

Two Bible Stories of Forgiveness

Bible Story One: Joseph forgives his brothers

The brothers' offenses:

- Jealousy
- Betrayal
- Plotting to murder Joseph
- Selling him into slavery
- Lying to their father Jacob

The Story: Genesis 37-50

Key Forgiveness Passage: (New Living Translation)

Joseph to his brothers: (Genesis 50: 20-21) 20 “You planned evil against me; God planned it for good to bring about the present result—the survival of many people. 21 Therefore don’t be afraid. I will take care of you and your little ones.” And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

The Events

1. Joseph was Jacob’s favorite son (mother was Rachel) and Jacob made him a robe of many colors. His brother’s became extremely jealous. They “hated him and could not bring themselves to speak peaceably to him.” (Genesis 37:4)
2. Joseph told them about dreams he had where they would bow down to him and the brothers hated him even more (Genesis 37:5-11).
3. While Joseph was sent to give a report on how his brothers were doing tending his father’s flocks, the brothers plotted to kill him. Reuben convinced the brothers instead to throw him into a pit in the wilderness intending to rescue him later (Genesis 37:12-35).
4. A caravan of Ishmaelites came along traveling to Egypt and the other brothers sold him as a slave for 20 pieces of silver. The brothers took Joseph’s robe dipped in goat’s blood and told Jacob that a vicious animal had devoured him.
5. After being purchased as a slave, Joseph was sold to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh (2 Samuel 37:26-28).
6. Joseph was accused of rape by Potiphar’s wife after he refused to sleep with her. When she reported her accusation to her husband, Joseph was put in prison (Genesis 39:6-20).
7. Years later, after interpreting the Pharaoh’s dreams (Genesis 41:1-36), he was appointed ruler over all the land of Egypt ((Genesis 41:41-44).

8. A seven year famine occurred as Joseph had predicted and Jacob sent his sons to find grain in Egypt (Genesis 42:1-2). They were recognized by Joseph and eventually Joseph revealed his identity (Genesis 42:6-7)
9. Before his death, Jacob told his sons to ask Joseph to forgive them. Fearing that Joseph would be angry about what they had done, they sent a message to Joseph: “Before your father died, he instructed us to say to you: ‘Please forgive your brothers for the great wrong they did to you—for their sin in treating you so cruelly’ So we, the servants of the God of your father, bet you to forgive our sin.” (Genesis 50:17)
10. Joseph wept upon receipt of the message. He told his brothers that God intended it all for good when he placed him in his position in Egypt because he could save the lives of many people during the famine. Joseph spoke kindly to them and promised to take care of his brothers and their children (Genesis 50:19-21).

Thought Questions:

At what point do you believe Joseph forgave his brothers?

In what ways did Joseph demonstrate his forgiveness?

What emotions did Joseph experience in the process of forgiving his brothers and the events prior? Read Genesis 37-50. Note Genesis 40:15; 45:2; 50:17; 50:21.

In Genesis 50:20, Joseph tells his brothers: “You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people.” What New Testament scripture mirrors this same verse? Write out the verse or verses.

Joseph’s story is one of betrayal and injustice. Think of a personal experience you have had that involved these same offenses. What emotions did you experience? Were you able to forgive the offender(s)? If so, how. If not, what has made it difficult to forgive?

Bible Story Two: God forgives David for his adultery with Bathsheba.

David's offenses:

- Lusting after and sleeping with another man's wife
- Setting up the murder of Uriah
- Using deception to cover up his relationship with Bathsheba and the pregnancy
- Showing contempt for the word of the Lord

The Story: 2 Samuel 11:1-12:25 and Psalm 51

Key Forgiveness Passages: (New Living Translation)

Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the Lord," And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone. (Psalm 32: 5)

Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin. For I recognize my rebellion; it haunts me day and night. (Psalm 51: 2-3)

The Events:

1. From the roof of his palace, David saw a beautiful woman named Bathsheba bathing. He sent for her knowing she was married and slept with her. Later, Bathsheba discovered that she was pregnant and sent word to David (2 Samuel 11:1-5).
2. David sent for Bathsheba's husband Uriah who had returned from battle and tried to convince him to go home to his wife. David was hoping he would sleep with his wife so Uriah would believe the child was his. Instead Uriah slept at the palace entrance in support of his fellow soldiers (2 Samuel 11:6-24).
3. When this plan failed, David invited Uriah to dinner and got him drunk hoping he would go home to his wife. Instead he again slept at the palace entrance. The next morning, David arranged for Uriah's death by instructing Joab, the captain of his army, to station him on the front lines and then pull back so he would be killed. Joab followed David's orders and Uriah was killed (2 Samuel 11:14-24).
4. After Bathsheba's period of mourning was over, David sent for her and make her one of his wives. She later gave birth to a son, Solomon (2 Samuel 11: 26-27).
5. God sent Nathan the prophet to tell David a story about a rich man who took a lamb from a poor man who loved the lamb very much. The poor man had raised the lamb and cradled it in his arms "like baby daughter" and it was all he owned. The rich man took

the poor man's lamb, killed it and prepared it for a guest. After telling the story, Nathan told David he was that man and God was very displeased. David was told by Nathan that his son would die and God would give his wives to another man and they would have sex in public view (2 Samuel 12:11-12).

6. The prophesy came to pass when David's son Absalom set up a tent on the palace roof where everyone could see and slept with his father's concubines (2 Samuel 16:21-22).
7. God forgave David after he confessed his guilt (2 Samuel 12:13; Psalm 32:5). There were still consequences for David's transgressions because he had "shown utter contempt for the word of the Lord" (2 Samuel 12:14).

Thought Questions:

How soon did God forgive David after he confessed his sin? Read 2 Samuel 12:13.

What did God do when he forgave David? Read (Psalm 103:12; 1 John 1:9; Hebrews 8:12)

What must we do for God to forgive our sins? List scriptures to support your answer.

What happens to our sin when God forgives?

When God forgives us does he still allow the earthly consequences for our choices? Why or why not?
