

## Introduction

If you are involved in manufacturing or machining, you are familiar with the term "trueing." Let's say, for example, that you are working with wood. Often when you buy lumber all of the boards of a particular measurement are not exactly the same size. If you are building something that requires precision, you must first cut or shave or plane the wood to the exact specifications. When you do this you are "trueing" the wood.

Those of you who manufacture tires out at Armstrong are familiar with trueing; automotive machinists who work on engines are familiar with trueing. The dictionary definition of trueing is "to make level, square, balanced, or concentric; to bring or to restore to a desired...accuracy or form."<sup>1</sup>

There is a process of trueing going on in Genesis 42 - not with manufacturing or machines, but with *men*. This comes out to you most clearly if you read the text in the King James Version.

In verse eleven you read, "***We are all one man's sons; we are true men...***" Joseph's brothers said this about themselves in their meeting with him, and they repeated it to Jacob in verse thirty-one, saying again "we are true men."

In response to their claim to be "true men," Joseph tried them:

Genesis 42:19 If ye *be true men*, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison...

Genesis 42:33 And the man, the lord of the country, said unto us, Hereby shall I know that ye *are true men*; leave one of your brethren *here* with me...

Genesis 42:34 And bring your youngest brother unto me: then shall I know that ye *are* no spies, but *that ye are true men*...

The ten brothers claimed to be "true" men. *They were not!* Their lives were out of balance, out of round, not square, because they had never dealt with their sin of selling their younger brother into slavery.

Joseph knew, as we know, that they were not "true" men. *God used him to true them!* He put them through a series of severe trials. He tried them in order to true them - in order to bring out their sin so that they could be restored to God's measure of spiritual balance.

God still does this today. When your life is out of "true" He intervenes to restore you to His measure of spiritual balance. He tries you in order to true you.

#1 God Will Try You  
When You Need Trueing

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<sup>1</sup>*Websters Ninth Collegiate Dictionary*, p. 1267.

(v1-24)

Joseph had been Potiphar's steward for eleven years. He had spent two years in prison before interpreting Pharaoh's dream. Seven years of plenty had passed before his brothers came to him during the famine. It had been at least twenty years since they had last seen Joseph, then a young adult of seventeen.

Genesis 42:1 When Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, "Why do you look at one another?"

Jacob could not understand why his sons were not already on their way to buy grain in Egypt. We can! They had sold Joseph into slavery to a traveling band of Ishmaelites who were on their way to Egypt. Just the thought of going there rekindled the awful memories of their deed; they exchanged knowing glances at one another.

Avoidance can be an important spiritual strategy. For example, if you have a drinking problem, you should avoid places where alcohol is present. Avoidance can also be an indication that something is out of true in your life...

Genesis 42:2 And he said, "Indeed I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down to that place and buy for us there, that we may live and not die."

Genesis 42:3 So Joseph's ten brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt.

There was one and only one solution to their famine, and it involved going the way that God had ordained for them.

The same can be said during your times of spiritual famine. When things are out of true in your life, the solution God presents in His Word should be sought and followed...

Genesis 42:4 But Jacob did not send Joseph's brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he said, "Lest some calamity befall him."

As we will see throughout, Jacob's life was not true yet either. While you might excuse him for being protective of Benjamin, he was not fully trusting God with his son's life. Later on he would say,

Genesis 42:36 And Jacob their father said to them, "You have bereaved me: Joseph is no *more*, Simeon is no *more*, and you want to take Benjamin. All these things are against me."

Genesis 42:38 But he said, "My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he is left alone. If any calamity should befall him along the way in which you go, then you would bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave."

We know, from reading ahead, that all things were for him.

In our own lives we ought to know *from reading ahead* that all things are for us! When you read and reread the Bible, you are reading ahead - reading with hope for the future...

Genesis 42:5 And the sons of Israel went to buy *grain* among those who journeyed, for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

Genesis 42:6 Now Joseph *was* governor over the land; and it was he who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed down before him with *their* faces to the earth.

Genesis 42:7 Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he acted as a stranger to them and spoke roughly to them. Then he said to them, "Where do you come from?" And they said, "From the land of Canaan to buy food."

Genesis 42:8 So Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him.

Commentators are somewhat divided as to why Joseph acted roughly with his brothers. Some suggest that he was out of true! It is better to see Joseph acting as God's instrument to try these hard men, who had harbored their wicked deed for some twenty years.

Genesis 42:9 Then Joseph remembered the dreams which he had dreamed about them...

In Chapter Thirty-seven Joseph had dreamed "There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf."

God will bring His Word to pass in His perfect timing. Has He promised you something? Wait for it...

Genesis 42:9 Then Joseph remembered the dreams which he had dreamed about them, and said to them, "You *are* spies! You have come to see the nakedness of the land!"

Genesis 42:10 And they said to him, "No, my lord, but your servants have come to buy food.

Genesis 42:11 "We *are* all one man's sons; we *are* honest [true] *men*; your servants are not spies."

Genesis 42:12 But he said to them, "No, but you have come to see the nakedness of the land."

Genesis 42:13 And they said, "Your servants *are* twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and in fact, the youngest *is* with our father today, and one *is* no more."

Genesis 42:14 But Joseph said to them, "It *is* as I spoke to you, saying, 'You *are* spies!'

Why accuse them of being spies? Here is one thought. We saw earlier, again in Chapter Thirty-seven, that Joseph was his father's supervisor. He wore a long tunic and did no work himself. He would go out and bring back a report to Jacob of how well the other ten brothers were working. From their perspective, Joseph was Jacob's *spy*.

Throughout Joseph's dealings with these ten men there were subtle clues as to what God was doing. They thought of Joseph as a spy; they were accused of spying. They threw Joseph into a pit; they were thrown into prison. They watched as the Ishmaelites chained Joseph; they watched as Joseph chained Simeon. They sent Joseph in chains to Egypt; they were forced to leave Simeon in chains in Egypt.

They didn't get it until the end, so dull were their spiritual perceptions. God gives *you* clues about what He is doing...It is better to work with God to bring your life into true than to resist and have Him persist in doing it.

Genesis 42:15 "In this *manner* you shall be tested: By the life of Pharaoh, you shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here.

Genesis 42:16 "Send one of you, and let him bring your brother; and you shall be kept in prison, that your words may be tested to see whether *there is* any truth in you; or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you *are* spies!"

Genesis 42:17 So he put them all together in prison three days.

Here is yet another clue: They had been responsible for separating Jacob from his favorite son; now they would be responsible for doing it again. Twice they are told it is a test, but they fail to see it as God's test to true them.

Genesis 42:18 Then Joseph said to them the third day, "Do this and live, *for* I fear God:

Genesis 42:19 "If you *are* honest [true] *men*, let one of your brothers be confined to your prison house; but you, go and carry grain for the famine of your houses.

Genesis 42:20 "And bring your youngest brother to me; so your words will be verified, and you shall not die." And they did so.

The testings Joseph put them through were severe because their hearts were so hard. At the same time, he was merciful, giving them the food they came for.

God desires to give you His tender mercies. Hard hearts require His severe mercies...

Genesis 42:21 Then they said to one another, "We *are* truly guilty concerning our brother, for we saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with us, and we would not hear; therefore this distress has come upon us."

Genesis 42:22 And Reuben answered them, saying, "Did I not speak to you, saying, 'Do not sin against the boy'; and you would not listen? Therefore behold, his blood is now required of us."

Genesis 42:23 But they did not know that Joseph understood *them*, for he spoke to them through an interpreter.

Genesis 42:24 And he turned himself away from them and wept. Then he returned to them again, and talked with them. And he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes.

Joseph's weeping tells you a great deal. He is not hateful and vindictive towards his brothers. He would rather reveal himself to them. God prevents him from doing so.

If you are to yield yourself to God as His instrument, you must be willing to be the kind of instrument He needs at the time! There are different tools for different jobs. A surgeon must cut with the scalpel before he closes with the sutures. It is the same in God's service.

Listen to what God told Jeremiah in His commission to him:

Jeremiah 1:10 See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, To root out and to pull down, To destroy and to throw down, To build and to plant."

We would like to concentrate on "to build and to plant"; often God needs a tool "to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down." You can't build-up until you tear-down and clear out. Nehemiah learned this when commissioned by God to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem:

Nehemiah 4:10 Then Judah said, "The strength of the laborers is failing, and *there is* so much rubbish that we are not able to build the wall."

Be the kind of instrument God needs you to be...

Joseph's brothers said they were "true" men. Joseph knew they were not, and so God used him to try them. I want you to see that trying them *was* having an affect towards trueing them.

At the beginning of the chapter they spoke not at all about Joseph, but only exchanged glances.

When they first spoke to Joseph, they said, "We are all one man's sons, we are true men..." As they were tried, they spoke more accurately, more truly. In verse thirteen they admitted that they were twelve brothers, and that there was a problem with one:

Genesis 42:13 And they said, "Your servants *are* twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and in fact, the youngest *is* with our father today, and one *is* no more."

As they were tried further, they spoke more plainly still amongst themselves, saying in verse twenty-two,

Genesis 42:22 And Reuben answered them, saying, "Did I not speak to you, saying, 'Do not sin against the boy'; and you would not listen? Therefore behold, his blood is now required of us."

Joseph's trying them was trueing them!

God will try *you* to true you. God says, in Jeremiah 17:9-10,

Jeremiah 17:9 "The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?

Jeremiah 17:10 I, the LORD, search the heart, / test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.

God is constantly at work to bring you into true with His measure for your spiritual life. This work can and should take place in the secret places of your heart; you read in Hebrews 4:12,

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

If you are dull to God's instrument, He will work outwardly to true you - He will try you to true you!

#2 Don't Trifle With God  
When You Need Trueing  
(v25-38)

Joseph's trying of these men began to true them, but they quickly settled for something less than God had in mind. When they arrived back in Canaan, they recounted their story to Jacob. In verse thirty through thirty-two you read,

Genesis 42:30 "The man *who is* lord of the land spoke roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country.

Genesis 42:31 "But we said to him, '*We are honest men*; we are not spies.

Genesis 42:32 '*We are* twelve brothers, sons of our father; one *is no more*, and the youngest *is* with our father this day in the land of Canaan.'

They didn't make a full confession to Jacob. God had brought them to the point of openly admitting their sin, but they settled for less than true when back safe in their homes.

Genesis 42:25 Then Joseph gave a command to fill their sacks with grain, to restore every man's money to his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. Thus he did for them.

Genesis 42:26 So they loaded their donkeys with the grain and departed from there.

Genesis 42:27 But as one *of them* opened his sack to give his donkey feed at the encampment, he saw his money; and there it was, in the mouth of his sack.

Genesis 42:28 So he said to his brothers, "My money has been restored, and there it is, in my sack!" Then their hearts failed *them* and they were afraid, saying to one another, "What *is* this *that* God has done to us?"

These men had sold Joseph for money. They loved money. But now, finding it in the sack, they loathed it!

They acknowledged that God was ordering these events, but only in a superficial way. As we have said, there were enough clues to lead them to a discovery of exactly what God was doing. They, too, were aware of Joseph's dreams of twenty years ago; the dreams were part of the reason they hated him. They refused to meditate on these events, guarding their hearts from any real repentance.

You *should* ask yourself, "What is this that God has done?"

Genesis 42:29 Then they went to Jacob their father in the land of Canaan and told him all that had happened to them, saying:

Genesis 42:30 "The man *who is* lord of the land spoke roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country.

Genesis 42:31 "But we said to him, '*We are honest men*; we are not spies.

Genesis 42:32 '*We are* twelve brothers, sons of our father; one *is no more*, and the youngest *is* with our father this day in the land of Canaan.'

Genesis 42:33 "Then the man, the lord of the country, said to us, 'By this I will know that you *are honest men*: Leave one of your brothers *here* with me, take *food for* the famine of your households, and be gone.

Genesis 42:34 'And bring your youngest brother to me; so I shall know that you *are* not spies, but *that you are honest men*. I will grant your brother to you, and you may trade in the land.'

Genesis 42:35 Then it happened as they emptied their sacks, that surprisingly each man's bundle of money *was* in his sack; and when they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid.

Since they were unwilling to be tried, the trying continued. They each had received their money back! Upon returning to Egypt they were certain that they would be arrested as thieves.

This is interesting. They needed to return to Egypt in order to free their brother, but the receipt of the money hindered them. In reality, they had needed to go to Egypt to find and free their brother Joseph, but money had hindered them! It hindered them in the sense that, to go to Egypt, they would have had to confess to Jacob how they had sold Joseph to slave traders on their way there.

God's strategies for unlocking the secrets of your heart are a marvel...

Genesis 42:36 And Jacob their father said to them, "You have bereaved me: Joseph is no *more*, Simeon is no *more*, and you want to take Benjamin. All these things are against me."

We want to be kind towards Jacob, recognizing the love of a father for his son. We must say, however, that his thinking was not Biblical at this point. He was walking by sight and not by faith. God was also trying him.

Genesis 42:37 Then Reuben spoke to his father, saying, "Kill my two sons if I do not bring him *back* to you; put him in my hands, and I will bring him back to you."

This is among the very stupidest things ever said in God's Word! What possible comfort could Jacob receive by killing his grandchildren? This was a foolish vow, made by a man who wanted to make things right but who was yet unwilling to submit to God's solution.

God's solution would have been for these men to confess and repent before Jacob and before Joseph. Reuben was searching for some other way.

You must follow God's specifications if you are to be tried...

Genesis 42:38 But he said, "My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he is left alone. If any calamity should befall him along the way in which you go, then you would bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave."

Jacob said, "My son shall not go..." But the famine would continue until, in Chapter Forty-three, he was forced to send Benjamin with them.

Never say never!

As you now see, God was trying these men to true them. They were trifling with God, not submitting to His obvious intervention in their lives. The scope of God's providential dealings with Joseph and his brothers is mind boggling! Yet, against this incredible backdrop, they were attempting to downplay what God was doing.

God orders the universe in order to true your heart; it is not something to trifle with! The events and circumstances of your life are providentially designed to bring you more and more into harmony with God's spiritual standards. What is His standard? Don't ask "what," ask "Who?" Who is His standard? Jesus Christ is! God is at work in your life to true you to the standard of Jesus Christ, to conform you into His image.

Recognize that God is trueing you. The Apostle Paul did; that's why he could say, (1 Corinthians 11:1) "Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ." God was trueing him into the standard of Jesus. He wants to do the same with us.

### Conclusion

As we said earlier, many people struggle with Joseph's unusual behavior towards his brothers. He seems distant, harsh, almost cruel. Part of the reason is that God is using him to try these men. There is another reason as well.

We have frequently suggested that the story of Joseph has a typical application. There are types in this story which illustrate greater things. What might we learn from Joseph's treatment of his brothers?

In the New Testament you find an eight verse summary of Genesis Thirty-seven through Fifty. It is in the speech that Stephen, the first Christian martyr, gave to the Jewish leaders of his day.

Acts 7:9 "And the patriarchs, becoming envious, sold Joseph into Egypt. But God was with him

Acts 7:10 "and delivered him out of all his troubles, and gave him favor and wisdom in the presence of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house.

Acts 7:11 "Now a famine and great trouble came over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and our fathers found no sustenance.

Acts 7:12 "But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first.

Acts 7:13 "And the second *time* Joseph was made known to his brothers, and Joseph's family became known to the Pharaoh.

Acts 7:14 "Then Joseph sent and called his father Jacob and all his relatives to *him*, seventy-five people.

Acts 7:15 "So Jacob went down to Egypt; and he died, he and our fathers.

Acts 7:16 "And they were carried back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham bought for a sum of money from the sons of Hamor, *the father* of Shechem.

Stephen tells us that Joseph was sold by his natural brothers for envy, but that God exalted him and he became the savior of the known world - dispensing bread to all who came to him.



This type illustrates Jesus, Who was sold by His national brothers for envy, but Who was highly exalted by God to become the Savior of the world - dispensing living bread to all who come to Him.

Stephen tells us that a time of great trouble came upon the whole world during Joseph's day, forcing his brothers to come to him when they didn't yet recognize him.

Just so, we learn in Scripture that a time of Great Tribulation will come upon the whole world in the Last Days, forcing the Jews to come to Jesus even though they don't yet recognize Him!

Stephen says, "And the second *time* Joseph was made known to his brothers." Likewise, in His Second Coming, the Lord Jesus Christ will make Himself known to the Jews; Scripture says, "then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for *his* only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn" (Zechariah 12:10).

Joseph saved the Jews from out of great trouble. Jesus will save the Jews from out of the Great Tribulation. The Apostle Paul declares, " And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (Romans 11:26).

You see in Joseph, then, an illustration of God's future dealings with the nation of Israel. Today His treatment of them seems harsh, almost cruel. They have hardened their hearts against His Son, Jesus, in unbelief. He is trying them in order to true them!

It is my prayer that each of us would be tried and trued...