

WEEK 4 LESSON GUIDE



BIG IDEA

God can help repair broken relationships.

BIBLE

Luke 6:32–36; Genesis 33:1–11;
James 4:1; Romans 5:8

ABOUT THIS WEEK

This week, we'll hear from Jesus about how we can love and care for others even if we're facing conflict at the moment. Jesus' words and the way he modeled them for us help us see how **God can help repair broken relationships**.

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

INTRODUCTION

- Welcome to our final week of *On Your Own!* We've enjoyed exploring relationships with you over the last few weeks. As we wrap up our series, we have one more idea to discuss: what happens when a relationship breaks down, is tossed aside, or when a relationship is done?
- The reality is that occasionally, our friends hurt us, and we hurt our friends. We want to support and care for each other, but sometimes, it still falls apart.
- What does it look like to heal a friendship when trust has been broken or the relationship has been undermined? Let's look at two stories from the Bible that show us how God can help us pick up the pieces of a broken friendship.

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

SCRIPTURE | Luke 6:32–36

- The Gospel of Luke contains one of Jesus' most famous but difficult teachings of Jesus. In the section we're about to read, Jesus talks about living with healthy relationships between God and others. He helps us navigate complicated relationships that may be antagonistic, broken, or seemingly unreconcilable.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Luke 6:32–36.*
- I love how Jesus didn't avoid talking about broken relationships and the desire to want to heal them. He dug right into the toughest part of loving people with whom you are in conflict, like showing compassion for one another and realizing God's love is available to all people, even the difficult ones.
- Jesus went right to the heart of the matter by pointing out it is easy to love others who love you in return. This is when a relationship feels best. When there is hatred or contempt in the mix, the answer is still love. Jesus told the crowd that God's love and mercy extend to ungrateful and wicked people, and so should our love.
- This task seems impossible, but Jesus mentioned a few tangible ways to live out this expansive love.

- **DO GOOD TO YOUR ENEMIES:** Don't hold back. Extend kindness and grace to them. This doesn't mean putting yourself in dangerous, vulnerable, or unhealthy relationships, but compassion should be our driving force rather than aggression.
- **GIVE WITHOUT EXPECTING ANYTHING BACK:** Similarly to loving others who may not love you, give freely without expecting equal payment or a quick fix. Occasionally, we give with strings attached, meaning we give with conditions, and when those conditions aren't met, we may end up disappointed or hurt again. Jesus said to give out of the endless supply of goodness and generosity God gives you and leave it at that. You belong with God no matter how they respond.
- **BE MERCIFUL, JUST AS GOD IS MERCIFUL:** The Greek word we translate to "merciful" can also be translated to "compassionate." Jesus asked his followers to be compassionate towards people suffering in the same way God freely offers compassion to you when you are hurting. This way, the world will have more compassionate people doing God's work in every situation.
- What is remarkable is Jesus didn't just teach this — he lived it out. He showed us what it looks like to do this for all of humanity. Jesus' compassion was displayed through his life and ministry, but it was most clearly demonstrated on the cross.
- Humans routinely suffer because of broken relationships, destructive habits, and harmful selfishness, and still, Jesus laid down his life for all of us. His sacrificial love restored and healed our relationship between God and others. Jesus saw people's suffering and disconnection, then acted out of compassion for us, even those who had betrayed him.
- We can't love our enemies like that on our own. But because we have experienced the love of Jesus, we *can* ask Jesus to help us love those who have hurt us. We have compassion for them and where their suffering may come from. We can ask Jesus to help us be merciful in ways that allow the healing process to begin.

SCRIPTURE | Genesis 33:1–11

- In the first book of the Bible, Genesis, we see this compassion play out. In Genesis 25, a story begins with twin brothers Jacob and Esau, who couldn't have been more different. Jacob liked staying home, cooking, and hanging out with his mom. His brother, Esau, was a scruffy, gruff guy who loved to hunt and spend time outside. If they had control of the remote at home, Jacob would choose to watch *Iron Chef*, and Esau would want to binge the show *Alone*.
- Esau was the older brother by minutes and would receive the first son's inheritance, double what his younger siblings would receive. This was called the birthright, and it was a big deal in his culture.
 - Jacob was constantly trying to figure out a way to get his brother's birthright. One day, Esau came home from a hunting trip and was super hungry. Jacob had been making stew, so he told Esau to turn over his birthright to him if he wanted to eat. Esau agreed because he was so hungry, which began a long resentment between the brothers.
 - Years later, Jacob stole from Esau again. Their father, Isaac, was blind, so Jacob took advantage of his limitations by acting and dressing like his brother, Esau. Jacob covered himself in animal fur and fooled his father into giving him God's vision and blessing, which was intended for Esau.
- This deception made Esau so angry that Jacob ran for his life. They didn't see each other for years. They grew up and had their own families, and then years later, Jacob heard Esau wanted to meet with him. Can you imagine what Jacob would be thinking? I bet Jacob was terrified. So, Jacob sent gifts over to help ease the tension. Let's see what happens when the brothers see each other again.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Genesis 33:1–11.
- This seems like the perfect end to the story, right? They made amends, and things worked out! Unfortunately, this is not the end of the story. Jacob was still fearful and unsure about his brother's intentions, so immediately after this, Jacob deceived Esau again.
- Let's not focus on Jacob's inability to change or be trustworthy. Let's look at Esau. What did Esau choose to do after years of betrayal and having his birthright stolen from him?
 - Esau experienced the healing he needed in his own life. He didn't need Jacob to change his ways or live differently. Instead, Esau reconciled with his brother and fixed what was broken.
 - Esau's change of heart didn't require Jacob to do anything differently. He chose to forgive him and let go of the hurt, the anger, and all the other feelings he had held on to.

- You might be thinking, "Great, but where's the restoration? Where's the healing in the relationship?" Honestly, not every relationship will be healed back to where it was before the damage was done, and the Bible is realistic about this.
 - They restored the relationship, but that didn't mean they became best friends. They decided it was best to go their separate ways but no longer harbor resentment for what happened.
 - Sometimes, setting boundaries and letting people go in different directions is okay. Esau was able to repair what he could. It takes two people to heal a relationship entirely.
- Walking away can be a part of the love and healing that we are looking for. Taking a step towards forgiveness is moving towards the healing God wants for us. When we release people from the burdens they have created in our lives, we allow God to heal our hearts, whether or not they change.
- Healing might look like letting go of our anger and resentment first so we can move forward. God desires healthy relationships for everyone, so we know God will be there to help us pick up the pieces from any damaged relationship. Even if the result doesn't look like we imagined, **God can help repair broken relationships.**

NOW WHAT? *What does God want us to do about it?*

GOSPEL PRESENTATION

- Maybe you hear all of that, and somewhere deep down you feel like that isn't fair. You feel like the person who damaged your relationship deserves some sort of punishment or at the least, they don't deserve forgiveness. But can I tell you something? Neither do you.
- You may be thinking, "What do you mean? What do I need forgiveness for?" All of us needs forgiveness from God for the ways that we've sinned against Him and damaged our relationship.
- God has loved us and forgiven us so freely despite all of our efforts to turn our back on Him and sin against Him.
- God is all about reconciliation and repairing broken relationships. It's the reason why He sent Jesus.
- **READ Romans 5:8**
- This verse teaches us that while we were actively living lives that were harmful to our relationship with God, He sent Jesus as the means to forgive us. He didn't wait for us to clean up our act. He didn't wait for us to stop giving Him the silent treatment. He loved!
- So if you're here, there's a chance you find yourself in one of two positions:
 1. You have received this Grace from God and now it's time for you to extend it to someone else. If that's you, I challenge you to take a look at the Grace God has shown you and ask yourself what it would look like to show that same grace to someone who may have broken your trust over the years.
 2. You haven't received this grace from God yet. Can I tell you, you don't have to wait on Him. He's already extended it. He's waiting on you to accept this invitation. And if that's you, I want to take a moment to give you some space to respond to that invitation from God and then I want to ask you to share it with your small group leader when we head to groups in a few minutes.
 - Invite those in the room who don't have a relationship with God to accept His forgiveness and enter into a healed relationship with Him.

PRAYER | Love Your Enemies

- In the book of Luke, we hear one of the most famous and challenging teachings from Jesus. I would have liked it if Jesus said, "Love your enemies when it's convenient or feels right." Instead, he said this, without qualifications: "Love your enemies." Jesus taught his followers to live differently in the world. He wanted them to prayerfully approach relationships in a way that tried to repair what was broken, whether it was with a friend or an enemy.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this prayer activity, you will need [the slide](#) and enough half-page of blank card stock for every student. Lead your group through the prayer prompts on the slide, asking them to write down any thoughts about what God is saying. Consider playing reflective music as they pray.*
- When we pray, we open ourselves up to the possibility of something new in our relationship with God. And when we pray together, we support each other. God designed us to connect to God and each other in

healthy relationships. Sometimes, that means using the same pieces of a frayed relationship, and other times, it can look like crafting a great relationship from new insights we've learned about each other.

- As we end this series, I hope you see that God wants you to have meaningful and healthy friendships. Relationships where **God-centered relationships begin with God-centered lives**, communities where **your friends can help your faith grow**, times when **God can help us choose our friends wisely**, and, even when things fall apart, a trust that **God can help repair broken relationships**. God desires community for everyone following Jesus rather than going through life *On Your Own*.