

Spiritual Transformation Looks Like This

Genesis 44

Twenty years after being sold by his brothers, Joseph is ruling Egypt. Not knowing it is him, they stand before him in need of food. Have their hearts changed? The tension reaches a fever pitch as Joseph instigates a test to determine if their spiritual transformation is real.

The Setting: Famine and Fortune in Egypt

Joseph's test: Will the brothers abandon Benjamin? (1-13)

Judah's plea: We are guilty; take me instead of Benjamin! (14-34)

What Spiritual Transformation Looks Like

- *Stop trying to justify yourself*
- *Admit your sin and repent*
- *Recognize God's just judgment*
- *Sacrifice self to bring healing to others*



1. Genesis 42-44 is a fascinating narrative: God choreographs a meeting between Joseph and his brothers twenty years after they sold him into slavery. He recognizes them, but they think he is dead! Joseph deftly exposes their guilt, and forces their hand. Hunger is a great motivator! In chapter 44, the tension reaches a breaking point. Why did Joseph instruct his steward to put his cup in Benjamin's bag? What attitudes (which led his brothers to sell him into slavery) is he confronting? Have you ever felt God exposing your sinful attitudes and actions?
2. In v13, after Joseph's cup is discovered in Benjamin's sack of grain, the brothers *tear their clothes*. What did this symbolize? In v16, Judah – speaking for them all – exhibits key aspects of spiritual transformation. The first of these is highlighted in the phrase, *How can we justify ourselves?* Nothing exposes sinful guilt like self-justification! Where is this *first* seen in the Bible? When we 'justify our sinful actions,' what do we *fail* to do that *we need* to do (see 1 John 1.9)?
3. A key to spiritual transformation is recognizing God's role in our daily lives. Christians can ignore God's plans and purposes for their lives, and when we do, we miss what He is trying to teach us, and how He wants to change us. Judah identifies God as the just judge for their sinful actions. While circumstances were forcing the brothers to reckon with their guilt, this is not always the case; often, we need to *voluntarily* and *intentionally* invite God to examine our lives (Ps 139.23-24). Have you done this recently?
4. Judah's speech (18-34) exhibits the brothers' changed attitudes. Contrast their earlier feelings toward Joseph with their feelings toward Benjamin. How would you describe Judah's offer in v33? Healing is possible when someone is willing to take the penalty for wrong on themselves. God did this for us when He sent Jesus to die for our sin. Who needs your sacrificial love and forgiveness today?