

JOSEPH

Living Above Mediocrity

"Overcoming the guilt of our past."

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.— **Ephesians 4:32**

See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.— **Hebrews 12:15**

When Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt, he said to his sons, "Why do you just keep looking at each other?"² He continued, "I have heard that there is grain in Egypt. Go down there and buy some for us, so that we may live and not die." — **Genesis 42:1-2**

So Israel's sons were among those who went to buy grain, for the famine was in the land of Canaan also.⁶ Now Joseph was the governor of the land, the one who sold grain to all its people. So when Joseph's brothers arrived, they bowed down to him with their faces to the ground.⁷ As soon as Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them, but he pretended to be a stranger and spoke harshly to them. "Where do you come from?" he asked. "From the land of Canaan," they replied, "to buy food."⁸ Although Joseph recognized his brothers, they did not recognize him.⁹ Then he remembered his dreams about them and said to them, "You are spies! You have come to see where our land is unprotected." — **Genesis 42:5-9**

We are all the sons of one man. Your servants are honest men, not spies."¹² "No!" he said to them. "You have come to see where our land is unprotected."¹³ But they replied, "Your servants were twelve brothers, the sons of one man, who lives in the land of Canaan. The youngest is now with our father, and one is no more."¹⁴ Joseph said to them, "It is just as I told you: You are spies!¹⁵ And this is how you will be tested: As surely as Pharaoh lives, you will not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here.¹⁶ Send one of your number to get your brother; the rest of you will be kept in prison, so that your words may be tested to see if you are telling the truth. If you are not, then as surely as Pharaoh lives, you are spies!"¹⁷ And he put them all in custody for three days.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 stay here in prison, while the rest of you go and take grain back for your starving households.²⁰ But you must bring your youngest brother to me, so that your words may be verified and that you may not die." This they proceeded to do. — **Genesis 42:11-20**

They said to one another, "Surely we are being punished because of our brother. We saw how distressed he was when he pleaded with us for his life, but we would not listen; that's why this distress has come upon us."²² Reuben replied, "Didn't I tell you not to sin against the boy? But you wouldn't listen! Now we must give an accounting for his blood."²³ They did not realize that Joseph could understand them, since he was using an interpreter.²⁴ He turned away from them and began to weep, but then turned back and spoke to them again. He had Simeon taken from them and bound before their eyes. — **Genesis 42:21-24**

How do we overcome guilt and a seared conscience?

How not too:

1. Bury your guilt

Lie: In time we will forget.

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. — **Galatians 6:7**

2. Cover your guilt by trying to be good.
3. Run from your guilt.

What did Joseph's brothers do to overcome their seared consciences?

► They took responsibility:

- a) They did not blame anyone else.
- b) They did not make excuses.

Our guilt is awakened when we finally realize God has given us His grace even when we did not deserve it.

Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.² Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.³ When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.⁴ For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Selah — **Psalms 32:1-4**

⁸For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹not by works, so that no one can boast. — **Ephesians 2:8-9**