

## GROUP LEADER'S NOTES – STUDY 16

### QUESTION 1

- a) It was Judah's impassioned appeal on behalf of Benjamin in 44:18-34 that was the last straw.
- b) This was a sign that the brothers had indeed changed. There was true repentance.
- c) Judah's willingness to sacrifice himself for Benjamin demonstrates a complete turnaround.
- d) The grief and love of Joseph cannot be contained any longer. This is seen in his uncontrollable weeping.

### QUESTION 2

- a) It is significant that Joseph clears everyone else out of the room. He doesn't want the details of what the brothers have done to become public; let alone get back to Pharaoh.
- b) It's hardly surprising that the brothers were dismayed. Up until now Joseph had spoken to them through an interpreter. Now alone with them, he spoke for the first time in their language.
- c) The word 'dismayed' really means 'terrified'.
- d) This revelation could bring joy; but also, renewed distress. What would Joseph do in revenge?
- e) Joseph in verses 4-5 tells them something that only he and they could know. This helps to verify his identity.
- f) Joseph has to mention what they did. Forgiveness cannot deny wrongdoing.

### QUESTION 3

- a) Joseph has always seen God's hand in his life. Way back he had shared with his family what he believed God's will was for them all.
- b) When falsely accused; he was seeking to uphold the honour of God (39:9). And when he interpreted the various dreams told to him (e.g. 41:16); he always credited them to God.
- c) When he had revealed to Pharaoh what was going to happen in Egypt; he still put God at the centre (see 41:25, 28, 32).
- d) God had used their wickedness to further His own purposes.
- e) Notice in verse 5 we have both: "you sold me" and "God sent me". Those two things can both be true; and yet still go together.
- f) In verses 5-9 Joseph mentions God four times. This is what explains Joseph's greatness.
- g) It was always about God. God was with him.
- h) Throughout all that Joseph went through, he never stopped trusting and serving God.

### QUESTION 4

- a) God can take even man's wicked acts to move His plans forward. The supreme example of this is the cross (see Acts 2:23-24).
- b) The fact that God overruled in the sin of the brothers here does not lessen their guilt. But God uses that sin for good.
- c) *"It is when we are ignorant of God's ways with us that we are most likely to nurture hatred and nurse grievances. It is accepting the sovereignty of God that releases us to forgive"* (Liam Goligher).
- d) Joseph's understanding of the sovereignty of God helps him to forgive his brothers: *"No one who believes in the sovereignty of God in the affairs of life can bear a grudge or take revenge"* (A P Ross).
- e) Perhaps there are things we need to forgive others for. Or perhaps we need forgiveness from them.

### QUESTION 5

- a) Joseph's love for his family, despite what they had done to him, is remarkable.
- b) We can understand his love for Benjamin. He had nothing to do with what had taken place against Joseph.
- c) But here Joseph kisses all his brothers. It demonstrates that he has clearly forgiven them and would not hold it against them.
- d) He knows that his father continues to carry the burden of losing his son. Therefore, Joseph wants him to know as soon as possible that he was still alive.
- e) In verse 10 we see the phrase "you shall be near me" and in verse 11 "I will provide for you".
- f) That shows full forgiveness and reconciliation.

### QUESTION 6

- a) Joseph's love and subsequent treatment of his brothers was undeserved.
- b) This is a small illustration of the extent of God's love for guilty sinners (see 1 John 3:1).
- c) Joseph had felt the pain of rejection; but love and grace take over. So, with Jesus. He was rejected and yet still went to the cross to save us.
- d) Joseph's forgiveness cost those years of rejection, humiliation, false accusation and suffering as a slave in prison.
- e) The forgiveness of God for sinners such as us, cost the life of His Son. Guilty but forgiven.