

# The Life Challenge

*"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." John 10:10*

**Series:** Live by Faith...Dream for More  
**Title:** Living by Faith  
**Text:** Genesis 37:5-8; 42:1-9a; 45:1-11  
**Speaker:** Matt Ewert  
**Date:** May 26, 2019



## WARM-UP

Share one personal "take away" from this past weekend's worship service.

## DISCUSSION

Read Genesis 45:1-11

*"Do they really matter, all the why's? Could all the answers take away the pain, or all the reasons really dry my eyes, though from Heaven's court? No, I would weep again. My God, You have saved me from Hell's black abyss; oh, save me now from the tyranny of bitterness!"*

—Author Unknown

This weekend we saw how Joseph made a decision to trust God's in the sovereignty of God, which allowed him to act graciously towards his brothers in spite of the hurt they caused him. Pastor Matt suggested that **bitterness is always destructive and never redemptive.**

- Do you agree with that last statement?
- If so—if we know that bitterness never produces good—why do we still find ourselves entertaining bitterness at times in our lives?
- How can we guard against letting bitterness get a hold in our lives?

*"The power to create newness does not come from detachment, but from risky, self-disclosing engagement."*

—Walter Brueggemann

Once he finally decided to reveal himself to his brothers, Joseph used his "old" name that represented his past life with his brothers (and the years of hurt that he experienced at their hands), instead of using his Egyptian name that represented his new life without them. He chooses to "risk" with them by pursuing reconciliation from the closeness of brotherhood, rather than from the protection of his royal position.

- What are the risks associated with reconciling with people who have caused you hurt?
- How do you decide whether or not the risk is worth taking?
- In what way is the example of Jesus in Colossians 1:19-22 instructive to use as we weigh the risk involved with achieving reconciliation?

*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.  
I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.*

John 10:10

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## DISCUSSION

Joseph was able to choose reconciliation with his brothers instead of choosing the road of bitterness because he was able to fully trust God and what He was up to in the trajectory of his life. He discerned that God's purposes through his "story" was to preserve and sustain life (Genesis 45:7; 50:20).

- In what ways do you allow God to work through you to bring "life" to people?
- What circumstances or situations are in front of you, that you aren't currently engaged in, where you could be a source of "life" to those who desperately need it?
- What next steps do you think God is asking you to take in this regard?

**Pray for one another to have an awareness and willingness to allow God to bring His "life" to the people and circumstances that He leads you to.**

**Here's what our families are discussing together this week:**

We ask God to give you complete knowledge of his will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding. Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce every kind of good fruit. All the while, you will grow as you learn to know God better and better. **Colossians 1:9b-10**



**Warm - Up:** Why is it hard to forgive people who have hurt us? • Why does God want us to forgive people who hurt us? How does God forgive us for the ways we sin against Him?

**We HEARD:** Read from Genesis 39-41. Watch video from Parent Email.

**We KNOW:** A great f\_\_\_\_\_ came, just as Joseph predicted from Pharaoh's dream. • Jacob sent his sons to E\_\_\_\_\_ to get food. • Joseph f\_\_\_\_\_ his brothers and revealed that he was their brother. • God sent J\_\_\_\_\_ to Egypt to establish a remnant.

**We LIVE:** How do we "Live by Faith"? Talk about this sentence: "Faith is trusting in God and what he's up to in our world even when we can't fully see..."

**We PRAY:** Lord, You worked in Joseph's life for his good and Your glory. Help us forgive others like You helped Joseph forgive brothers and like You have forgiven us. Help us to Live by Faith and Dream for the More that you have planned for us. Amen.

**Family Activity:** Talk about things that might make you angry. For each idea put a stone in a bag. *If we don't forgive people who are unkind to us, it's like carrying a heavy load. Our bad feelings weigh us down and make us feel angry. One way to feel better is to tell Jesus and ask Him to help you forgive them and to forgive you for being angry. When we forgive others or ask for their forgiveness, it's like letting go of a heavy load. Practice forgiveness like Jesus gives us by saying I forgive you for... and take the rocks out of your bag. Forgiving others and giving these feelings to Jesus helps us feel light again.*