

Lesson 7.18 – The Unforgiving Servant: Forgiveness and Restitution

Topic: Becoming Peacemakers  
Subtopic: Forgiveness & Restitution  
1A. God the Creator and Father  
4F. Peace in the Home School & Community  
Class: Standard VII (Grade 7)

Materials Needed:  
Blackboard and Chalk  
Exercise book  
*Optional* – seed and plant for illustration;  
small pieces of extra paper

Objectives: **Knowledge:** Students will know understand what *forgiveness* and *restitution* are. **Attitude:** They will want to practice forgiveness and restitution.

References: Matthew 18:21-35

Memory Verse: Matthew 6:14

Teacher Activities

**Introduction:** *Optional Worship.*  
Share a story- *Kezia's older sister, Jerida, gave her coins to buy some vegetables at the market. Kezia bought most of the vegetables Jerida wanted but she used one coin to buy a cold drink. She told Jerida she didn't have enough coins to buy everything. Later Kezia feels bad about what she did. What should she do now?*

**Bible Story:** Discuss Matthew 18:21-35 using the Teacher's Notes as a guide. This is the story of the Unforgiving Servant.

**Application:** Explain what the "bitter plant" of Hebrews 12:14-15 means by using an illustration.  
Discuss how Jerida needs to *forgive* and Kezia needs to make *restitution*.

**Evaluation:** Have you forgiven everyone who has hurt or angered you? Did you try to talk to them? Have you let go of the bitterness?

Student Activities

**Introduction:** Students tell what they think Kezia should do.

**Bible Story:** Matthew 18:21-35 Read and act out this parable.  
Read Hebrews 12:14-15

**Application:** Write down someone or something they need to forgive and illustrate letting it go by throwing away the paper. Give suggestions for how Kezia could make restitution.  
*Journal:* Reflect on what they learned this week.

**Evaluation:** Do student reflections show a willingness to forgive and an understanding of restitution?

**Extension Activities:** *Math.* Have students take turns telling a short story about someone taking or destroying something and then ask how much the person would have to give back to make restitution. (They must double what they took.) *Memory verse.* Practice the memory verse with a partner.

## Notes for Teacher

Jesus continues teaching about how to walk in love by telling a parable about forgiveness. Because God is forgiving and merciful, He requires us to be forgiving, also. It is not easy to forgive but the person who forgives receives as much benefit (or more) than the one who is forgiven. Jesus teaches about forgiveness using a parable.

Key Points: We must forgive others if we want God to forgive us. Forgiveness and restitution are important for peacemaking.

Introduction: Share a story about Kezia. Let students make comments about the story. Remind them of the importance of honesty and ask how lying like this can cause conflict. Ask what Kezia should do now. Is saying she is sorry enough? What should Jerida do if Kezia tells her she used the money for a cold drink?

Bible Story: Matthew 18:21-35. This is a long passage so divide among several Readers. You might want to have students act out the story while it is being read. You will need Jesus, Peter, King, his servant, fellow servant who is thrown into jail, other servants who go and tell the King.

- **What important principle is Jesus teaching with this story?** (We must forgive others because God forgives us)
- **What are some characteristics of the king in this story?** (merciful, forgiving, just, fair)
- **How are these characteristics like God?** (Help students understand that God is forgiving and merciful but he is also righteous and just. We all deserve punishment for sin. If we do not forgive others, we will receive our just punishment. However, if we are kind and forgiving, then God delights to give mercy and forgiveness to those who ask Him for it.)
- **Would this King have been considered just if he just ignored how his servant treated his fellow servant?** (No, justice requires punishment for wrong doing.)
- **God is also just. He will not let sin go unpunished forever. That is why we must be kind and forgiving to others. We will all one day stand before God and a just God will not ignore sin.**
- **How many times must we forgive someone?** (Jesus said 70 times 7 or 490 times. What He means is that we must keep on forgiving and not count how many times we forgive. Remember, God will judge that person some day. But unforgiveness causes us to do mean, unkind things and God will not forgive us if we do not forgive others.)

Application: **Let's go back to the story about Kezia. If Jerida is going to do what Jesus said, what must she do? Forgive her sister. Forgiveness means letting go of our anger and our expectations about what that person should do for us. We must forgive even if the other person does not apologize or try to do anything to make up for their sin. However, what can we do?** Remind students that Jesus said to go to the person and talk to them. If they don't repent, get someone to go with you and try again. He even said to try a third time but if they did not listen, then you do not need to be friends with them but you need to forgive—let go of the angry, hurt feelings. Let's see what happens if you do not.

*Read Hebrews 12:14-15.*

- **What two things are we to do according to verse 14?** Live at peace with everyone and live a holy life
- **What happens to those who do not do this?** They will not see God and they will have a “bitter plant” in their heart that causes trouble for many. One seed, one incident of unforgiveness, can lead to lots of incidents of anger and bitterness toward others.

*Illustration.* (If you do not have a seed and plant, you can still give the explanation.) Hold up a seed and the plant that grows from it. For example, hold up one kernal of maize and an ear of maize. Say, **“If I plant one seed of maize in the ground how much maize do I get? I get a whole ear with lots of kernals of maize. If you let one bitter feeling—either feelings of hurt or feelings of anger—settle into your heart, it will cause anger and bitterness to come out in lots of different ways in your life. It will hurt you, your family and your friends.”** Give each student one small piece of paper (you can take regular writing paper and divide it into four pieces). Have them write down anything that they feel angry or hurt about. Pass around the wastebasket and invite them to throw the paper away. Tell them that if they will forgive the person as they throw the paper away, they will feel better and God can forgive them for being angry.

*Story Illustration.* One time there was a man that wanted some land for his cows. We will call this man Jim. His neighbor who we will call Mike bought the land. Jim was angry that he didn’t get to buy the land. He asked Mike to let him graze his cows there. Mike would not do it. He said, “I bought this land so my own cows would have grass.” They got into a fight and the first man killed his neighbor. He had to go to jail and both families were grieved and did not have their fathers at home any more. Bitterness and unforgiveness caused trouble not only for those two men but for their families and the tragedy caused sadness for all the neighbors, family and friends who knew them. Unforgiveness is a bitter plant that causes trouble for many.

*Jedida and Kezia.* **So, if Jedida finds out that Kezia stole some of the money and lied about it, she needs to forgive Kezia even if Kezia doesn’t ask for forgiveness. She can talk to Kezia and try to get her to apologize or pay her back but she must forgive even if Kezia doesn’t do what Jedida wants. However, let’s say you are Kezia and you are truly sorry. What do you do? Do you just say, “I’m sorry,” and forget about it?** Write the word *restitution* on the board. Ask if anyone knows what it means. *Resitution means to restore or pay back* for something. **If you have hurt someone or taken something from someone, you need to try to restore it or pay them back for it. How could Kezia do that?** Let the class think of four or five ways Kezia can make up for what she took from her sister.

Have a Reader read *Exodus 22:9*.

- According to this verse, what does Kezia need to do? (Pay back double what she took).
- If Kezia doesn’t have any money, what can she do? (Maybe she could do chores for her sister or do something else that is kind to help her sister.)
- If we have taken something from someone else or hurt them in any way, we need to pay them back at least *double* what we took.

*Journal.* Have students reflect for several minutes about this week’s lesson and then write a paragraph telling what they learned.