Read: Genesis 45:3-15

Forgiveness Defeats Fear

> **Genesis 45:3-5,8,15**
> Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still living?" But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence.
>
> Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me." When they had done so, he said, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you."
>
> "So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt."
>
> And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterward his brothers talked with him.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Joseph's brothers were terrified of him. They had been so mean to him, hurt him, and sold him for money to die in Egypt. They thought they'd never see him again. They were some of the worst brothers.

When someone hits you, you often want to hit them back. If someone hurts you, you often want to hurt them back. Joseph's brothers thought that was what Joseph would do to them, that he would get angry and hurt them. He was powerful enough to do it, even to put them to death!

But Joseph did not give in to anger. Instead, Joseph trusted God to take care of him, and he forgave his brothers. God took care of Joseph and protected him through all the bad things he suffered. God blessed Joseph and brought him from slavery and prison to become the second in command over all Egypt! The bigger miracle was that God gave Joseph the ability to forgive. He didn't hurt his brothers or try to get revenge. He let go of anger, and he trusted God. You know what else God did? God worked sorrow and fear in the brothers over what they had done. Through forgiveness God brought them back together as a family. Forgiveness defeated fear.

God has made us his family. We are sinners, and we do things that are wrong, sinful, and awful against God every day. At one time we were even enemies of God, born in sin, the worst! But God showed love to us even though we didn't deserve it. God forgave us. He made us his own at our baptism and grows us through his Word when we hear it and learn it. God took care of us. God sent his Son Jesus to take away our sins and pay for them on the cross. God raised Jesus from the dead to prove it. God's forgiveness takes away our fear and makes us part of his

family. God gives us the ability to forgive those who hurt us and let go of anger or wrath. God will take care of it. God will take care of us. Forgiveness defeats fear.

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- Joseph was powerful and could hurt his brothers, but what did Jesus help him do instead?
- What did Jesus do for us to forgive us?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- What makes it hard for you to forgive classmates when they hurt you?
- How can forgiveness bring people back together?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Agree/Disagree: It's the best policy to talk to someone right away if they've hurt you.
- How can forgiving someone in your heart be a blessing even when the other person isn't sorry?

Closing Prayer:
Dear Jesus, thank you for the forgiveness you give to us, and help us to forgive those who sin against us. Help us trust you, and bless us. Amen.