

- There cannot be reconciliation unless there is a broken relationship.
- Reconciliation can flow only from heart change in all parties involved.
- Reconciliation involves kindness:

Genesis 42:9 (ESV) And Joseph remembered the dreams that he had dreamed of them. And he said to them, “You are spies; you have come to see the nakedness of the land.”

Genesis 37:5-9 (ESV)⁵ Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they hated him even more.⁶ He said to them, “Hear this dream that I have dreamed: ⁷ Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and behold, my sheaf arose and stood upright. And behold, your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf.”⁸ His brothers said to him, “Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to rule over us?” So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.⁹ Then he dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers and said, “Behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me.”

Genesis 42:11 (ESV) We are all sons of one man. We are honest men. Your servants have never been spies.

- Joseph understood the difference between forgiveness and reconciliation.

Real reconciliation involves the rebuilding of trust when both parties to a broken relationship approach each other in forgiveness and true repentance.

The first test was Joseph’s demand that one of the brothers stay in prison in Egypt while the others brought back Benjamin to prove their honesty.

Genesis 42:18–20 (ESV)¹⁸ On the third day Joseph said to them, “Do this and you will live, for I fear God: ¹⁹ if you are honest men, let one of your brothers remain confined where you are in custody, and let the rest go and carry grain for the famine of your households, ²⁰ and bring your youngest brother to me. So your words will be verified, and you shall not die.” And they did so.

Genesis 42:21 (ESV) Then they said to one another, “In truth we are guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul, when he begged us and we did not listen. That is why this distress has come upon us.”

Genesis 42:36 (ESV) And Jacob their father said to them, “You have bereaved me of my children: Joseph is no more, and Simeon is no more, and now you would take Benjamin. All this has come against me.”

The truth is that many of us live, sometimes for many years, with our hopes of reconciliation constantly deferred. There may be many reasons. Some of those reasons may be good, while others may be wrong. Some reasons are wise, while some are foolish. Some factors are within our control, while others are not.

THE GOOD NEWS:

However, running through the story of Joseph's family—as well as of the whole Bible and of history—is the even more profound truth of the gospel. The truth is that our situation is both far worse and far better than we could ever have imagined. It is far worse than we think because the things we do to each other are the evidence of our fractured relationship with the One who made us, takes care of us, and sustains our very life. The great turning point in the brothers' self-awareness came when they began to see that the evil they had done against Joseph was first and foremost a sin against God, deserving of punishment. Yet at the same time, our situation is far better than we can imagine because the God against whom we have offended has already reconciled us to himself.

Joseph – a picture of Jesus:

The betrayal of the best-loved son of their father, which led to his enslavement, suffering, humiliation, and unjust imprisonment, became the means by which God raised him to a position of power and influence for the saving of many lives.