



13- Heal a Family / Build a Nation

01/17/2010 - Jim Johnson – Gen. 43:16-44:34

Joseph was ready to pick up the broken pieces and start over with his relationship with his brothers. He wondered, however, if they were ready. So he decided to test his brothers. He determined to recreate the circumstances of the past to see how his brothers would respond. Let's suppose that, you, like Joseph's brothers, have inflicted some kind of hurt on your family. And your relationship with this person has been negatively affected. But you have reached a point where you want to be a family again. The burden is therefore upon you. You need to give that person a reason to turn their heart back to you again. You need to be the one to rebuild those broken bridges. Joseph's brothers teach us how.

Genesis 43:23-34

Benjamin was returned and Simeon was released from prison. They were invited to share dinner with Joseph in his home. Joseph made sure that they were seated in birth order. It was obvious that Reuben was the oldest and should have had a larger portion. Benjamin the youngest, however, got five times as much as the others. Joseph had deliberately recreated the conditions of their youth - where he as the youngest had been favored by his father. But rather than reacting with jealousy, they *"feasted and drank freely with him."* No mumbling or protest, no evidence of envy or jealousy whatsoever. They were content to enjoy what was in front of them regardless of what Ben got. The brothers were bigger than they once were.

If you want to rebuild the broken bridges, then be a _____ person.

Small, petty people are greatly bothered by small petty things. Bigger, gracious people are not. Leave the pettiness and the smallness behind.

Genesis 44:1-13

Joseph's official silver cup was planted Benjamin's bag in order to frame him. After the brothers left for home, they were intercepted. The steward found the cup in Benjamin's bag. He appeared to be guilty and would not be carried back to Egypt to face prison or death. The ten were innocent and could have proceeded back to Canaan with all their grain - and yet all of them - to a brother - turned their donkeys around and headed back to Egypt with Benjamin. They chose to stick with family.

If you want to rebuild the broken bridges, then _____ with your family.

Stay at home sometimes and give your boy the time he needs. Give your wandering wife some evidence that you are committed to her and loyal to her. Say hi to your parents when you come in from school. Stick with your family.

Genesis 44:14-16

When they had returned to Joseph, Judah spoke for the group. He approached Joseph with a very contrite and humble attitude. He and his brothers fell to the ground before him. They related to Joseph in humility.

If you want to rebuild the broken bridges, do it with _____.

The person that you hurt will not respond to you if you lack humility. God resists the proud. People resist the proud.

Judah spoke of their sin saying, *"God has found out the iniquity of your servants."* He was speaking of the sin of betraying Joseph. (Gen. 42:21) They believed that the trouble with Benjamin was their just reward for having betrayed Joseph. They confessed their sin about Joseph to Joseph, not knowing that he was Joseph.

If you want to rebuild the broken bridges, then admit you were _____.

It is impossible for you to rebuild unless you are willing to acknowledge your sin and to seek the forgiveness of the one you hurt. Say to them, "Do you remember that incident? Well I do, and I have decided that I was wrong. I hurt you will you forgive me?"

Also note - that the brothers offered no excuse for their behavior. Judah said, *"What can we say to my lord? What can we speak? And how can we justify ourselves?"* They did not blame the silver cup on Benjamin. They did not blame their sin against Joseph on their dad's unjust favoritism. They did not blame it on Joseph's cocky attitude. They simply confessed their guilt and said, "We have no excuse."

If you want to rebuild the broken bridges, do not try to _____ your sin.

When we confess our sin, but attach a justification for it, then we completely negate the value of our confession. We are essentially saying, "Yes I did it, but it wasn't really my fault."

One final observation in this section. Judah said to Joseph, *"God has found out the iniquity of your servants."* His words manifested a belief in a living, and omniscient God who knew when his children did evil and disciplined them appropriately. His words spoke of 10 hearts that were submitted to God.

If you want to rebuild the broken bridges, _____ yourself to the Lord.

To submit to God is to choose His will for us - to exchange our selfish agenda for His agenda. Self-willed people come into conflict with each other. People who are submitted to God get along with each other. If you want to rebuild some broken bridges in your family – demonstrate that you are committed to the Lord and His will for your family.

Genesis 44:17-29

Joseph was determined to keep Benjamin and allegedly punish him for his sin. Judah chose to intercede out of concern for Jacob. He argued that Ben needed to be returned to his dad because Jacob had a special and unique love for Benjamin. It was that kind of lopsided love that had deeply hurt him and his brothers and made them so angry. The inequities were just a fact of life and Judah knew it. But somehow he and his brothers were able to set them aside and plead for the life on Benjamin anyway. This is only possible when forgiveness is present.

If you want to rebuild the broken bridges, _____ the others.

There is seldom a broken relationship where one person is completely guilty and the other completely innocent. If there is to be healing, then someone is going to have to get the ball rolling, by forgiving the hurts of the past.

Genesis 44:33-34

Judah continued to plead for the life of his brother Benjamin. He offered to make the supreme sacrifice – to take Benjamin's place and to absorb any punishment that was due to him. Judah was willing to sacrifice whatever was needed for the sake of his father and his brother. He was willing to die to himself and his own wants and wishes.

If you want to rebuild the broken bridges, make the necessary _____.

You are married but you still hang out with your old drinking buddies who have such a negative influence on you. If you care about your marriage – make the necessary sacrifice – cut it off with the guys. Self-sacrifice is one of the best tools in the hand of a bridge builder.

_____ comes to a family when we are willing to rebuild the broken bridges.

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

Use this section in your personal or family devotions to better apply the truth.

1. With whom do you need to rebuild?
2. Which of the bridge building steps would be easier for you to do? Why?
3. Which of the bridge building steps would be harder for you to do? Why?
4. When will you begin?