

CAMPFIRE STORIES

Elementary
Week 4

PARENT BIBLE STUDY

Read: Genesis 41:53-45:15

Joseph's brothers completely altered the course of his life. Their actions sent him far from home and into a life of slavery and prison. But when he saw them again after a couple decades, he forgave them.

Here's what he said to them after he finally revealed who he was: "Don't be angry with yourselves for what you did. It was God's plan for me to come here. I am here to save people's lives," Genesis 45:5.

Joseph did not stay focused on his troubled past. Ultimately, he did not hold onto bitter memories about his family. His faith in God's character allowed him to see the bigger picture and have confidence in God when he couldn't gain any confidence from his external circumstances.

When the whole family reunited, Joseph forgave because of his faith. Joseph acknowledged that God knew all the harm that came to him would eventually save his own family—and thousands of other people—from starvation.

Joseph's story becomes a picture of Jesus—another son (God's only Son) who came to earth and was accused of crimes he did not commit, just like Joseph. Then Jesus was sent to die so that all of us could be forgiven and reconnected to God once and for all. All the pain and suffering were worth it so that we could have a way back to God.

Joseph's life of suffering ensured life for any who came to him for food. Jesus' suffering in death ensures eternal life for any who come to him for truth.

Would it be easier for you to deal with people who have wronged you in the past, maybe even altered the course of your life, if you knew that God would use it for good? Romans 8:28 says that "all things work together for good for those who love God." Can you forgive easier knowing this?

How would believing that your pain and suffering have a bigger purpose help you endure?