

Bible Studies for Life: November 17

*Joseph and His Brothers: Family Reconciliation • Genesis
42:3-5, 21-24a; 45:1-5*

By Bobby McKay



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In all my years of watching Family Feud, there is one thing I have never witnessed: an actual feud. The contest's premise is a play on words, but there has never been as much as shouting at the opposing family. I am non-confrontational by nature, and I am not advocating violence, but given the connotation of the word "feud," you would expect a little tension occasionally. In many homes and, sadly, many churches, feuds come quickly and frequently. The turmoil and struggles some homes face behind closed doors are no game. However, in the lives of genuine Christian families, hope and reconciliation are possible. Christ continually is calling us to forgive others who have hurt us.

Genesis 42:3-5

One of the most redeeming and lasting experiences a person can gain is realizing there is no such thing as a wasted experience. It is in the most challenging times and seasons of adversity that God will teach us some of the most important lessons. Lessons we would not benefit from otherwise. If your family is like most, there are members of your clan you only see at funerals. It may take a tragedy for your paths to cross. The crisis of the famine in our Bible study this week

brings the brothers together in a fantastic turn of events.

Genesis 42:21-24a

Joseph was not the same man his brothers had deserted 20 years before. God had promoted him through life's difficulties and used his circumstances to do many beautiful acts. Even before his brothers returned to his life, Joseph had already chosen to forgive them. His brothers desperately needed grain but got more than they bargained for. They were unaware that Joseph had heard their conversations of remorse and brokenness. Joseph wept, moved by the passing of time and the desire for harmony. The hand of God had orchestrated this moment of reconciliation, a testament to His power and grace.

Genesis 45:1-5

By revealing who he was, Joseph chose to display forgiveness. How many homes, churches, and marriages could be restored instantly by the extension of forgiveness and mercy? The power of forgiveness is not to be underestimated. It sees the big picture and the result. Joseph acknowledged God's hand during his life and his brothers. He was gracious, and that grace came from being humble. "I am Joseph, your brother," are some of the most touching and powerful words in all Scripture. Joseph had lived with the understanding that God was in control. His brothers feared Joseph seeking revenge, but their worries quickly ended. Joseph reminded them if God is in control, God will see His purposes come to fruition. There is nothing they, or anyone, could do to thwart the will of God. In the game Family Feud, there is a winner and a loser; each episode concludes with money and sometimes a new vehicle. People cheer, and the episode concludes. What about you? Is there any reconciliation or forgiveness needed in your life? Which "family feud" could you end today with a phone call, text, or a lunch date? Do it, and you will be the biggest winner of all.

McKay is pastor of New Liberty Baptist Church, Morton.