

SHADOWS

Shadows—Week Two: Reconciliation—Joseph

Connect: Do you have siblings? If so, share a story about “sibling rivalry” when you were growing up. Either way, what are some of the influences that cause this kind of conflict in families?

Grow

1. The account of Joseph and his brothers is an ancient story of **family dysfunction that spans generations**. In what ways have you seen a similar pattern in your life or in your extended family?
2. **Read Genesis 37:3-4.** How does the favoritism shown by Jacob contribute to the problems between Joseph and his brothers? Why is it so tough for some families to connect with one another?
3. **Read Ephesians 6:4.** Why do you think Paul included this instruction to fathers? How have you experienced the wisdom of this advice, whether it’s as a parent or as a child?
4. Scott said, “That robe was a sign, not only of their father’s love for Joseph, but it was a sign to them that *their father didn’t love them.*” How could a gift become a symbol that shouts out the lack of love for one child and/or the preference for another?
5. *In a broken world, brothers become enemies.* What is it about our brokenness that contributes to relational dysfunction between us and others?
6. *In spite of sin and brokenness, with God’s hand in our lives, enemies become brothers.* The theological term for this is reconciliation.
7. *When Joseph does the right thing, bad things happen to him.* What leads us to believe life works any differently than this? How do our expectations in this area affect our relationship with and trust in God?
8. **Read Genesis 50:20.** What does it look like when God turns something that seems to be intended for evil into something overwhelmingly good? Can you think of any examples in your life, in the lives of people you know, or from stories you’ve heard in the news?

Pray: Ask the Lord to be working in your heart, mind, and life to bring reconciliation where it’s needed. Pray for family members and old friends who need God to work in their lives to pave the way for this kind of healing and restoration.

Next: Read the entire account of Joseph’s life in Genesis 37-50. How many of the 70 “shadows” of Jesus in Joseph’s life story can you and/or your group compile together? Make a list and then spend some time thanking God for the amazing plan He was pointing to throughout the Old Testament.