

## **It's a Choice**

### **Ready:**

“But Joseph said to them, ‘Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children.’ And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.”

-Genesis 50:19-21

### **Set**

Alexis is a talented basketball player. As an eighth grader, she played on the varsity team at one school. Others quickly saw her ability and soon began mistreating her. Coaches and teammates beat her down mentally, and she began to grow a root of bitterness deep inside of her. She suffered several injuries and even transferred schools, but her situation did not improve. The root grew deeper and deeper.

Joseph was a part of a team as well – a team of brothers in Jacob's household. Joseph was blessed in many ways, and his brothers soon became bitterly jealous. When he was 17, his brothers sold him into slavery. But Joseph kept his faith. He was later falsely accused of a crime and imprisoned for years, but when he was 30 years old, he was named the second in charge of all of Egypt. Thirteen years... The root of bitterness could have grown deep in that amount of time, but Joseph, through God's help, focused on His plan for his life. When his father died, his brothers immediately worried that their brother, whom they cast away, would pay them back for all wrong doing. But Joseph made a choice to forgive, and he reassured his brothers of his love and faithfulness to them.

Alexis has been faced with a choice, too. She could continue to be bitter, or she could forgive those in her past who put her down and were unloving to her. In a similar way, we all have that choice every day. We can chose to forgive and forget or chose to be bitter and to hurt others in return. You may not think your bitterness is bothering others, but trust me, it will in time. Forgiveness is NOT a two-way street. God wants you to forgive and move forward. My prayer for Alexis, myself and others is that we make the choice, like Joseph, every day to forgive. Because even though others may intend to hurt and harm, God can and will use bad experiences for our good.

### **Go**

1. Do you have a root of bitterness growing inside of you? How many days, weeks or years has it been growing?
2. How are you encouraged by Joseph's story of trusting God more than your own unforgiving heart?

3. Today, sever the root of bitterness and seek forgiveness for this person (people) in your life. Write down their names and, one by one, pray and ask God to help you forgive them once and for all.

### **Workout**

Genesis 37-50

Hebrews 12:14-16

### **Bible Reference:**

Hebrews 12



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