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Leader Guide

Longing for Relationship

December 12, 2021

Main Passage: Genesis 45:1-2

Theological Theme

People are made to be in relationship with God and one another. However, sin has disrupted both. Because of sin, our relationship with God is broken and our relationship with our neighbor is dysfunctional. Jesus came to restore both.

Introduction

- ❓ What are some common ideas about heaven? Which of those ideas are backed up by what the Bible says, and which are not?
- ❓ Why do you think the idea of heaven interests people in general? What does that tell us about life here and now?

Joseph's father played favorites. His brothers mistreated him. Broken relationships and family dysfunction led to a life of separation and resentment. Jacob, Joseph's brothers, and Joseph all desired restored relationship. They had a deep longing for a restored relationship with one another. Ultimately, they longed for a restored relationship with God. Like Joseph's story, Jesus came to break down the dividing wall of hostility. In Christ, believers can be reconciled to God and build deep relationships with others. Furthermore, our longing for relationship and community will ultimately be realized when He comes again to set all things right.

1. The Brothers' Condition (Genesis 45:1-3)

Joseph's brothers were selfish, jealous, lying, deceptive, hateful, and murderous men. They were guilty and should have been condemned. They arrived to Joseph deserving to be condemned. They were

bankrupt and desperate. They could not help themselves and deserved no help from Joseph. They were totally at his mercy, which they did not deserve.

2. The Brothers' Hope (Genesis 45:4-8)

When Joseph revealed his identity to his brothers, he also revealed certain things about his beliefs. These beliefs had been forged in the fires of loss and grief, of great disappointment and anger. This was a moment of redemption. The prideful young man was gone, and what remained was a humble leader who recognized God's good purposes in even the worst of times.

3. The Brothers' Assurance (Genesis 45:9-11)

Joseph not only saved his brothers, but he kept them saved. He provided for their ongoing preservation and well-being. This is a picture of the glorious good that Jesus Christ does for those who have come to Him for pardon. When we came to Christ, prodigals that we were, He cleansed us of sin by His own blood. He nailed our sin debt to the cross. That old arrest warrant was nullified. The wrath of God that we deserved was satisfied. Christ really and truly saves sinners who come to Him for mercy.

Questions to Guide Your Group's Discussion

- ❓ What does this passage say?
- ❓ What did this passage mean to its original audience?
- ❓ What does this passage tell us about God?
- ❓ What does this passage tell us about man?
- ❓ What does this passage demand of me?
- ❓ How does this passage change the way I relate to people? (*How can you use this information this week at work or with friends and neighbors?*)
- ❓ How does this passage prompt me to pray to God?