

Peacemaker

If there were a Heisman Trophy for high school football in Pennsylvania, it would go to Jim Schaunessey. At least in football savvy Oil Trough, Pennsylvania where “Jim Schaunessey Day” was celebrated annually for years. If a player can succeed by being mean, tough, angry and motivated by hatred, Jim was. Beaten severely by his dad on a regular occasion made Jim shoe-leather tough. “My dad would paint the kitchen with my blood,” Jim recalls. “And then he’d beat up my mom before my eyes.”

Jim had one hiding place to run to when his dad was drunk and abusive. When his father found it, he kicked Jim until Jim was black and blue. Jim’s outlet for his hatred was smash-mouthed football where he earned a full scholarship to Arizona State and eventually was drafted by the New England Patriots. “I was in hundreds of barroom fights,” Jim now recalls matter-of-factly. “I’ve never lost one.”

When Jim saw a man hurt or insult a woman, he’d “light the man up” in recompense for the abuse he’d seen his mom receive from his dad.

Jim’s junior year in college, his life changed drastically. He had a “head on collision” with a crucified Man and used those three nails to pin his anger resolutely and permanently on his own rugged cross. Jim was a new man!

His second collision was almost as big as the first. My next door neighbor, and down to earth friend, Gary Smalley, met Jim shortly after his conversion and challenged him to forgive his dad and go home to seek reconciliation. When Jim flatly refused, Gary said, “Jim, how much of your broken relationship with your dad is your fault?” Jim snapped back, “3% at most. 97% is my dad’s fault.”

Gary persisted. “As a follower of Christ, Jim, take 100% responsibility for your 3%. It made sense. Jim went home where he was met with his father’s typical obstinacy and ridicule. He took his aging dad behind the house and sought his forgiveness. Gallantly, Jim apologized for everything he had done to his dad. His dad responded harshly. Jim began to weep and pray with his eyes affectionately heavenward. “God, my Father, I just ask that someday my dad can know You as his father as you have allowed me to know You.”

To Jim’s surprise, his dad began to weep. This broken, bitter and beleaguered man began to pray, “God, someday, will You let me know You the way Jim does?” God granted his request. Like a caterpillar metamorphosing into a butterfly, Jim’s dad became a brand new creation and for the first time in his life, he began to experience peace. The two walked as friends the remaining 14 years of his dad’s life. They prayed together, played together and traveled together to places his dad had always wanted to see. On his dad’s deathbed, Jim fondly reaffirmed his

tender love for his dad and released him to join his mom in heaven. The reconciling blood of Christ that reinstated man to his right relationship with God had once again empowered two men in conflict to give each other the same priceless gift of reconciliation.

Mark these Key Words: **Joseph** **Brothers** **Forgive**

Old Testament Viewpoint

Genesis 37:23, 28; Genesis 42: 6; Genesis 45:4-5, 15; Genesis 47:11

Genesis 37:23, 28 So it came about, when Joseph reached his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the varicolored tunic that was on him;

28 Then some Midianite traders passed by, so they pulled him up and lifted Joseph out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. Thus they brought Joseph into Egypt.

Genesis 42: 6 Now Joseph was the ruler over the land; he was the one who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed down to him with their faces to the ground.

Genesis 45:4-5, 15 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come closer to me." And they came closer. And he said, "I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. "Now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life.

15 He kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and afterward his brothers talked with him.

Genesis 47:11 So Joseph settled his father and his brothers and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had ordered.

New Testament Viewpoint

Matthew 5:9,44; Matthew 6:15; Revelation 12:10

Matthew 5:9, 44 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

44 But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

Matthew 6:15 But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

Revelation 12:10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night.

OBSERVATION: What is God saying?

1) Enmity and strife are two of Satan's favorite and most lethal weapons for separating relationship and bringing division to the body of Christ. How do anger, bitterness and pride aid him in succeeding in his task?

2) What do you see in Joseph's life that would help you in a difficult relationship you are facing today?

3) A peacemaker is one who initiates reconciliation in broken relationships. Why is a peacemaker so blessed by God?

4) Forgiveness ... complete, total forgiveness is one of God's greatest virtues. How can you daily prepare your heart to be a heart of forgiveness?

5) Bitterness and grudges are silent weapons we carry when we've been hurt. Why are they sins and what needs to be done with them?

6) If Satan is "the accuser of the saints," how are we actively teaming up with him when we hold on to a grudge or harbor bitterness?



PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS: *What else of significance do you see God saying in this passage?*



APPLICATION: *How does this passage relate to me today? What changes does it bring to my life?*



LOCKER ROOM: *If you had one thing in your life you could do over, what would it be? Is there anything you can do now to reconcile that situation?*



MEMORY VERSE: Matthew 6:15

But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.



My Prayers



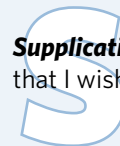
Adoration: Father, today I praise You for...



Confession: Father, please forgive me for...



Thanksgiving: Father, today I'm thankful for...



Supplication: Father, the people & things that I wish to pray for today are...