

Growing as the Family of God

3. Forgiveness

Genesis 50:15-21 (NIV)

¹⁵ When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?" ¹⁶ So they sent word to Joseph, saying, "Your father left these instructions before he died: ¹⁷ 'This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly.' Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father." When their message came to him, Joseph wept.

¹⁸ His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. "We are your slaves," they said.

¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God?"

²⁰ You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. ²¹ So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.

As the family of God, we journey together, bless others, envision God's promises; we pass on faith holistically and intergenerationally, remembering God's faithfulness; we forgive by

1. Letting go: Dropping past offenses.

'I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly.'

- *Expressing regret: Saying "I'm sorry."* Show that you understand the impact you had on them emotionally — frustration, disappointment, fear, etc. Be specific.
- *Accepting responsibility: Saying "I was wrong."* In a manner of speaking, submit a guilty plea. Don't try to defend your actions. If your action or inaction was inexcusable, say so.
- *Making restitution: Asking "How can I make it right?"* Offer some type of amends to make them whole again.
- *Planned change: Saying "I'll take steps to prevent a recurrence."* You can't promise to never make a mistake, but you can tell them what action you will take to avoid future problems.
- *Requesting forgiveness: Asking "Can you find it in your heart to forgive me?"* An apology is for something that is very serious or a repeated problem that requires this humbling question.
-- *The 5 Apology Languages* by Gary Chapman and Jennifer Thomas

2. Lifting up: Seeing God's purposes.

You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good.

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

Romans 12:18 (NIV)

3. Moving forward: Extending grace and mercy.

And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³ Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Colossians 3:12-14 (NIV)

Next steps: In your time alone with God this week, watch the Bible Project Video. What strikes you about God's intention for humanity and humanity's response? What are the patterns that continue to this day? Read Genesis 30-50. What stands out to you in the story of Joseph? Describe a time when you had to intentionally forgive someone for their sin or wrongdoing against you. How did you let go, lift up and move forward with another person? As you move forward, is there anyone you have harmed that you could seek forgiveness with one or more of the apology languages?

NOTES: