

Beginning Again after Betrayal **Genesis 50:15-21**

Have you ever been betrayed? Have you been hurt or wounded through the betrayal of a friend, a spouse, or a child? Have you been betrayed by your boss, your company, or even your government? If yes, then you can begin again. The Bible is a book of people and groups that began again, given a second chance. God is the God of beginning again, of starting over.

Joseph is an example of a person who was betrayed by those whom he thought loved him, and went through terrible personal adversity, and yet began again. How did Joseph begin again after betrayal? What can we learn from him?

1. PRACTICE CHRIST-LIKE GRIEF

“When the message came to him, Joseph wept.” (v. 17b)

It is not wrong to grieve. Grief is actually healthy. Jesus said, *“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted”* (Mt. 5:4). Do you remember Charlie Brown’s regular expression, “Good Grief”? Joseph practiced good grief or Christ-like grief. He grieved, but Joseph did not allow his grief to make him a bitter person. He was not fixated on his hurt and betrayal and getting even. Instead, Joseph allowed God to use his grief to teach him and prepare him for great things. Joseph wept many times

during his adversity. Jesus wept many times. But they let God use their grief to move them forward to greater things. Practice good grief, Christ-like grief. It is your choice—your grief can make you bitter or better.

2. PRACTICE CHRIST-LIKE MERCY

“...Joseph said to them, ‘Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God?’” (v. 19a)

Joseph chose to be merciful toward his brothers. He chose to forgive them for their betrayal. They mistakenly believed that Joseph would be vengeful after their father had died. But Joseph asked them, “Am I God?” Only God is just, and therefore He is the only One to seek vengeance. The Bible says, *“...It is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord. ‘Therefore if your enemy hungers, feed him; if he thirsts, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good”* (Rm. 12:19-21). Joseph showed mercy to his brothers, and treated them with kindness. This kind of mercy or forgiveness changes lives. *“...Don’t be afraid. I will provide for you and your children.’ And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them”* (v. 22). Paul said, *“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you”* (Eph. 4:32). Practice Christ-like mercy and forgiveness. It is your choice, your decision.

3. PRACTICE CHRIST-LIKE HOPE

“You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.” (v. 20)

Joseph was able to see God’s hand in his circumstances. Though he experienced hurt and terrible hardship, Joseph was able to see God using him to save the lives of his family as well as the people of Egypt. God did not abandon Joseph, but gave him hope in his circumstances. You and I need to practice Christ-like hope by trusting God in our daily circumstances. We may not understand why it is happening the way it is now, but godly hope allows us to trust God to bring about good out of our difficulty. It is why Paul said, *“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose”* (Rm. 8:28). Christ-like hope helps you to see beyond your grief and betrayal. It helps you to trust God to bring about good.

You can begin again after betrayal with God’s help. Jesus understands betrayal. He was betrayed by one of His disciples and suffered horribly. But the hope was salvation, deliverance, and freedom for you and me. Ask Jesus to help you, to forgive you, to be your Savior and Friend. He loves you—He will help you begin again.