

Forgiveness/Revenge

Day 1



Listen to
Scripture Song:



Today's Promise (#191) — KJV

Luke 6:37–38 "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."

♥ Apply the Promise!

Since God has completely forgiven our massive pile of sins, we must cheerfully forgive the small mistakes of others instead of demanding payback!

Bible Story (Matthew 18)

Jesus told a powerful story about a king who decided to collect the money his servants owed him. One servant owed the king an enormous debt—so much money that he could never pay it back.

The king ordered that the servant and his family be sold to pay the debt. The servant fell down before the king and begged, "Please be patient with me, and I will pay everything."

The king knew the servant could not really repay such a huge debt. But his heart was moved with compassion. Instead of demanding payment, the king forgave the whole debt and let the servant go free. The servant walked out owing nothing, even though he had done nothing to earn such mercy. He should have left the palace with a soft, thankful heart.

But that same servant went out and found another man who owed him a small amount of money. He grabbed him and demanded payment. When the man begged for patience, the servant refused. He had him thrown into prison.

Other servants saw what happened and were very upset. They told the king. The king called the unforgiving servant back and asked why he had refused to show mercy after receiving so much mercy himself.

Jesus' story reminds us that God has forgiven us far more than anyone will ever owe us. When we remember His mercy, we should not hold tightly to anger or demand payback. Because God has forgiven us, He wants us to forgive others with a merciful heart.

True Story

In 2015, a man named Dan walked out to his parked car after a very long day of work. As he walked up to his expensive car, he noticed something upsetting. Someone had accidentally scraped the side of his vehicle and caused some damage!

Under the windshield wiper, Dan found a note. A college student named Monica had written an apology and left her phone number. She explained that she had accidentally scratched the car and wanted to do the right thing. She also left her very last twenty dollar bill under the wiper, hoping it would somehow help pay for the repairs. Dan looked at the small amount of money.

Dan could have demanded that Monica pay for the repairs. He could have been angry, harsh, or impatient. After all, the car really was damaged, and Monica really was responsible.

But He remembered exactly how hard it was to be a young, broke student making mistakes. Because he had been shown so much grace in his own life, his heart melted with compassion. He quickly decided to freely pass that exact same mercy right along to her.

That evening, Dan called the anxious student. But he did not threaten to call the police or demand insurance money. Instead, he fully forgave the damage and told her to take that twenty dollar bill to buy a great dinner.

Dan's story reminds us that forgiveness means letting go of the desire to make someone pay. When we remember how much mercy God has shown us, we can ask Him to help us treat others with mercy too.

Discussion Questions:

- How much did the first servant owe the king, and what did the king do with the debt?
- When Monica accidentally scratched the expensive car, what did the owner Dan tell her to do with her twenty-dollar bill?
- If a friend breaks one of your toys or hurts you, how can you remember mercy instead of demanding payback?

Activity:

Give everyone a piece of yarn and have them tie a knot in the middle. Tell them to pull the ends as hard as they can! The knot only gets tighter, just like holding onto angry grudges. Now, have them gently untangle the knot until the yarn is straight. Explain that forgiveness gently unties the angry knots in our hearts so we can be free!

Forgiveness/Revenge

Day 2



Listen to
Scripture Song:



Today's Promise (#192) — KJV

Psalm 142:6–7 "Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I. Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name..." **Luke 23:34** "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." **Acts 7:60** "And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge..."

♥ Apply the Promise!

When people are actively being cruel to us, we don't have to wait for an apology to show mercy. Because Jesus has flooded our hearts with His amazing love, we can choose to forgive our enemies right in the middle of the hurt!

Bible Story (Luke 23)

Jesus lived a perfect life, healing the sick, opening blind eyes, and showing nothing but compassion to everyone He met. Yet, the religious leaders unfairly arrested Him and handed Him over to the Roman soldiers. As they led Jesus up a hill called Golgotha, the crowd shouted insults and mocked Him.

When they finally nailed Him to the wooden cross, the soldiers coldly divided His clothes and gambled for them right at His feet. In a moment of such deep sadness, almost any person would have begged for a sudden rescue or been very angry at the men who were hurting Him. Jesus could have called angels to rescue Him. He could have spoken words of judgment against the people who were hurting Him.

But Jesus did something that completely changed the universe. While the soldiers were actively hurting Him, and before a single person had even thought about saying they were sorry, Jesus looked down from the cross with a heart full of grace.

He prayed out loud, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." He did not wait for His enemies to realize their mistake, and He did not demand an apology first. He offered mercy right in the middle of His suffering.

Jesus' prayer shows us the highest kind of forgiveness. When people hurt us, we do not have to answer with revenge. We can ask God to give us His love, help us forgive, and keep our hearts free from bitterness.

Jesus' story reminds us that forgiveness is not weakness. It is the strong love of God living in the heart.

True Story

In 1996, an eighteen-year-old teenager named Keshia Thomas went to a peaceful rally in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Keshia was Black, and a group of white supremacists had come to town. These men believed cruel, hateful things about Black people and other groups.

Suddenly, someone spotted a white man wearing a shirt that supported the racist group. The angry crowd instantly turned on him. They knocked the man to the ground and began to hurt him. Keshia was standing right there.

The white man on the ground belonged to a group that hated her simply because she was Black. It would have been easy for her to just step back into the shadows and watch the crowd take out their frustration on her enemy.

Instead, Keshia immediately threw her own body over the fallen man, shielding his head and chest from the incoming blows. The crowd was so stunned by her selfless mercy that they backed away, and the man was saved.

Keshia did not protect him because he deserved it or because hatred did not matter. She protected him because she believed cruelty should not be answered with more cruelty.

Years later, the man's son came to thank her. He told her that because she had protected his father, his own life had been changed too. Keshia's story reminds us that mercy is stronger than revenge. When people are cruel, God can help us choose compassion instead of hatred. Forgiveness does not mean wrong is okay; it means we refuse to let bitterness control our hearts.

Discussion Questions:

- While Jesus was hanging on the cross, what amazing prayer did He pray for the soldiers?
- When the angry mob knocked the hateful man to the ground, what did Keshia Thomas do to protect him?
- If someone is actively being mean to you, how can you show "real-time" forgiveness before they even say sorry?

Activity:

Give everyone a piece of paper and a pencil. Tell them to start drawing a beautiful picture. While they are drawing, walk around and gently (but annoyingly) tap their papers or lightly jiggle the table. Ask them how hard it is to keep drawing something beautiful while someone is actively bothering them! Explain that Jesus gives us the power to keep painting a beautiful picture of forgiveness, even when someone is actively being unkind.

Forgiveness/Revenge

Day 3



🎵 Listen to
Scripture Song:



Today's Promise (#193) — KJV

Romans 12:19 "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

💖 Apply the Promise!

When someone hurts us, we don't need to try and get them back. We can step back and let the Lord handle the justice, choosing to show mercy instead of swinging a sword!

📖 Bible Story (Philemon)

In the early church, a wealthy man named Philemon had a servant named Onesimus. One day, Onesimus made a very terrible choice. He wronged his master and then ran far away to the busy city of Rome. He became a runaway, hiding from the law.

Under the strict laws of that time, Philemon had the legal right to demand the absolute maximum punishment for a runaway. If Onesimus was caught, Philemon could have demanded a harsh penalty. He had a right to be deeply offended and angry.

But while hiding in Rome, Onesimus met the Apostle Paul. Paul taught him the wonderful good news about Jesus. Onesimus surrendered his life to God and became a Christian! Paul knew that Onesimus needed to go back and make things right with Philemon.

Paul sent Onesimus back home with a very special letter. He asked Philemon to completely drop his right to revenge. He asked him not to punish the runaway servant, but to instead offer him a brand-new chance. He asked for pure mercy.

Paul told Philemon to welcome Onesimus back, not as a servant to be punished, but as a beloved, forgiven brother in Christ. Philemon was asked to put away his sharp sword of legal justice and freely offer a beautiful pardon!

The book of Philemon reminds us that forgiveness means giving up our right to get even. When someone has wronged us, we can let God handle justice and ask Him to help us show mercy instead of revenge. Because Jesus has received us with love, we can learn to receive others with grace.

☀️ True Story

In 2004, Victoria Ruvolo was driving home when something terrible happened. A group of teenagers driving in the opposite direction recklessly threw a stolen twenty-pound frozen turkey out of their moving car. The turkey crashed through Victoria's windshield and struck her in the face.

The heavy bird broke straight through the windshield of her car, causing very serious injuries to her face. She spent weeks in the hospital and had to go through painful surgeries.

The police quickly caught the eighteen-year-old boy named Ryan who had thrown the turkey. Because of the pain and damage he had caused, Ryan was facing up to twenty-five years in prison. Soon it was finally time for the court hearing.

Instead of glaring at the teenager, Victoria walked up to the weeping boy in court. She reached out, wrapped her arms around him, and gently stroked his hair. She told him to make something good out of his life. Then she asked the judge to give Ryan a second chance, offering a life-changing hug instead of harsh punishments!

Because Victoria chose mercy, the judge happily agreed to a much lighter sentence. Ryan served only six months in jail instead of twenty-five years! He was so moved by her grace that he completely changed his life.

Victoria's story reminds us that forgiveness does not mean pretending wrong is harmless. What happened to her was serious and painful. But instead of using her pain to demand revenge, she chose mercy. When we give justice to God, He can help us lay down our anger and offer grace.

💬 Discussion Questions:

- When the runaway servant Onesimus became a Christian, what did the Apostle Paul ask his master Philemon to do?
- What did Victoria do to the teenager, Ryan, right in the middle of the courtroom?
- If someone does something unfair to you, how can you give up your right to "get even" and choose to show them mercy instead?

🎨 Activity:

Give two children a short rope and have them gently pull back and forth. Explain that trying to get revenge is exactly like a never-ending tug-of-war. Tell one child to suddenly drop their end! The fight instantly ends. Explain that when we refuse to pull back against the people who hurt us and drop our right to get even, God takes over and brings peace!

Forgiveness/Revenge

Day 4



Listen to
Scripture Song:



Today's Promise (#194) — KJV

Romans 12:20–21 "Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

♥ Apply the Promise!

The absolute best way to win a fight is to surprise your enemy with radical kindness! When someone is mean to you, giving them a gift or a warm smile is like pouring warm, melting love right over their anger.

Bible Story (2 Kings 6)

A huge army of enemy soldiers marched out to capture God's prophet, Elisha. But God protected Elisha in an amazing way! God made the enemy soldiers so confused that they couldn't see or understand where they were going.

Since they were lost, Elisha boldly walked right up to the confused soldiers and led them straight into the middle of his own city! Suddenly, the enemies blinked their eyes and realized they were trapped. They were surrounded by the powerful King of Israel and all his mighty guards!

The King of Israel looked at the trapped enemies and thought, "This is my perfect chance to get even!" He eagerly asked Elisha, "Should my army attack them and wipe them out?" The enemy had come to hurt God's prophet, so almost anyone else would have shouted, "Yes, fight them!"

But Elisha told the king not to hurt them at all! Instead, he said to set bread and water before them so they could eat and drink, and then send them safely home.

So the king prepared a great, delicious feast for the enemy soldiers. The men who had come to cause harm were given food, water, and mercy. After they had eaten, they were sent safely back to their master.

Elisha did not overcome evil with more evil. He showed the king a better way. Kindness did what revenge could not do, because after that, the enemy raiders stopped coming into the land of Israel. This story reminds us that God's way is not to "win" by hurting people back. When someone is unkind to us, we can ask God for the strength to answer with mercy.

True Story

In 2008, a social worker named Julio Diaz stepped off a subway train in New York City. As he walked through the station, a teenager came toward him with a knife and demanded his wallet.

Julio didn't scream or fight. He calmly handed the teenager his wallet. But as the mugger turned to run away, Julio called out to him. "Hey, wait a minute," Julio said. "You forgot something. It's cold tonight. If you are going to be robbing people all night, you should take my coat to keep you warm."

The teenager stopped, surprised. He asked Julio why he would offer him his coat. Julio explained that if the boy was willing to risk prison for a wallet, he must really need help. Julio explained that he had just been on his way to get dinner, and he warmly invited the mugger to come eat with him! The teenager was so confused by this incredible kindness that he put his knife away and followed Julio to a nearby diner.

At the restaurant, the workers greeted Julio warmly, and the teenager noticed how kindly Julio treated everyone. After the meal, Julio said he would gladly pay the bill, but the teenager still had his wallet. The young man handed it back. Then Julio gave him twenty dollars and asked if he could have the knife in exchange. The teenager gave it to him.

Julio's story reminds us that kindness can surprise anger and soften a hard moment. Instead of fighting back with fear or anger, Julio chose kindness—and it completely changed the situation. He did not answer evil with evil. He chose calmness, respect, and practical kindness. When we let God guide our hearts, He can help us overcome evil with good.

Discussion Questions:

- What did Elisha tell the king of Israel to do instead of fighting the trapped soldiers?
- What did the teenager on the subway platform demand from Julio?
- Romans 12 says we should overcome evil with good. If a sibling or friend is being mean to you, what is a "good" thing you can do to surprise them?

Activity:

Cut a few pieces of red or orange construction paper into the shape of hot coals. Write a kind, helpful action on each coal (like "sharing a toy" or "saying a nice word").

Explain that heaping "coals" on an enemy's head doesn't mean hurting them; it means surprising them with warm, melting kindness!

Forgiveness/Revenge

Day 5



Listen to
Scripture Song:



Today's Promise (#195) — KJV

1 Peter 3:8–9 "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing..."

♥ Apply the Promise!

When people make mistakes or treat us poorly, we don't have to be mean back! Instead of holding grudges or acting superior, we can choose to be gentle, show deep compassion, and bless them like they are our own family.

Bible Story (2 Samuel 9)

David was finally crowned as the King of Israel. But getting to the throne had been a painful journey. The previous ruler, King Saul, had spent years hunting David through the wilderness, trying to take his life. When Saul died, the normal custom for a new king was to destroy the old king's family so they could never try to steal the throne back.

But David did not want to rule with bitterness. Instead of seeking revenge against Saul's family, David asked his servants a surprising question: "Is there anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him God's kindness?"

His servants brought forward a young man named Mephibosheth. He was King Saul's grandson, and he had been severely crippled in both of his feet since he was a little boy. He may have been afraid when he was brought to the palace, because many kings destroyed the families of former enemies.

But David did not call him there to punish him. He spoke kindly and said, "Do not be afraid." David gave back the land that had belonged to Saul's family and invited Mephibosheth to eat at the king's table like one of his own sons.

David's kindness showed a heart free from revenge. He did not treat Mephibosheth like the grandson of an enemy. He treated him like family.

This story reminds us that forgiveness does more than refuse to hurt someone back. It can also choose kindness, compassion, and blessing. When God fills our hearts with His love, we can show mercy instead of holding onto old grudges.

True Story

In the 1500s, a Christian man named Dirk Willems was imprisoned in the Netherlands because of his faith. He believed in following Jesus, even when it was dangerous.

One winter night, Dirk escaped from prison and ran across a frozen pond. Because he had been in prison with little food, he was thin and light enough to cross the ice.

A guard chased after him. But as the guard ran across the pond, the ice cracked beneath him, and he fell into the freezing water. He cried out for help. Dirk heard the cry and stopped. Freedom was just ahead of him, but a man was sinking behind him. In that moment, Dirk chose the way of Jesus instead of the way of revenge.

Dirk had a choice. He could keep running and save himself. The man in the water was his enemy, and if Dirk helped him, he would almost certainly be captured again.

But Dirk could not ignore someone who was dying. He turned back, reached out, and pulled the guard from the icy water.

The guard was saved, but Dirk was captured again. Later, he was killed for his faith. Dirk had chosen mercy even when it cost him his life. His kindness showed that a heart filled with Jesus would rather save an enemy than escape with revenge.

Dirk Willems's story reminds us that forgiveness and compassion are stronger than revenge. When someone has hurt us, we may want to walk away and let them suffer. But Jesus calls us to bless instead of curse and to show mercy even to those who treat us like enemies.

Discussion Questions:

- When Mephibosheth was brought to the palace, what did King David do instead of punishing him?
- When the prison guard fell through the cracking ice, what incredible choice did Dirk Willems make?
- Mephibosheth thought he was in trouble, but he got a wonderful blessing instead. Have you ever made a mistake, and instead of yelling, someone showed you grace?

Activity:

Give everyone a dark piece of paper and a bright piece of paper. Have them crumple the dark paper, explaining that this represents holding onto anger or judgment. It feels tight and negative! Now, tell them to throw the dark paper away and fold the bright paper into a paper airplane. Let them gently toss it to a friend! Explain that when we let go of judgment, we can send a beautiful, uplifting blessing to someone else instead.