

Reflection Questions

for

I FORGIVE YOU

by Wendy Alsup

Use these questions to reflect on your own experiences of moving forward in broken relationships, including forgiveness which you may need to extend or seek to receive. These questions can be used independently, in conjunction with counseling, or in a discussion group.

1. JOSEPH WEPT: The Pain of Loss

- In what relationship will you focus on extending or seeking forgiveness and working toward reconciliation?
- Reflecting on Isaiah 43:19, what would you like to see made new in this relationship? What would you like to see change in your own heart as well?
- Are you struggling with ambiguous loss? How can you begin to recognize and mourn this loss?

2. OUR GREATEST NEED: God's Plan for Reconciliation

- What makes forgiveness and reconciliation seem impossible in your broken relationships? What parallels do you see with Joseph's situation?
- How have you seen God at work giving life and hope in other contexts? How might that give you hope for this relationship?
- What difference does it make to you to consider your painful present in the light of God's plan for perfect reconciliation in the future?

3. IN THE MIDDLE: Living While Waiting

- Have you found yourself in unfamiliar territory in this broken relationship? In what ways are you "treading water" in your current situation—or have you found your footing?
- How have you noticed God's provision for you in your current affliction?
- What package of seeds is God placing before you? How can you be fruitful even now?

4. THE RECKONING: Recognizing the Wrong

- Why is it helpful to specifically acknowledge the wrong that has been done? Why do you think the brothers' confession made such an impact on Joseph even though it was not directed at him?
- In the relationship you are living with, can you name the specific sins committed against you? Would it help to articulate them aloud to someone?

- If hurt has been caused on both sides, can you name your sins to the person you've hurt? Will you ask for their forgiveness—and God's forgiveness—for those sins specifically?

5. JUDAH'S TURN: Repenting of Sin

- Reflecting on “worldly grief” versus “godly grief,” what kind of repentance do you find yourself either hoping to see in someone else or to follow through with yourself?
- What would the opposite of the sin committed against you, or that you committed, be? How can you pray and seek to see that opposite become a reality?
- Do you see the humanity in yourself and in your opponent?
- Are you carrying the weight of shame and guilt for past actions, like Joseph's brothers? Can you embrace the truth of the restoration brought by Christ?

6. AMAZING GRACE: Forgiving the Debt

- How can true justice be gained, according to God's work through Christ?
- Do your hopes for this broken relationship align with the grace shown on the cross? Will you pray for God to show you where you may be longing for revenge instead of repentance?
- How can you take vengeance out of your own hands and place it in God's?
- Have you confused forgiveness for “cheap grace”? How can you redefine forgiveness using the biblical understanding of grace?

7. FOUNDATION WORK: Repairing the Damage

- In your broken relationship, what are the foundations in need of repair?
- How does looking at the cross challenge you or change your perspective?
- As you continue to extend forgiveness and work toward reconciliation, how can you be praying for the other person, who is also part of God's bigger story? Are there any more tangible steps you can take, however small, to move toward repair—like initiating contact if appropriate?
- How can you remain committed to not spackling over problems, but addressing them at a foundational level as you move forward in forgiveness and seek reconciliation?

8. CRACKS OF GOLD: Restoring the Relationship

- What new perspective has God given you through your experience of broken relationship?
- What would it look like for God to pour gold lacquer into the cracks in your relationships, as he did in Joseph's?
- Why might reconciliation seem impossible in your life? What hope does the scene of Joseph's brothers re-repenting give you?