

Connect360: Bloom Where You're Planted

April 3, 2023

- *Lesson 3 in the Connect360 unit "How Great Is Our God: Passing the Faith Along" focuses on Genesis 50:15-20.*

Have you ever been betrayed by someone you loved? Most of us have. The deeper our relationship is with that person, the deeper is the wound.

If you have been wounded, have you forgiven the person(s) for the hurt and pain they caused? When another person hurts us, we are responsible to forgive them, whether or not they ask for it. When we hurt another person, we are responsible to ask them for forgiveness.

We often do not forgive others because they have never owned up to what they did, nor asked for forgiveness. So, we justify not forgiving them, because they have not done their part in apologizing. When this happens, we open up our lives to the tormentors of anger, bitterness or resentment.

The word "forgive" means to untie a boat from the dock, and let it go out to sea. If we do not forgive, the stench and venom of that boatload of rotting emotions poisons our life. When we forgive, allowing God to take the boat out to sea, we are free from the stench and reminders, and are open to receive new boats of blessing at our dock.

Joseph's brothers never asked Joseph for forgiveness, or forgave themselves, for the evil they did to him. Joseph forgave them after realizing this was God's plan for his life. The outcomes of their lives reveal the difference forgiveness makes.

People had done evil to Joseph, but God was at work accomplishing a

greater good. Romans 8:28 affirms that God can make all things work together for good, to those who are called to accomplish his good will. Not only did Joseph provide food for the Egyptians, but he also arranged for all the tribes of Israel to move to the only place in Mesopotamia where they could live well during the famine. Thus, God preserved the lineage of the coming Messiah.

One outstanding thing about Joseph was his grace and forgiveness. Would Joseph have been able to be kind and generous to others, if he were full of resentment and bitterness? No. If he had not forgiven his brothers, he would have been as enslaved to guilt as they were.

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