob to take some reluctant steps of faith?

Why are steps of faith so hard after we have experienced unexpected disappointment with God?

4. Read Genesis 43:16-34.
5. How did Joseph’s brothers respond to his kindness and grace?

Why? (see 42:21,22)

6. If Joseph is meant to be a picture of Christ, then the brothers represent us as sinners, expecting condemnation and receiving grace instead.

In what ways do you see yourself in the attitude and actions of the brothers?

Application

1. There are three main characters in this story:
 - Jacob, who is being forced to trust God again.
 - The brothers, who are coming to grips with their sin and God's grace.
 - Joseph, who is seeking to extend grace rather than justice.

Which character do you most identify with at this stage in your life?

Jacob: What reluctant step of faith do you need to take today?

Brothers: What sin do you need to come to grips with to experience the grace of God?

Joseph: Who in your life is God calling you to extend grace to rather than condemnation?