

LESSON 4: ENTITLEMENT

This includes:

- 1. LEADER PREPARATION**
- 2. LESSON GUIDE**

1. LEADER PREPARATION**LESSON OVERVIEW**

Our society says we're entitled to get even when someone mistreats us. But in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells us to give up self-serving patterns of living. "You've heard" it's right to take revenge, Jesus says, but following him means loving people unselfishly. In this lesson, students will hear how Jesus challenges not only our self-centered attitudes but also our unwillingness to sacrifice for the sake of others.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- 1. WHAT:** Students have heard they're entitled to self-serving patterns of living, but Jesus tells us to put other people's needs above our own.
- 2. WHY:** Jesus expands our understanding of sin to include anything that goes against his patterns of unselfish living.
- 3. HOW:** Students will consider how they treat others by exploring Jesus' teachings of altruistic living.

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE

Matthew 5:38-42

SECONDARY SCRIPTURE

Romans 12:14-19

TEACHING PREP

**LEADER
TIP**

Use this short overview to prepare for your lesson. While you may not want to convey this information word-for-word with your group, you'll want to absorb it as you prepare to lead.

Read Matthew 5:38-42.

This passage is part of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, where he challenged what people had been taught by society. In these verses, Jesus challenges our concept of revenge. As they often did, the scribes and Pharisees were taking the Old Testament Law out of context. God had given instructions for the civil government (see Leviticus 24:19-20, for example), but they were applying it to individual matters.

The expression "turning the other cheek" can be tough for Christians to comprehend and follow. During Jesus' time, being hit in the face was considered an insult for Jews. Author R.C. Sproul writes, "What's

interesting in the expression is that Jesus specifically mentions the right side of the face....If I hit you on your right cheek, the most normal way would be if I did it with the back of my right hand....To the best of our knowledge of the Hebrew language, that expression is a Jewish idiom that describes an insult, similar to the way challenges to duels in the days of King Arthur were made by a backhand slap to the right cheek of your opponent.”

Bible scholars agree that Jesus isn't saying it's wrong to defend ourselves. When personal safety is involved, he doesn't expect us to stand idly by and accept injury. Although Jesus didn't retaliate when he was being mistreated before his death, he was fulfilling prophecy as the Lamb of God.

Revenge, though, has no place in the lives of Jesus' followers. We are to leave that up to God, the ultimate judge. Instead, our role is to love and serve all people, no matter how they treat us.

For more background about Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, see the “Teaching Prep” section in Lesson 1 of this series.

THE BEFORE & AFTER [OPTIONAL]

TEXTS OR TWEETS

Send one or both of these messages to your students prior to your meeting. As with the rest of the curriculum, edit these questions to fit the needs of your ministry.

- Do you dream of ways to get revenge? Tonight's lesson might be just what you need.
- An eye for an eye. Is that the best way to live? Join us this week for a great conversation.

PARENT EMAIL

Send this email to parents following the lesson to encourage them to continue the conversation at home. Feel free to edit and customize the email to fit your ministry needs.

Dear parents,

We're continuing our series comparing what culture tells us and what Jesus tells us. This week we explored Matthew 5:38-42, where Jesus challenges our assumptions about revenge.

Teenagers have heard from our culture that they're justified in taking the law into their own hands when they're wronged. But Jesus urges us to respond much differently—and following through on that can be quite a challenge.

I encourage you to spend a few minutes this week talking with your teenager about our lesson. Consider building your conversation around these questions:

- In your opinion, what was the most challenging thing Jesus said in this week's lesson? Explain.
- Why is “turning the other cheek” often so difficult? What do you think Jesus was trying to teach us?
- If someone hurts you, what's the best way to respond?
- If we respond in love, how do we avoid getting walked on?

- Based on this lesson, who do you need to treat differently during the week ahead?

We're grateful for your prayers and support. May God bless you as your family lives for him!

LESSON 4: ENTITLEMENT**2. LESSON GUIDE****GETTING THINGS STARTED [OPTIONAL]****LEADER
TIP**

Preview the following video for your group: youtu.be/VzQ4FZTmR8s (or use another video about showing kindness to strangers). You'll need an Internet connection and a computer or tablet to display the video for your participants.

Welcome your students and invite them into your meeting area. Open in prayer, and then play the video clip. Then **ASK**:

- *If you'd been on the subway, how do you think you would've responded to the sleepy guy?*
- *When people cross over into your personal space, how do you usually react, and why?*
- *When you interact with other people, what do you expect from them? What do you feel entitled to?*
- *If Jesus had been on that train, what might he have done?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *This social experiment tested the tensions between loving others and maintaining our own personal rights. Our culture says we're each entitled to those rights. But when everyone is looking out only for themselves, relationships break down. For society to work as Jesus intends, people must care for others, even if personal costs are required.*

TEACHING POINTS**LEADER
TIP**

Use the Teaching Points to help students capture the essence of each lesson with more discussion and less lecture-style teaching. Remember: All throughout these lessons, it's up to you to choose (1) how many questions you use and (2) the wording of the main points—keep ours, or change the wording to make it clearer for your audience.

Read Matthew 5:38-42 together as a group. Because this passage is so brief, consider having students read the verses several times, from different translations of the Bible.

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Let's explore a passage from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount that features his thoughts about revenge. You may have heard some of these phrases before, but let's see how they're relevant to our lives today.*

1. WE'VE HEARD WE'RE ENTITLED TO GET EVEN WITH SOMEONE WHO HURTS US

ASK:

- *In the Old Testament, the punishment was supposed to always match the crime—what might it have been like to live under that law?*
- *Think of a time you took revenge on someone who hurt you. Did it help take away the pain of being hurt? Why or why not?*
- *Why do people often feel entitled to get “paybacks”? What, if anything, does that accomplish?*
- *What's the difference, if any, between defending yourself and taking revenge?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Sometimes we feel justified in hurting people because they hurt us first. But that sort of action doesn't solve the underlying problems, and it certainly doesn't restore our relationships.*

2. JESUS SAYS IT'S WRONG TO TAKE REVENGE

ASK:

- *How does Jesus' advice in verses 39-41 challenge our culture's mindset?*
- *Do you think Jesus intends for us to be taken advantage of? Why or why not?*
- *What does revenge do to a relationship?*
- *When this was written, the Romans were oppressing the Israelites. What insights into this passage does that context provide?*
- *Think of people throughout history who've put this passage into practice, such as Martin Luther King Jr. What kind of power is evident in someone who chooses not to take revenge?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Someone who responds to hurtful behaviors with loving action is a person of tremendous inner strength who can change the world. This inner power comes from following Jesus and imitating his patterns of integrity in how we interact with others.*

3. JESUS CHALLENGES US TO LIVE FOR THE SAKE OF PEOPLE WHO WRONG US

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *In this section of his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus challenges us to respond to hurtful behaviors through loving action—which usually isn't our first instinct.*

ASK:

- *To be able to respond to hurt with kindness, what changes must take place in someone's heart and life?*
- *What are some ways to resist a revenge-filled response?*
- *What solid advice for living and interacting with people does verse 42 provide? How can you put this into practice?*
- *During his ministry on earth, how did Jesus model this way of living for us?*

EXTRA DISCUSSION [OPTIONAL]

Ask students to form groups of two or three to discuss these questions.



ASK:

- Read Romans 12:14-19. Which instruction in this passage is most difficult for you to follow, and why? Which is easiest to follow, and why?
- Think of someone who lives out the truths in this Scripture—what impact does that person have on the people around him or her?
- God is the ultimate judge. How can this truth help you as you respond to people who hurt you?

Bring everyone back together, and ask for volunteers to share answers to the previous questions, as time permits.

LIVING IT OUT

ASK:

- What questions would you want to ask Jesus about this challenging passage in Matthew 5?
- When someone hurts you, how can you get help without seeking revenge?
- What types of things can you do for others this week that will set a radical example of living for Jesus? Let's think outside the box on this.

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *We've talked about some very challenging and personal things today. If you'd like to follow up about anything, please talk to a leader, a parent, or a friend. And be sure to talk to Jesus in prayer about all these things, too.*



Ask students to each find a quiet spot in your meeting area for a few minutes of prayer and reflection. Consider praying together as a group or asking if any students would like prayer from the rest of the group.

SUMMARY



Provide a quick summary or take-home challenge based on (1) this lesson's content, (2) the dialogue that took place today, (3) your understanding of the issues and struggles your teenagers are facing, and (4) the big picture of your youth ministry and what your leadership team wants accomplished with the teaching and discussion time.

FOR KEEPS [MEMORY VERSE]

Encourage and/or challenge your teenagers to memorize the Scripture below.

"Never pay back evil with more evil" (Romans 12:17).