



12 / 09 / 2012 // GROUP DISCUSSION FROM THE CURRENT TEACHING SERIES ... HEADLINES

## START

Take a moment, go around the circle and introduce yourself. Each person needs to answer this question:

**What was the best Christmas present you ever received and why?**

## SHARE

We are in the series called "Headlines," in which we are looking at some amazing stories from God's word. These stories are amazing because they actually happened, and if we were alive in those days, these stories would have made some big headlines in the local paper. We have all read the paper and wondered why things happened the way they did. This week we will be focusing on a story in the life of Joseph and the struggle we all face at times, the struggle of forgiveness. If we think our families are dysfunctional, consider Joseph's family. Take turns reading Genesis 37:1-36 and we will focus on two key verses:

### Genesis 37:3-4 (NLT)

Jacob loved Joseph more than any of his other children because Joseph had been born to him in his old age. So one day Jacob had a special gift made for Joseph—a beautiful robe. But his brothers hated Joseph because their father loved him more than the rest of them. They couldn't say a kind word to him.

The Commentary Critical on the Bible by Jamieson Fausset explains the seriousness of this hostility, "could not speak peaceably unto him—did not say "peace be to thee" [Ge 43:23, &c.], the usual expression of good wishes among friends and acquaintances. It is deemed a sacred duty to give all this form of salutation; and the withholding of it is an unmistakable sign of dislike or secret hostility. The habitual refusal of Joseph's brethren, therefore, to meet him with "the salaam," showed how ill-disposed they were towards him. It is very natural in parents to love the youngest, and feel partial to those who excel in talents or amiableness. But in a family constituted as Jacob's—many children by different mothers—he showed great and criminal indiscretion."

**Have you ever had someone show hostility toward you in a passive way? How did it impact you?**

**How does holding a grudge toward another person affect you personally? Does it do more damage to the grudge holder or the receiver and why?**

**After reading about how Joseph's brothers cruelly sold him, what verses stand out to you and why?**

## GROW

The truth about all of us is that we not only need forgiveness for things we have done, but will need to forgive others. This week, take a night and read the entire story of Joseph and underline key verses where God might be speaking to you about your life through Joseph's story.

Joseph was not only betrayed once, but had many more painful experiences in his life including doing time for a crime he was actually innocent of, but eventually Joseph realized that through it all, God had a plan. It was up to Joseph, however, to not allow bitterness to destroy him, but to choose forgiveness and trust in God's plan. In the message we realize that Joseph's entire family is in need during a harsh drought and his brothers come for help. The brothers don't realize they are coming to see Joseph; let's see what happens:

### Genesis 45:1-3

Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, "Have everyone leave my presence!" So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers. And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and Pharaoh's household heard about it.





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Instead of anger or retribution, Joseph allows the pain to show and wept loudly. How can honestly grieving over past hurts help us? How did it help Joseph?

### Genesis 50:19-21

But Joseph replied, "Don't be afraid of me. Am I God, that I can punish you? You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people. No, don't be afraid. I will continue to take care of you and your children." So he reassured them by speaking kindly to them.

When Joseph's brothers realize that they are at the mercy of Joseph for the awful thing they did to him, they are afraid. What stands out to you about what Joseph said to his brothers?

What is the importance of Joseph leaving the judging to God? What can we learn from that?

### MOVE

Throughout the message, Eric spoke about the power of forgiveness. Each one of us has experienced moments where we know we need to forgive someone. We have all experienced the truth that holding on to the grudge is actually poisoning us. On the flip side, if we were honest, all of us have hurt someone in the past, either intentionally or accidentally. Understanding that we all have fallen short of how God wants us to live actually helps us realize we need forgiveness from others for things we have done wrong. We thank God that we can receive that forgiveness through what Jesus did on the cross for each of us and now we have the opportunity to offer that to others who have hurt us.

### Matthew 6:14-15

For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

### Matthew 18:21-22

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times."

### Romans 12:19a-21

Do not take revenge...On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink...Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good

Why would God ask us to actually pray and do good to our enemies?

Forgiving someone doesn't mean that we are justifying what that person did. It is in obedience to God's command and in response to what Jesus has done for us. Can someone share how forgiveness has helped you personally?

### PRAY

Let's put into practice what we have been learning by praying for each other.

Sometime this week, think about that one person or situation that you need to bring to God and purposefully spend time praying and forgiving them from your heart. Maybe you need to make a call tonight or tomorrow and ask someone to forgive you or reach out. If you need to, write this verse out and tape it to your dashboard or put it on the refrigerator:

### Luke 6:27-28

...Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.