

# Journey Into Victorious Living

## LESSON 8 . . . Principles for Peacemaking (Genesis 45:1-28)



### NOTES

Occasionally, we all experience a falling-out in a relationship. When that happens, our responsibility as Christians is to do all we can to restore the relationship. Though Joseph doesn't have a Bible, he knows God's heart because he knows God's way, as in Romans 12:18. Write it below:

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This is exactly what Joseph does. Therefore, in this chapter, we find **three principles for peacemaking**.

### 1. Allow God time to work (45:1-8).

When he hears Judah's offer to stay as a slave in Benjamin's place, Joseph knows his brothers have truly changed. He can no longer contain his emotions and orders everyone except his brothers out of the room. Then, he weeps so loudly the Egyptians outside the room can hear him. This is the third of five times Joseph weeps over broken relationships in his family (42:24, 43:30, 45:2, 45:14 & 50:17). Joseph's weeping reveals he took no pleasure in deceiving and frightening his brothers. It has been a long, hard, and heartbreaking twenty-two years since he was sold into slavery.

If we desire to be peacemakers, we must **allow God time to work**. If we wait on Him, God will give us opportunities to make reconciliation and peace. Therefore, we must follow what example of the psalmist in Psalm 130:5?

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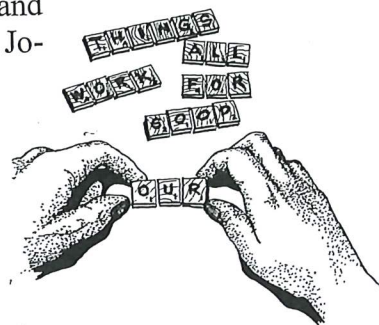
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After releasing his emotions, Joseph says to his brothers, *I am Joseph; doth my father yet live?* (45:3a). His brothers have already answered this question once before (43:27-28), but Joseph's hurting heart wants reassurance. However, his brothers are so shocked and terrified they can't utter a word (45:3b). This is the first time Joseph has talked to them in Hebrew; until now he has always used an interpreter (42:23). They probably expect Joseph to execute them for selling him into slavery.

Joseph is now going to complete the task of peacemaking with his brothers. Seeing his brothers' terror, Joseph tells them to come closer, and again he

tells them he is their brother Joseph, whom they sold into slavery. Then, Joseph tells his brothers the famine has been in the land for two years and there are five more years of famine to come. Three times in verses 5-8 Joseph tells them God sent him ahead to save their lives.

Furthermore, Joseph tells his brothers God made him a *father*, or counselor, to Pharaoh and *ruler* of all Egypt (45:8b). The reason Joseph can be so loving and forgiving is he understands God has a purpose for every hurtful event in his life (Rom. 8:28). A "journey into victorious living" requires believing that, in God's time, He will bring good out of every hurt we suffer. Therefore, we can forgive those who wrong us. God will do His part, but we must do ours by obeying what command of Jesus in Luke 6:28?



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The word translated *bless* (EULOGEO, you-log-eh'-oh) is the Greek word from which we get our word "eulogy." It means "to speak well of" or say good things about. So, when people hurt us, we should say only good things about them and pray for them. The only exception for not saying good things would be to protect someone else.

The first principle for peacemaking is **allow God time to work**; then . . .

## 2. Await opportunities to talk (45:9-15).

Joseph tells his brothers to hurry back to his father and tell him God has been good to him in Egypt and to come immediately (45:9). Three times Joseph says God *sent* him to Egypt (45:5-8a). Then, he says, God has *made me* (45:8b-9). Problems and hurts are some of the most effective tools God has to make us into the people He wants us to be.

Joseph also informs his brothers that, when their families come back from Canaan, they will live in the *land of Goshen*, a very fertile area of north-eastern Egypt. There Joseph will provide for their needs until the famine ends. Again, he tells them to tell his father about his position in Egypt and all they have seen (45:10-13a). Joseph then adds: *ye shall haste and bring down my father hither* (45:13b). Joseph is afraid his aging father might die unless they quickly bring him to Egypt. Now, we come to another of the most moving verses in the Bible—Genesis 45:14. Write it below:



Benjamin is Joseph's youngest and only full brother by Jacob's beloved wife Rachel, who died giving birth to Benjamin (35:18 & 24). After embracing and weeping with Benjamin, Joseph hugs each of his brothers and weeps over them. Afterwards, his brothers talk with him (45:15).



After we give God time to work, we must wait for an opportunity to talk constructively. Over the years I have had to lead my church to make decisions that did not please everyone. The way I detect someone is upset with me is when they don't want to talk to me. The same is true when my heart is not right toward someone. Not wanting to talk to someone is usually a symptom of not obeying what command in Ephesians 4:31?

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We cannot be peacemakers until we first deal with the bitterness and anger in our own hearts. Sometimes we need to give God time to work in our own hearts, as well as in the heart of someone who has hurt us. One way we know our hearts are right is when we want to talk sincerely and lovingly to someone for the sole purpose of reconciliation.

However, if we try to rush things and talk too early, the situation almost always becomes worse. Therefore, **allow God time to work, await opportunities to talk**, and . . .

### **3. Anticipate God's blessings on your efforts (45:16-28).**

When Pharaoh hears Joseph's brothers are in Egypt, he is pleased. Pharaoh probably sees this as an opportunity for him to repay Joseph for helping him prepare for the famine. He tells Joseph to tell his brothers to return to Canaan and bring back their families. Furthermore, he tells Joseph to let them know they will have the best land and will live off *the fat of the land* (45:16-18). The word *fat* refers to the finest products of the harvest. Finally, what does Pharaoh tell Joseph's brothers they can take from Egypt in which to bring their families back (45:19)?

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These are not cheap, rickety wagons; they are Egyptian carts, the finest in the world. The Hebrew word translated *wagons* (AGĀLĀ, awg-aw-law') can also be translated "chariots." They are the equivalent of today's Rolls Royce. The brothers came to Egypt on foot or riding their donkeys, which would return loaded with food. Returning to Canaan with Egyptian *wagons* would be the equivalent of going home in limousines to transport their families back to Egypt.

Joseph follows Pharaoh's instructions, equipping his brothers with new clothing and provisions for the journey. He also sends his father twenty

donkeys loaded with food and provisions for the journey back to Egypt. Then, he tells his brothers not to quarrel on the way home (45:21-24).

Joseph knew that although poverty often draws people closer together, prosperity sometimes pulls them apart. Prosperity is the worst thing that can happen to some families. A falling-out is often the result of what truth found in 1 Timothy 6:10a?

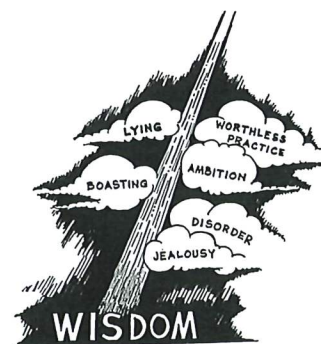
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While Jacob's sons are in Egypt, he has been anxiously waiting to see if Benjamin and Simeon would return with his other sons. Therefore, he must have been overwhelmed when he sees all his sons ride up in the latest model of Egyptian *wagons*, loaded with all kinds of extravagant provisions. However, Jacob's sons tell him something he never expected to hear—something more shocking than all the carts and provisions. What do they tell him in Genesis 45:26b?

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Jacob is stunned and can't believe his ears. Then, they relate to him what Joseph told him about coming to Egypt. Seeing all the carts and provisions convinces Jacob the story is all true, and his *spirit* is *revived* (45:27). In verses 25-27 the father is called *Jacob*, but we read in verse 28: *And Israel said, It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.* He is called *Israel* because not only is he *revived* mentally and emotionally but also spiritually. The old man whose spirit had been crushed is now totally revived and living up to his new name *Israel*, which means "God rules." Israel's decision to take his family to Egypt begins the fulfillment of the prophecy God gave to Abraham that his descendants would be foreigners and servants in a foreign land for 400 years (Gen. 15:13).

Therefore, in the land of Goshen, as God pre-ordained, they will multiply without losing their identity as the twelve sons, or tribes, of Israel. This is a result of the efforts of Joseph, who throughout his life exhibits godly *wisdom*, which is always *pure* and *peaceable* (Jas. 3:17). Joseph is a wonderful example of what promise in James 3:18?



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This means peacemakers will reap a harvest of right relationships with God and with other people. To reap this kind of harvest, and have a "journey into victorious living," you must practice the **principles for peacemaking: allow God time to work, await opportunities to talk, and anticipate God's blessings on your efforts.**



# Journey Into Victorious Living

## LESSON 9 . . . Finding and Doing God's Will (Genesis 46:1-34)



### NOTES

**W**e have traveled a long way with Joseph: from the pit to Potiphar's house to the prison, and to the palace. However, our journey does not end with Joseph exalted and at the pinnacle of success in Egypt. The Bible is the story of how God keeps His promise to Joseph's great-grandfather Abraham that through his seed all the nations of the world would be blessed. Joseph knew this promise could not be fulfilled in the riches of Egypt. So, the first question Joseph asked his brothers after revealing his identity was if his father was still living (45:3). When his hopes were confirmed, Joseph immediately sent his brothers back home to bring the rest of the family to Egypt (45:21-24). Though Joseph is at the peak of success in Egypt, his heart is still in the Promised Land and the promised seed. How is this confirmed by what Joseph later says to his brothers as he is dying (Genesis 50:24b)?

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In this chapter we now discover **four** requirements for **finding and doing God's will** . . .

### 1. Seek God's direction (46:1-7).

When Israel received the news his beloved son Joseph, who for twenty-two years was thought dead, is alive, his broken heart and *spirit* were *revived* (45:27). Therefore, Israel heads for Egypt with all his family and possessions. When he reaches *Beersheba*, he offers *sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac* (46:1). *Beersheba* was where God had spoken to his father Isaac and where his great-grandfather Abraham called on the Lord by a new name, *the everlasting God* (21:33).

This is the Hebrew name EL OLĀM, (EL-O-lawm'), which means the ageless, or perpetual, God. It denotes God is consistent and always keeps His promises. How does God express this attribute about Himself in Malachi 3:6a?

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*Beersheba* was a special spiritual place for Jacob and his forefathers. The inspired writer refers to Joseph's father by both of his names—*Jacob* and *Israel*—in this chapter, indicating two things. First, he is living up to his new name, *Israel*. Second, it is a reminder that his descendants will fulfill



God's promise to his grandfather Abraham (32:12). The name *Jacob* reminds us he is a physical descendant of Abraham and Isaac.

Jacob knew his grandfather Abraham had gone through a humiliating experience in Egypt when he lied about his wife Sarah being his sister (12:10-20). He also knew God had told his father Isaac not to go to Egypt (26:2). Therefore, before Jacob can travel to Egypt, he must get God's permission to leave Canaan, the Promised Land.

After Israel offers *sacrifices*, the Lord speaks to him in visions at night and tells him not to be afraid to go to Egypt because there He will make of him *a great nation* (46:3). God also tells Israel He will go to Egypt with him and bring him back. However, what does God tell him in Genesis 46:4c?

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This means when Jacob dies his beloved son Joseph will be at his side for his peaceful home-going and will gently close his eyes.

When seeking God's will, we—like Jacob—need to go to our *Beersheba*, the place where God can best speak to us. It might be a church service, a special prayer place, etc. When it came time for Jesus to choose His twelve disciples, what does Luke 6:12 tell us He did?

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The next morning Jesus chose His twelve disciples (Lk 6:13). In the same way, after seeking God's direction, Jacob and his family proceed to Egypt (46:5-7).

To find and do God's will, first **seek God's direction** and . . .

## **2. Surrender to God's timetable (46:8-27).**

Jacob's family had begun to multiply even before leaving Canaan. Abraham had two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, but Isaac was the only son of promise (22:2). Isaac had two sons, Jacob and Esau. However, it was through Jacob that God's promise to Abraham would be fulfilled (32:12). Because the size of Israel's family when they move from the Promised Land to Egypt is so important, the inspired writer gives a detailed list of Jacob's family (46:8-25). According to Genesis 46:27b, upon arrival in Egypt, what is the total number of Jacob's family?

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The *threescore and six* in verse 26 excludes Jacob, Joseph, Ephraim, and



Manasseh. It has now been over 200 years since God first appeared to Abraham and promised his seed would become a great nation (12:2). It will be another 400 years after Jacob's family moves to Egypt before they return to Canaan, the Promised Land. When they do leave Egypt 400 years later, what does Exodus 12:37 give as the number of Jacob's descendants?

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Another requirement for **finding and doing God's will** is surrendering to His timetable because God never gets in a hurry. If you are in a hurry to understand the entire Bible, to have a prayer answered, or to find God's will for your life, you must surrender to God's timetable. What promise does God give in Lamentations 3:25 to those who wait for Him?

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The word translated *wait* (QĀWĀ, kay-vaw') means to wait in expectation. Faith always waits expectantly.

To find and do God's will: **seek God's direction, surrender to God's timetable**, and . . .

### **3. Submit to adversity (46:28-30).**

**Finding and doing God's will** is never easy because it always includes suffering and sacrifice. As Jacob's family approaches Egypt, he sends Judah, who appears now to be the leader among his sons, to Joseph to get directions to Goshen. Then, Joseph has his chariot made ready and hurries to Goshen to see his father. He was only seventeen when his brothers sold him (37:2), and it has been about twenty-two years since Joseph last saw his beloved father. As soon as he sees Jacob, Joseph embraces him and weeps for a long time (46:28-29).

It has been more than twenty long years of loneliness, hurt, and pain. However, through all his adversity Joseph never stepped out of God's will. Joseph is an example of the truth that being in God's will doesn't exempt us from suffering and trouble (Jn 16:33b). To fulfill God's will for his life, Joseph endured suffering and sacrifice. Yet, Joseph never complains, seeks revenge, or does anything contrary to God's will. Joseph's reunion with his beloved father is a wonderful example of what truth found in Psalm 37:4?

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Israel tells Joseph he can now die since he has seen his beloved son and knows he is alive (46:30). This means he can now die happy and content.

**Finding and doing God's will includes: seek God's direction, surrender to God's timetable, submit to adversity, and . . .**

#### **4. Shun deceit (46:31-34).**

After an emotional reunion, Joseph reveals his plan to tell Pharaoh they are *shepherds* so he could secure the land of Goshen for them (46:32). Pharaoh knew they were coming but apparently had not designated any particular land for them (45:17-20).

Joseph will be totally honest with Pharaoh, emphasizing they are *shepherds* who have brought their flocks as well as other livestock (46:32). This will make it clear they need a lot of grazing land, which can be provided in Goshen. Joseph instructs his family that when Pharaoh asks what their occupation is, they are truthfully to say they tend *cattle*. The word translated *cattle* (MIQNEH, mik-neh') is a generic word referring to cattle, flocks, or herds. So, there is no deception concerning their profession, as some commentaries suggest. Joseph knew God's ways; thus, he would know what truth found in Psalm 101:7?

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Later, when Joseph takes some of his brothers before Pharaoh and he asks *What is your occupation?* they reply, *Thy servants are shepherds* (47:3). Being honest about their occupation would be a big plus. This is because, as Joseph tells his family, shepherds are *an abomination*, or detestable, to the Egyptians (46:34). Therefore, the Egyptians would be delighted to let the Israelites live segregated lives in Goshen. This was part of God's plan. If they lived among the Egyptians, they might be tempted to intermarry and eventually be assimilated into Egyptian culture. This does not mean God is prejudiced. In 1 Kings 11:2d, why does God say He doesn't want His people to marry non-believers?

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God's will for this area of our lives has not changed. As believers, we are commanded not to marry *unbelievers* (2 Cor. 6:14). This command is given for the same reason: they will turn our hearts *after their gods*, such as money, success, possessions, pleasure, etc.

To find and do God's will: **seek God's direction, surrender to God's timetable, submit to adversity, and shun deceit.**