

THE PARDON TEST!

Genesis 50:12-26

INTRODUCTION: In these tests of Joseph we learn of God's plan to build character into His children through the means of testing us. Always remember: "Big destinies must be supported by big character. If God is giving you some big tests right now learn to count it joy because God may very well have a big destiny in mind for you. James 1:2-9. The "Pardon Test" is a test of our being willing to forgive others when they mistreat us.

I. FORGIVING OTHERS!

Joseph was sold as a slave not by strangers but by his own older brothers: Genesis 50:15-21. The first time the word "forgive" is used in the Bible is right here: Genesis 50:16-17. When the Bible speaks of forgiveness it means to release or to pardon those that have harmed us. Today from the life of Joseph we will see three keys to being able to pardon from our hearts those who have wronged us.

II. KEY NUMBER 1: RELEASE PEOPLE!

The word "forgive" means "to release fully from the wages of transgressions." Joseph's brothers did not confess their own sin to him but said their father asked Joseph to forgive them. Should we forgive those who have not yet confessed their sin and continue to manipulate and not admit from their heart that what they did was wrong? Genesis 50:15-17. Yes, even though his brothers lied about what their father had said, Joseph chose to forgive them. Joseph realized that not forgiving someone who has hurt you puts you in the place God reserves for Himself: Genesis 50:19-20. If we don't forgive others our hearts will become full of bitterness and vindication. Leviticus 19:18; Romans 12:19-21 NLT. The only One qualified to bring justice to a bad situation is God because all the rest of us are also unjust.

III. KEY NUMBER 2: RECEIVE!

One of the primary reasons so many people have difficulty forgiving others is because they have never experienced God's forgiveness themselves. You cannot give what you do not have: 1 Corinthians 4:7; Matthew 6:9-15. We cannot change God's Word but praise the Lord, God's Word can change us! The word "as" means "in the same way!" Matthew 6:12; Matthew 10:8; Ephesians 4:30-32. God forgave us even when we did not deserve it: Titus 3:3-8; Ephesians 2:8-10.

IV. KEY NUMBER 3: BELIEVE!

For us to be able to truly forgive others from our hearts we must first believe in our hearts that we have been forgiven totally by our God through His grace: John 8:31-32; Psalm 103:12; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 8:1-4. How much of your sin did God the Father put on His only begotten Son? All of it! Habakkuk 1:13; Job 36:7; 1 Peter 3:12. Our Lord's eyes are on the righteous every day. Do you wish you were righteous? 2 Corinthians 5:21. All of our past, present, and future sins were laid on Jesus Christ on the cross: 1 Peter 2:24-25. We must receive God's forgiveness for ourselves so that we will be able to pass God's forgiveness to others. John 1:12-13. We must believe it so that we can receive it so that we can release others also. That is "The Pardon Test!"