

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2021: *Rest in Christ*

Lesson 7 “Rest, Relationships, and Healing”

Read for this week’s study

Genesis 42:7–20; Matthew 25:41–46; Genesis 42:21–24; Genesis 45:1–15; Luke 23:34;
Genesis 50:15–21.

Memory Text

“ ‘But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life’ ” (Genesis 45:5, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Facing the Past
- III. Setting the Stage
- IV. Forgive and Forget?
- V. Making It Practical
- VI. Finding Rest After Forgiveness
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “This week we will look at forgiveness and what it can do for restless human hearts.” (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson) The lesson looks at forgiveness through the latter part of Joseph’s story in the book of Genesis. Why is forgiveness so important in Christianity and life in general?
2. What is the purpose of forgiveness? Can forgiveness be abused? How can we avoid feeling guilty about our lives and live in the awareness that God’s forgiveness is amply available?
3. Sunday’s lesson starts with the first encounter between Joseph and his brothers in Genesis 42:7–20. Why the elaborate plot? What was Joseph trying to do in this first meeting after 22 years? Why doesn't Joseph just lay all his cards on the table? His brothers are desperate. They will do anything that he wants them to do. What role does the story play in the book of Genesis?

4. “Joseph has forgiven his brothers. We don’t know exactly when Joseph forgave them, but it was obviously long before they showed up. Joseph probably would never have thrived in Egypt if he had not forgiven because, most likely, the anger and bitterness would have eaten away at his soul and damaged his relations with the Lord. [...] Without forgiveness, we remain victims. Forgiveness has more to do with ourselves than with the person or persons who have wronged us.” (Monday’s Lesson) What is the purpose of Joseph so elaborately setting the stage of their encounters?
5. “‘The whole idea of forgiveness is an intentional act by the victim. It’s not something that just happens.’ Forgiveness doesn’t mean that there will be no consequences. Forgiveness doesn’t mean letting an abuser continue abusive patterns.” (Tuesday’s Lesson) What does it mean to “forgive and forget”? What is it that should not be forgotten?
6. “In order to forgive, I must admit that I have been hurt. This can be hard to do, as we are sometimes more inclined to try to bury our feelings rather than work through them. Acknowledging unchristian feelings of resentment and even anger before God is fine. We see this often expressed in the Psalms.” (Wednesday’s Lesson)
7. What is the relationship between confession and forgiveness (Luke 23:34)? What is the relationship and difference between forgiveness and reconciliation?
8. “Practicing biblical principles in our relationships will not mean that we ever can or should accept abuse.” (from Sunday’s lesson) What else do we need to keep in mind if we want to make forgiveness practical?
9. What are Joseph’s brothers worried about, and why would they be worried about it (Genesis 50:15–21)? What does this fear that surfaces 17 years later say about them? (Thursday’s Lesson)
10. Joseph’s story had a happy ending. How do we respond when the ending to a story isn’t so happy? How does the “larger view” help us in this?
11. Think of your own life as you contemplate the statement from *Desire of Ages* 224, 225 (last page). How does understanding God’s providence help us work through the trials and struggles that we face? What lesson about forgiveness do we need to learn as a community of believers?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

And that’s why Jesus told the prodigal son story. When did the father forgive the prodigal son? Even as he helped him pack his bags to leave. And the greatest discovery the prodigal son made was—half way through his speech of repentance—that his father had long since forgiven him. The message of forgiveness is simply part of the revelation of the truth about God. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God* in all 66 – Ephesians and Colossians,

recorded May 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/67MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/68MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

When do you think the prodigal son really came to know his father, and the kindness of his father led him to real repentance? Don't you think it's after he discovered he had been forgiven? Which comes first, forgiveness or repentance? In a sense, the forgiveness is offered, and some of us are won by that to repentance. If we're legalists, you have to do it all in the right order, you know, or God can't do it. He's not that kind of a God. He wants us to come home all the time, not willing that any of his children should be lost, but that all should come to repentance. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Luke, recorded April 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/55MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/56MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

If you had been in God's place on that day in Eden when Adam and Eve first sinned, what would you have done with them?

Would you have forgiven them and offered at least one more chance to stay in the garden? Human parents do this every day for their disobedient children. Since God is love, why was Adam banished on his first offense? (See Genesis 3.)

The wrong answer to this question can seriously affect one's attitude toward God and one's practice of religion.

Many believe that God has long been angry with the human race, most reluctant to forgive and bless His erring creatures. For thousands of years men have offered sacrifice—sometimes their children—to win the favor of an offended god. Even in the Christian world some teach that, were it not for constant intercession, God could not find it in His heart to love and save us sinners.

But need we do anything to make God love us?

Nothing is more emphatic in Scripture than that God has always loved—even His most wayward child. When God said, "In the day that you eat of it, you shall die," He was uttering no arbitrary threat. In love for His creatures, He was only warning of the consequence of rebellion.

Sin so changes the sinner that it actually results in death. Separated from the Source of life, he will surely die. Out of harmony with his Creator he can no longer endure the glory of His

presence. {Maxwell, A. Graham. *You Can Trust the Bible; why, after many translations, it is still the word of God*, 68-69. Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1967}

Solomon came to his senses, and he remembered God. He said, “God, I’m sorry. Can I come back? And I’d be willing just to sweep floors.” Does God take people back that way? Or does he take them completely back? How about the prodigal son? Did he come back as a servant, or did he come back fully reinstated? So God took Solomon back. How fully did he take him back?

“Well,” Solomon said, “can I do anything to help others not do what I’ve done?” And God says, “Yes. You can write me a book.” And Solomon said, “But only holy men of God, moved by the Holy Spirit, write books in the Bible.”

Isn’t it stunning that a man who wasted so much is listed among the holy men of God and was asked to write yet another book in the Bible? Once again, I’m glad God is in charge, because when somebody disgraces himself in our church, from then on, he’s a back pew man, isn’t he? We don’t let him up front very much. God puts them up front, and even asks them to write more of the Bible. Now, what about that? Are we too hard?” {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in All 66 – Joshua, Judges, & Ruth*, recorded November 1983, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1983:

<http://pkp.cc/11MMPOGIA66> (Pt 1 Joshua & Judges)

<http://pkp.cc/12MMPOGIA66> (Pt 2 Joshua & Judges)

<http://pkp.cc/13MMPOGIA66> (Pt 1 Ruth & 1 Samuel)

<http://pkp.cc/14MMPOGIA66> (Pt 2 Ruth & 1 Samuel)

Further Study with Ellen White

The opinion is held by many that God placed a separating wall between the Hebrews and the outside world; that His care and love, withdrawn to a great extent from the rest of mankind, were centered upon Israel. But God did not design that His people should build up a wall of partition between themselves and their fellow men. The heart of Infinite Love was reaching out toward all the inhabitants of the earth. Though they had rejected Him, He was constantly seeking to reveal Himself to them and make them partakers of His love and grace. His blessing was granted to the chosen people, that they might bless others. . . . {PP 368.1}

So to the people of Egypt and of all the nations connected with that powerful kingdom, God manifested Himself through Joseph. Why did the Lord choose to exalt Joseph so highly among the Egyptians? He might have provided some other way for the accomplishment of His purposes toward the children of Jacob; but He desired to make Joseph a light, and He placed him in the palace of the king, that the heavenly illumination might extend far and near. By his wisdom and justice, by the purity and benevolence of his daily life, by his devotion to the interests of the people—and that people a nation of idolaters—Joseph was a representative of Christ. In their benefactor, to whom all Egypt turned with gratitude and praise, that heathen people were to behold the love of their Creator and Redeemer. {PP 368.3}

The merciful are “partakers of the divine nature,” and in them the compassionate love of God finds expression. All whose hearts are in sympathy with the heart of Infinite Love will seek to reclaim and not to condemn. Christ dwelling in the soul is a spring that never runs dry. Where He abides, there will be an overflowing of beneficence. {MB 22.2}

However much your enemies have bruised and wounded your soul, forgive them, and by maintaining faith in Christ, you will find Him to be to you as the shadow of a great Rock in a weary land. . . . {UL 42.4}

But forgiveness has a broader meaning than many suppose. When God gives the promise that He “will abundantly pardon,” He adds, as if the meaning of that promise exceeded all that we could comprehend: “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.” Isaiah 55:7-9. God’s forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness *for* sin, but reclaiming *from* sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.” Psalm 51:10. And again he says, “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.” Psalm 103:12. {MB 114.1}

The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means that sin is taken away, and that the vacuum is filled with the Spirit. It means that the mind is divinely illumined, that the heart is emptied of self, and filled with the presence of Christ. {OHC 154.5}

In God’s forgiveness the heart of the erring one is drawn close to the great heart of Infinite Love. The tide of divine compassion flows into the sinner’s soul, and from him to the souls of others. The tenderness and mercy that Christ has revealed in His own precious life will be seen in those who become sharers of His grace. {COL 251.1}

It is God’s glory to encircle sinful, repentant human beings in the arms of His love, to bind up their wounds, to cleanse them from sin, and to clothe them with the garments of salvation. {PK 668.3}

The Teacher from heaven, no less a personage than the Son of God, came to earth to reveal the character of the Father to men, that they might worship Him in spirit and in truth. Christ revealed to men the fact that the strictest adherence to ceremony and form would not save them; for the kingdom of God was spiritual in its nature. Christ came to the world to sow it with truth. He held the keys to all the treasures of wisdom, and was able to open doors to science, and to reveal undiscovered stores of knowledge, were it essential to salvation. He presented to men that which was exactly contrary to the representations of the enemy in regard to the character of God, and sought to impress upon men the paternal love of the Father, who “so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” He urged upon men the necessity of prayer, repentance, confession, and the abandonment of sin. He taught them honesty, forbearance, mercy, and compassion, enjoining upon them to love not only those who loved them, but those who hated them, who treated them despitefully. In this He was revealing to them the character of the Father, who is long-suffering, merciful, and gracious, slow to anger, and full of goodness and truth. Those who accepted His teaching were under the guardian care of angels, who were commissioned to strengthen, to enlighten, that the truth might renew and sanctify the soul. {FE 177.1}

God does not force the will or judgment of any. He takes no pleasure in a slavish obedience. He desires that the creatures of His hands shall love Him because He is worthy of love. He would have them obey Him because they have an intelligent appreciation of His wisdom, justice, and benevolence. And all who have a just conception of these qualities will love Him because they are drawn toward Him in admiration of His attributes. {GC 541.3}

God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning, and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him. {DA 224.5}