

Midweek Study

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TRUSTING GOD IN THE DARKNESS

Genesis 37-50

Making Things Right

(Genesis 43:1 – 45:15)

Joseph tests his brothers in several ways related to what they did to him 20 years before.

- Test of **Accusation** (42:7-9) – How will they handle being treated harshly?
- Test of **Argument** (42:21-24) – Will they blame each other or take responsibility?
- Test of **Abandonment** (42:24) – Will they leave Simeon (and later Benjamin) in Egypt?
- Test of **Accumulation** (42:25-28) – Do they value deceitful gain or will they give it back?
- Test of **Affection** (43:34) – Will they despise generosity poured out on Benjamin?
- Test of **Anguish** (44:34) – Do they care about what the loss will mean to their father?

1. The **Return** (Genesis 43:1-14)

This is in the second year of the famine. There are still five more years to go. They cannot go back to Egypt without Benjamin.

2. The **Reception** (Genesis 43:15-34)

Tony Evans writes, “But the steward replied, **Your God and the God of your father must have put treasure in your bags** (43:23). This suggests that Joseph’s faith must have spread to his staff, because here was an Egyptian servant invoking the name of the God of the Hebrews!”¹

Here, Joseph is testing the feelings of the brothers toward Benjamin. Would they treat Benjamin with contempt if he is given favor (5 times as much as them)? Have they changed? Perhaps they would remember the coat of many colors given to their other brother many years ago.

¹ Tony Evans, *The Tony Evans Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2019), 96.

3. The Rejection (Genesis 44:1-17)

Joseph orders that his own silver cup be secretly placed in Benjamin's sack. Shortly after leaving the city, the brothers are stopped and searched. To the brothers' horror, the cup is found in Benjamin's sack, and he is arrested.²

Joseph decides to see if his brothers would sacrifice Benjamin for their own safety.

The phrase "God has found out the iniquity of your servants" (Gen. 44:16) doesn't refer only to the discovery of the grain money or to the silver cup. The statement also refers to their hidden sins, the way they had treated Joseph and their father years before.³

4. The Request (Genesis 44:18-34)

It was then that Judah came to Benjamin's defense in the longest speech by a human found in the Book of Genesis, and one of the most moving speeches found anywhere in the Bible.⁴

5. The Reconciliation (Genesis 45:1-15)

Genesis 45:14-15 The climax of the story occurs, and they have reconciled. Joseph and Benjamin weep, and Joseph is affectionate with each brother. It has been over 20 years since they were separated.

Applications:

- 1) **Sometimes you are being tested when you don't realize you are being tested.** In **Judges 7:1-8**, God tells Gideon to test the soldiers by seeing how they drink water from the river. Thomas states, "It is comparatively easy to shine on great occasions when we are conscious that the eyes of others are upon us; it is not by any means so easy to shine when we are free from the constraint of other people, when we are alone in our room doing the duty of the moment with equal need of faithfulness to God... Miss Havergal, in one of her books, prays that her 'unconscious influence' might be all for Christ. One of Bushnell's sermons is on the deeply interesting subject of 'Unconscious Influence.'"⁵
- 2) **Though we are free to choose our actions, we may be ultimately fulfilling the plan and purpose of God.** Joseph tells his brothers in **Genesis 45:9-13** that he was sent to preserve his family, but we know that he was used by God in a greater way. Thomas writes, "God knew that it was the way in which the promise to Abraham was to be fulfilled and the family transformed into a great nation... [This should give] a dignity to life to realize that nothing is trivial and without meaning."⁶

Proverbs 19:21 (ESV) says, "Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand."

² H. L. Willmington, *The Outline Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999), Ge 43:31-44:17.

³ Warren Wiersbe, *Be Authentic*, "Be" Commentary Series (Colorado Springs, CO: Chariot Victor Pub., 1997), 124.

⁴ Wiersbe, 124.

⁵ W.H. Griffith Thomas, *Genesis: A Devotional Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1953), 422-423.

⁶ Thomas, 429.