



Life is hard. Carrying the weight of bitterness makes life even harder. For nearly 22 years, Joseph had been carrying the emotional and practical weight of his brothers' choice to sell him into slavery when he was 17 years old. Although the circumstances of his life improved, Genesis 45 gives us a window into Joseph's heart of forgiveness toward his brothers. After 2 years of famine, Joseph's 11 brothers travel back to Egypt to ask for food for their family, not knowing that they will be standing face to face with their brother - who now has the means to enact revenge and the justification to remain bitter. What we see, instead, is forgiveness at its finest. Instead of choosing the easy path of bitterness, revenge, and anger, he chose the hard, God-honoring path of forgiveness.

1. Has anyone ever come to you and asked for your forgiveness? Talk about that event/circumstance and what it did for you and your relationship with that person.
2. Why do you think forgiving someone is so difficult to do? Would you say forgiveness is easy or hard for you, personally?
3. **Read Genesis 45:1-15.** Remember, it's been 22 years since Joseph's 10 older brothers sold him into slavery and he hasn't seen them since. For all they know, Joseph is dead, and this is the moment Joseph reveals himself to his brothers.
4. What do you think is going through Joseph's mind when he has his brothers alone. What do you think was going through the brothers' minds when Joseph revealed himself to them?
5. What evidence in this passage points to the fact that Joseph fully forgave his brothers?
6. **Now read Ephesians 4:31-32.** It's been said that the Christian's willingness to forgive others is directly connected to their understanding of Christ's willingness to forgive them. Do you agree or disagree with this and why?
7. In the sermon on Sunday, Chris Hall, pointed out when we refuse to forgive, we are choosing to carry the weight and consequence of someone else's sin. Whose sin are you still carrying with you today?
8. What freedom have you experienced as a result of forgiving someone in your life? Share about that experience if you are willing.
9. Is there someone in your life you still need to forgive? What steps do you sense the Holy Spirit is leading you to take to forgive that person?