

12 A FAMILY REUNION

KEY TEXT: GENESIS 42:1-7; 45:1-9

CENTRAL truth

God's power frees us to reconcile with others. In this week's Scripture, Joseph reconnects with his brothers after more than twenty years. Though God had been kind to him, Joseph had not forgotten the agony of his betrayal at their hands. Yet he chose to reconcile with his brothers. Through God's power, we can forgive and reconcile with those who have wounded us.

key question

What does repentance look like, both in our relationships with God and with one another?

A key building block in the foundation of reconciliation is repentance. After a series of tests, it became abundantly clear to Joseph that his brothers were repentant. Repentance involves both a change of mind and remorse over the realization of wrongdoing. Our relationships with God and others require repentance for true reconciliation to take place.

keep in mind

- As the topic of reconciliation is discussed, students may wonder if we always need to always reconcile with people who have wounded us. Look at the **Give an Answer** section in today's session to help you as you teach. Reconciliation—the restoration of a relationship after a wrong has taken place—is not always possible or safe. However, this does not mean we're released from the responsibility to forgive. Help students see the difference between forgiveness and reconciliation.
- Scholars don't all agree about Joseph's initial response to his brothers in this passage. While some believe he was being vindictive, others are convinced that he was rightfully testing his brothers to see if they had truly experienced a change of heart. Stress that in either scenario, the takeaway for students should be that forgiveness is difficult to extend. This is something students (and leaders) should be able to identify with.

application

How can God use our painful experiences to bless our friends and family?

the win

FOR THE STUDENT: Students should understand that when we have been wounded by others, God supplies us with the grace necessary to forgive and reconcile.

FOR THE LEADER: As you lead students through this week's Scripture, drive home the importance of asking the Lord for His grace as we seek to reconcile with others.

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