

## LESSON 1: BE UNDERSTANDING

**WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO LEARN:** Understanding and grace are keys to Christ-centered relationships.

**WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO DO WITH WHAT THEY'VE LEARNED:** To identify ways they can be more understanding and gracious in their relationships

**Scripture Focus:** Luke 6:41-42

**OVERVIEW:** We look at Jesus' teaching in Luke 6 in regards to judging others, and rightly so. But when applied to our relationships, it shines new light on the spirit behind the words. Jesus' teaching here is all about understanding (empathy may be the more fitting word). Choosing to see other people's shortcomings through the lens of our own is a major part of what it means to have relationships that honor God. It's helping teach students to extend understanding and grace when they watch their friends blow it, either with them or with someone else. In this lesson, you'll challenge them to consider what it looks like to show grace and understanding in their relationships.

## TEACHER PREP VIDEO

The Jesus And Relationships Teacher Prep Videos are short videos designed to help you grasp the main points of the lessons as you prepare to teach.

To access your "Jesus And Relationships Lesson 1 Teacher Prep Video," click on the URL below.

- <https://youthministry360.com/jesus-and-relationship-teacher-prep>

## BIBLE BACKGROUND

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide some context for the Scripture you'll be studying. The Details give you background info for each book, The Setting informs you what's happening in and around the passage, and The Main Point gives you an overview of how the passage will be used in the lesson.

- **What do we mean by “context”?** In every ym360 Bible study lesson, you’ll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By “context” we mean at the very least helping students know who wrote the book, when it was written, and why it was written.
- **What’s The Big Deal?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don’t get a “big picture” understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God’s plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the Bible Background to help summarize the context.

## THE DETAILS

- **Author:** Luke was a doctor, a Gentile Christian and a companion of Paul.
- **Time frame:** The Gospel of Luke was written around 60 AD.
- **Purpose:** Luke is the only Gentile author of the Bible. His entire purpose was to write an accurate account of the life of Jesus so as to present Jesus as Savior, fully God, and fully man. It is one of the synoptic Gospels, having much in common with the Gospels of Matthew and Mark.

## THE SETTING

Luke 6:41-42 is in the third major section of the Sermon on the Plain. The purpose of Jesus’ teaching in the Sermon on the Plain is to recast the Jewish law in a way that is consistent with the teaching of the Old Testament and yet, also exposes the hearts of His hearers in a fresh way. The audience is primarily His disciples (Luke 6:20), but there is also a great crowd listening to Jesus as well (Luke 6:17).

These verses illustrate two major themes of the Sermon on the Plain (and the entire Book of Luke): loving our enemies and extending mercy to those who don’t seem to deserve it.

Is the Sermon on the Plain different from The Sermon on the Mount? The Sermon on the Plain found in Luke has much of the same content as the Sermon on the Mount found in Matthew. There are two possible explanations. First, Luke and Matthew are recording the same sermon, but are simply describing the geographical surroundings differently. Perhaps, Jesus found some sort of plateau on the mountain and Matthew is describing the mountain, while Luke is describing the plateau or plain. The second possibility is that Matthew and Luke are recording two different sermons that share much of the same content, much like hearing a preacher give very similar messages on two different occasions.

## THE MAIN POINT

The Sermon on the Plain is ultimately about reversing the way in which we see the world around us. It’s about embracing a Kingdom mindset. Jesus is illustrating for His hearers that part of that reversal is radically changing the way that we relate to other people. When we experience God’s grace through knowing Jesus, we should be, both, aware of our own sinfulness and willing to extend grace to others. Therefore, in the place of a judgmental attitude, we have an attitude of understanding. In the place of searching for the faults of others, we are gracious to others. Why? Because Jesus is well aware of our sinfulness and would be just in condemning us, yet He extended to us understanding and grace.

# LESSON PLAN

The Lesson Plan contains three elements: An introductory activity called The Lead-In; the Bible study section called The Main Event; an application-focused segment called The Last Word.

## THE LEAD IN

- **Goal:** For students to begin to think about the concept of empathy and how to create empathy.
- **Set-Up:** You will need to preview the trailer of the movie "Frozen" (found here [http://youtu.be/TbQmSdoF\\_Uc](http://youtu.be/TbQmSdoF_Uc)). You will also need to arrange for a way to show this clip to your students.

**FIRST**, ask who has seen the movie Frozen. Ask your students to watch the movie trailer as if they had never seen the movie. Play the trailer for them.

**THEN**, ask them the following questions:

- **If you had never seen the entire movie, only the trailer, what are some things you would conclude about Elsa?**  
*Answer:* She seems to be an evil queen who has frozen her entire country. She seems to be the villain of the movie.
- **OK, now many of you have seen the movie. What is Elsa actually like?**  
*Answer:* She is afraid of her powers and doesn't know how to control them. She is not the villain. The "nice guy," Hans, turns out to be the villain.
- **What difference does actually knowing Elsa's story make in how you view her?**  
*Answer:* It makes a massive difference. In the trailer, it seems like she is an evil ice queen, but in reality, she is not. Once we see the movie, we are much more empathetic to Elsa.
- **Do you think we make judgments about people we know without understanding the entire story? Can you give some examples?**  
*Answer:* Yes! Probably all the time. The examples will vary.

**FINALLY**, conclude by observing that we can make some serious judgment mistakes by not understanding the full story. Explain that in your lesson today, you're going to examine how Jesus instructs us to extend grace and understanding toward other people.

**Say:**

- **This is our first of four weeks of looking at what Jesus has to say about relationships. Often, we magnify the faults of other people without truly understanding their situation. We don't take time to understand them. There's another word for developing understanding. It's called empathy. As we study today's passage, these two words are going to be fresh in our minds. We're going to discover what Jesus taught on understanding and empathizing with others.**

Then, transition to the Main Event.

## THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** To help students learn that understanding and grace are keys to Christ-centered relationships.
- **Set-Up:** None.

**FIRST,** Instruct your students to go to Luke 6:41-42. As they find the passage, go over the Setting with them using the Bible Background. It might be kind of cool to cover the idea of the Sermon on the Plain and how it might or might not be the same teaching as what Matthew recorded as the Sermon on the Mount.

**THEN,** after everyone has found the passage, read or ask a student to read Luke 6:41-42. Explain that these verses are probably some of Jesus' more famous words. Even people who don't claim to know Jesus are at least faintly familiar with this passage. Lead students in exploring what these verses mean for their lives. **Ask:**

- **What do you think Jesus' point is?**  
*Answers may vary,* but the big idea is that we should be more aware of our own sin than the sins of others.
- **In this passage, Jesus is using an exaggeration. Obviously, a person can't have a plank in their eye. And even if they could, they wouldn't walk around town with a 2 x 4 stuck in their eye. They'd be in the ER getting it removed. When you think about the imagery, it's actually pretty funny. Why would Jesus use such an outrageous illustration?**  
*Answer:* Jesus is making a point. Just as ridiculous as it would be for a man with a 2 x 4 in his eye to try to remove a speck from someone else's eye, it is equally ridiculous for a person with a great sin to ignore their sin and point out someone else's. A plank in a person's eye would be both obvious and serious.
- **What does Jesus call people who would do such a thing?**  
*Answer:* A hypocrite.
- **What is a hypocrite?**  
*Answer:* A hypocrite is someone who pretends to be something they are not. Someone who says one thing, but does another. Someone, like the person in this passage, who holds others to a standard that he or she doesn't hold himself or herself to.
- **How can we prevent from becoming hypocrites?**  
*Answer:* In one sense, we are and will always be hypocritical on some level. We never quite live up to God's standard in our lives. In another sense, though, we can avoid developing the reputation of being hypocritical. We should be honest about our sinfulness, not trying to cover it up. Then, we should never hold others to a standard that we know we don't live up to.

**NEXT,** point out that Jesus assumes His audience has a log in their eye. He doesn't say, "if you have a plank," but that the plank is there. **Say something like:**

- **This means that all of us, no matter how good we think we are, have obvious and serious sin in our lives. In other words, the first step to having Christ-centered relationships is to be aware of our own sinfulness. We must understand that we have obvious and deep-seated sin issues inside our hearts.**

**Then, ask:**

- **What does the passage teach us about the seriousness of our own sin?**  
*Answer:* The truth is that all sin separates us from God. All of us are sinners, and our sin is serious. To God, all of our sin is obvious and serious, like a plank protruding from someone's eye.

- **What type of attitude does Jesus want us to take toward our sinfulness?**

*Answer:* Jesus wants us to be self-aware of our sins. We should be humble because we realize that we have a serious sin problem, and our only hope is the grace of Jesus. And even in a ridiculous example, he calls us to REMOVE our sin. Not walk around apolo gizing for the plank, and saying “oh that’s just me!”. But to get it out of there!

- **How does that type of attitude toward our own sinfulness change the way we view the sins of other people?**

*Answer:* Once we realize the seriousness of our own sin, it changes our attitudes toward the sins of others. We understand how easy it is to fall into sin and how hard it is to get out. We know that the only reason we’ve experienced freedom from sin is because of the grace of Jesus.

**THEN**, explain that our understanding of our own sin shapes the way that we relate to others. **Say:**

• **If we want Christ-centered relationships, they must be shaped by Christ and not our own sense of self-preservation. When we want to make ourselves look good, we minimize our sin while magnifying the sins of others. The Gospel response however is to be honest about our sin, while extending understanding and grace to others.**

**Then, ask:**

- **What does it mean to have understanding?**

*Answer:* We exhibit understanding toward others, when we have an awareness of why people do what they do. Understanding is demonstrated by empathy. Empathy is when we strive to understand another person’s feelings.

- **How can we extend understanding to others?**

*Answer:* We extend understanding to others when we don’t jump to conclusions, but ask them questions to get the whole story. Just because somebody upsets you, doesn’t mean that they have sinned! We extend understanding when we put ourselves in their shoes. Often when we strive for understanding, we find that in a given situation we probably would have made a similar choice.

- **So let’s say that sin has occurred. God calls us to extend grace. But what is that?**

*Answer:* Grace is when you get what you don’t deserve. All sin deserves God’s just judgment. However, in Jesus we get a relation ship with God. We didn’t earn it or deserve it, but God graciously gave it to us.

- **How do we extend grace to others?**

*Answer:* We can extend grace to others by treating them better than they deserve. We display grace when we are quick to forgive others and restore relationships. Grace is not considering a wrong deed right, but it is considering the person over and above what they have done. This is important. Grace does not condone wrongdoing. Grace is not acceptance. Grace loves despite wrongdoing.

**NEXT**, explain to students that it’s been said that we can be guilty of judging other people based on their actions, yet we expect others to judge us based on our intentions. In other words, we want people to understand our faults if we hurt them, but we also expect them to pay the penalty if they upset us even a little. We would like for them to see how hard we’ve tried or the reasons we failed. Explain that the problem is that we usually don’t attempt to understand why others struggle; we just judge them based on their actions. **Then, ask:**

- **Do you think this is true?**

*Answer:* Answers may vary. If you need, illustrate it this way: When someone lets us down or is late, they are unreliable. When we let someone else down or we’re late, it is usually due to circumstances beyond our control, i.e.. traffic was terrible, there was a family emergency, my dog ate my homework, and so on.

- **Why are we so quick to point out faults in others?**

*Answer:* When we point out other peoples’ faults, it helps us justify our anger or distrust of them. To use Jesus’ illustration, when we point out the speck in someone else’s eye, then it takes attention away from the plank in our eye (a.k.a the lack of control we have

When we point out someone's bad decision with his or her girlfriend or boyfriend, it distracts us from our own sexually immoral thoughts. (You could think through other examples that might fit best for your group.)

- **Do you think this is fair?**

**Answer:** The obvious answer is that it is not fair.

- **What difference would it make in your life if you tried to extend grace and understanding toward others?**

**Answer:** It would make a massive difference in the way that we see our own sin and the sin of others.

**FINALLY**, wrap up the Main Event by recapping the lesson. **Say something like:**

• **Having Christ-centered relationships requires that we have self-awareness of our own sinfulness. We are humbled by the fact that God loved us even when we were sinners. We extend grace and understanding to others because Jesus extended grace and understanding to us. We don't find faults with others in order to make ourselves look better. When we experience the understanding and grace of Jesus, we, in turn, long to extend it to others.**

## THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** For students to identify ways they can be more understanding and gracious in their relationships.
- **Set-Up:** None

**FIRST**, explain to your students that being understanding and gracious doesn't always come naturally, or simply because they heard one lesson on it. In order to grow in Christ-centered relationships, we need to identify thoughts, behaviors, and habits that increase understanding and grace. Increasing in grace and understanding requires two steps: We need to be aware of our own sin (the plank), and we need to develop empathy toward others.

**THEN**, instruct your students to move to a place in the room where they can focus completely on God and not be distracted by anyone else. Explain that you will spend a few moments asking God to search our hearts and show us our planks, the sin that is embedded deep in our hearts. Tell them as they pray, you are going to give them a few questions to ask of themselves. **Ask any of the following questions that might be helpful for your group:**

- Is there a habit, behavior, or thought pattern in your life that damages your relationship with God?
- Is there something about you that you are afraid will be exposed?
- Is there a possession that you feel like you could never live without?
- When your mind wanders, what do you think about?

**NEXT**, give your students some time to process and pray. Then conclude the time of prayer.

**THEN**, remind your students that the second step is to develop empathy toward others. Challenge them to identify one person who they have been critical of in the past, or who has let them down, or they just don't like very much. Make sure this is a person they see on a regular basis.

**FINALLY**, Give your students an assignment. Say, your assignment this week is to talk to that person. Ask them questions about their life. Get to know their story. In order to increase our understanding, we need to understand more about other peoples' stories.

Conclude by praying for your students. **Ask God to give them the strength and courage to begin to develop empathy toward others.**

- Don't forget to distribute the devotions to your students this week. If you're printing them, have them available for students as you wrap up class. If you're texting a link, posting them on Social Media, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU...

- *Do you have questions about a lesson?*
- *Something that worked particularly well you want to share?*
- *Something that didn't work you want to bring up?*

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at [feedback@youthministry360.com](mailto:feedback@youthministry360.com).



## LESSON 2: PLAYING PEACEMAKER

**WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO LEARN:** Understanding and grace are keys to Christ-centered relationships.

**WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO DO WITH WHAT THEY'VE LEARNED:** To identify ways they can be more understanding and gracious in their relationships

**Scripture Focus:** Matthew 5:21-24

**OVERVIEW:** One might say that Jesus' entire mission was about making peace between God and us. And so it's no surprise that Jesus is concerned with us being people of peace, as well. There is no room for anger or hatred in a Christ-centered relationship. As Christ-followers, we have to model the peace of Christ to others. This lesson will help remind your students of this and challenge them to look at their relationships with this lens.

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## THE DETAILS

- **Author:** Matthew, a former tax collector, was a disciple of Jesus and a firsthand witness to the stories he relates in his gospel.
- **Time frame:** Most people hold to Matthew’s gospel being written in the late 50’s or 60’s AD, though there are some who think it was written after the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD.
- **Purpose:** Matthew was writing to a primarily Jewish audience to convince them that Jesus was indeed the long-awaited Messiah. But he was probably aware of a Gentile audience, as his gospel makes the case that the saving truth of Christ is for all nations.

## THE SETTING

Matthew 5:21-24 is part of the Sermon on the Mount, which is Jesus’ most famous teaching. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus is expounding upon the Law in order to teach His listeners the true meaning of the Law. He is not teaching a new Law. In fact, Jesus says “I have not come to abolish the law” (Matthew 5:17). Instead, Jesus is correcting Jewish tradition’s misinterpretation of the Law. Jewish tradition demanded external righteousness, while almost completely ignoring the importance of internal character.

Jesus’ purpose in the Sermon on the Mount is two-fold. First, Jesus exposes the sins of people’s hearts, showing their need for salvation apart from the Law. Second, Jesus is establishing a way of life for His followers to embrace. This new way of life strives for right hearts which then, drive right behavior.

The audience is primarily His disciples, but there is also a great crowd listening to Jesus as well (Matthew 5:1).

## THE MAIN POINT

The Sermon on the Mount is ultimately about reversing the way in which we see the world around us. It’s about embracing a Kingdom mindset. One key in embracing a Kingdom mindset is to have a proper evaluation of yourself, especially in light of your relationships with other people. The passage demands we evaluate our attitudes, not only our outward actions, while also encouraging us to maintain healthy heart attitudes toward other people. Our attitude should be free from anger and hostility.

# LESSON PLAN

The Lesson Plan contains three elements: An introductory activity called The Lead-In; the Bible study section called The Main Event; an application-focused segment called The Last Word.

## THE LEAD IN

- **Goal:** For students to begin thinking about the importance of what is on the inside, not just how things appear on the outside.
- **Set-Up:** You will need four pieces of bread, peanut butter, jelly, and toothpaste. Make one regular peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Make a second sandwich, but instead of jelly use toothpaste. You may want to make the sandwiches prior to class. \*Please be mindful of allergies.

**FIRST**, show the two sandwiches to your class. Don't allow them to eat, touch, or even look closely at the sandwiches just yet. Ask:

- **From where you are right now can you tell any difference between these two sandwiches?**  
*Answer:* They shouldn't.
- **If you wanted to know if there is a difference between these two sandwiches, what would you have to do?**  
*Answer:* Look closer. Perhaps take a bite.
- **Would anyone like to find out if the sandwiches are different by trying them?**  
*Answer:* Your students are smart. They are going to know something is up at this point. Make sure that no one with peanut allergies tries the sandwich.

**NEXT**, explain to your students that you made both of these sandwiches. One is a typical PB & J. The other, if they haven't figured it out yet, is your own special creation a peanut butter and toothpaste sandwich. **Then, ask:**

- **Does what is on the inside of a sandwich make a difference?**  
*Answer:* Absolutely. In fact, it is what is on the inside that defines a sandwich. A roast beef sandwich has roast beef on the inside, a turkey sandwich as turkey on the inside, and a toothpaste sandwich has toothpaste on the inside.

Help students see that what is on the inside of a sandwich makes a massive difference. A sandwich made with jelly is delicious. A sandwich made with toothpaste is disgusting. Likewise, what is on the inside of us makes a difference. Even if we look good on the outside, even if we seem to do everything right, our inward character makes a massive difference.

**FINALLY**, explain that today you're going to be looking at your second Bible study on what Jesus had to say about relationships. In this lesson, you'll be discussing the topic of anger. **Say:**

- **Let's define anger. As you are going to see in the coming lesson, we are separating anger and frustration. Although they may feel VERY similar, they are a little different. Often anger is an inward attitude towards another person that impacts ALL of our interactions with them. While we might not violently attack other people, if we are harboring anger and hostility in our hearts, it will significantly affect our lives and our relationships. Think of it this way: if you are carrying a bowl of popcorn to the couch, and happen to spill it all over the cushions, you will probably be upset. A parent might see you do this and say "Come on, really?" And you may even grit your teeth a little while you pick it all up. This is frustration. It happens all the time in our lives, and odds are, you and your parent won't think of it anymore once it's cleaned up. But when**

**Jesus is talking about anger, he is talking more about grudge-holding and continually disliking someone. It would be like if you spilled that same bowl of popcorn ON someone, and they later went home and made an 18 step plan on how to get revenge on you. Suddenly, you are avoiding them in the hallway because they give you a death glare every chance they get. That's anger.**

- **With that in mind, today we're going to see how there is no room for uncontrolled anger in Christ-centered relationships.**

Then, transition to the Main Event.

## THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** For students to understand that there is no room for uncontrolled anger or hostility in Christ-centered relationships
- **Set-Up:** None

**FIRST**, see if anyone can remember what you discussed in your last lesson. Use the following bullet points to help if needed:

- You learned that understanding and grace are keys to Christ-centered relationships.
- You challenged students to identify ways they could be more understanding and gracious in their relationships

**NEXT**, instruct your students to go to Matthew 5:21-24. As they find the passage, review the Setting with them using your Bible Background. It's important for them to understand this teaching is a part of the Sermon on the Mount and the purpose of the Sermon on the Mount. If any of your students have questions regarding the difference between the Sermon on the Mount (found in Matthew) and the Sermon on the Plain (found in Luke), you can find a quick explanation in The Setting section of Lesson 1.

**THEN**, after everyone has found the passage read or ask a student to read Matthew 5:21-22 and lead students in a brief discussion of the verses. Explain that when Jesus said the phrases "You have heard it said to those of old...But I say to you," He was not casting aside the Old Testament Law. In fact, just a few verses earlier he affirms the Old Testament Law (Matthew 5:17). Instead, Jesus is correcting the long-held religious traditions that had emerged from the Law. This tradition emphasized outward obedience to the neglect of inward purity.

### Then ask:

- **Can you summarize Jesus' main point in these two verses?**

**Answer:** Jesus says that our inward thoughts, feelings, and intentions are just as important as our outward actions. He equates harboring anger toward someone with murder.

- **If you heard this teaching for the first time, what would be shocking about it?**

**Answers could vary**, but the shocking part is that according to Jesus' moral standard, long-standing anger, insulting language, and slander deserve judgment just like murder.

- **In what way does Jesus challenge our understanding of murder?**

**Answer:** We, like the Jewish religious leaders of the day, often focus on outward behavior. How many times have we heard, "Hey it's not like I murdered anyone"? Yet, we don't evaluate the thoughts and intentions of our hearts. Jesus challenges us to look deeper.

**NEXT**, instruct your students to examine verse 22 and **ask:**

- **What three specific actions does Jesus mention in this passage?**  
*Answer:* Anger toward a brother, insulting a brother, and calling a brother "fool." Explain that in this passage, anger carries the idea of longing to harm or hurt another person. We are not talking about the fleeting feelings of frustration.
- **What are some specific ways that teenagers your age struggle with anger?**  
*Answers will obviously vary,* but you are looking for examples to make sure they understand what it means to desire or wish harm on someone else. If your class dynamic allows you might also want to push for examples from their own lives.
- **What ways do students your age express their anger toward others?**  
*Answers will probably include* insults, profanity, sub-tweeting, bullying, etc.
- **What are some consequences of expressing our anger by insulting others?**  
*Answers could include* saying things you regret, hurting others, developing a bad reputation, and more. Expressing anger in the form of insult always hurts relationships. The point is that you want them to give you examples to illustrate the concept.

Make sure they understand the idea of what Jesus was saying when He said, "anyone who says 'You fool.'" Explain that Jesus is referring to an attack on someone's character or reputation. In other words, it is 'murdering' their reputation. This would include what you say to a person and what you might say about a person, like gossip. **Ask:**

- **What are some ways that you could attack the character of others?**  
*Answer:* Spreading rumors, gossiping, betraying someone's trust. Magnifying someone's faults in order to make yourself look better, and so on.
- **What are some consequences of attacking someone's character?**  
*Answer:* It could cost the other person friendships, opportunities, or even his or her reputation. The attacker is placing himself or herself under judgment. It's sin and sin affects our relationship with God and our relationships with others.
- **Do you agree with Jesus that your inward attitude and thoughts are as important as your outward behavior? Why or why not?**

**THEN,** wrap up this line of questioning by **saying something similar to the following:**

- **We often justify ourselves by the fact that we've "never murdered anyone." We can't be that bad... I mean it's not like we've killed anyone. The problem is, that according to Jesus' teaching, we may as well be guilty of murder because of how our inward anger seeks to harm others. With that in mind, I know that I've killed at least a few people in my heart! How about everyone else?**

Make sure students understand that Jesus wasn't literally saying that they are guilty of murder in God's eyes. Explain that the first purpose of Jesus' teaching is to help us see and understand that we are guilty before God, just as guilty as if we had murdered someone. The anger we harbor toward others is sin, just as murder is sin.

But there is a second purpose in Jesus' teaching, which is to give us a new way to live. Help students see that Jesus wants us to realize that there's no room for uncontrolled anger or hostility in Christ-centered relationships. We, like the religious leaders of Jesus' time, often emphasize the outward "seen behavior" over the inward, hidden attitude. The problem is that unresolved anger affects our relationships with others, our relationship with God, and us. **Ask:**

- **How did Jesus set an example of having a heart free from anger?**  
*Answer:* There are many examples, but here are a few. Jesus was betrayed by Judas, but He still called Judas "friend." Jesus was insulted by others while He was on the cross, but did not insult them back. Jesus even asked God to forgive the men who condemned Him to die on the cross.

- **Can holding on to anger bring you satisfaction?**

*Answer:* The answer is no. While it might feel good for a time, ultimately it will do more to harm you than help you. Anger and bitterness can crush your heart and destroy relationships. It distances you from other people. It separates you from God. And it dominates your thoughts, leading you to lash out in anger at people for no reason.

- **How would your life be different if you were rightly concerned with your inward attitude?**

*Answer:* You would probably let go of anger quicker. Not gossip or spread rumors. You take seriously insulting or slandering other people.

- **What specific behaviors would you eliminate?**

*Answers will vary.*

**FINALLY**, read or ask a student to read verses 23-24. Then, **ask:**

- **According to these verses, how important is it to God that we maintain healthy relationships with others?**

*Answer:* Extremely important. Jesus commands His listeners to cease an act of worship in order to make things right with a brother.

- **In what way do our relationships with other people affect our worship of God?**

*Answer:* They are directly related. If our relationships with other people are not right, then our relationship with God is going to be hindered.

- **Notice the phrase, "your brother has something against you." Who do you think should take initiative in restoring a relationship?**

*Answer:* You should. If you have something against your brother, then you need to seek reconciliation. If your brother has something against you, then, likewise, you need to see reconciliation.

**FINALLY**, wrap up your time of study and transition to the Last Word by **saying something like:**

• **Jesus' point is that our relationships should be a priority. If we are holding onto anger toward another person, then we need to make it right with him or her. If not, we not only hurt our relationship with that person, but we're also hurting our relationship with God.**

## THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** For students to honestly evaluate whether or not they have lost their temper with someone recently, and if so, to commit to making amends.
- **Set-Up:** Paper and pens for each student in your group.

**FIRST**, pass out paper and pens to all the students in your class. Instruct them to draw lines that divide their paper into four equal columns. Then, in the first column ask them to make a list of things that cause them to lose their tempers. Perhaps it's everyday frustrations, like road rage, bad grades, striking out, not being in control, among other things.

**NEXT**, after giving them a few minutes to write, instruct them to look over their list in column one. As they look over the list ask them to think about the last time something from their list made them lose their temper. Direct them to write in the second column the person to whom their anger was directed. For example, if they write "bad driving" in column one, then next to it in column two they should write the name of the "bad driver" who made them angry.

**THEN**, ask them to describe how they responded to the person that angered them in the third column. For example, if they lashed out at a friend who had ruffled their feathers, they might write down what they said.

**FINALLY**, direct the students to think about their inner thoughts during this response. Ask them to think about if they wished harm on that other person. Tell them to think about if they insulted them in some way. Ask them to think about if they murdered someone's character or reputation.

In the fourth column, tell them to write how they wish they had responded. Direct them to respond now, if they need to ask someone for forgiveness then encourage them to do it. Invite them to put their desired response into practice today. Challenge them to start by praying right now for God to forgive them of their sin and to give them the courage to resolve the situation. Tell them that might need to call someone right now to restore the relationship.

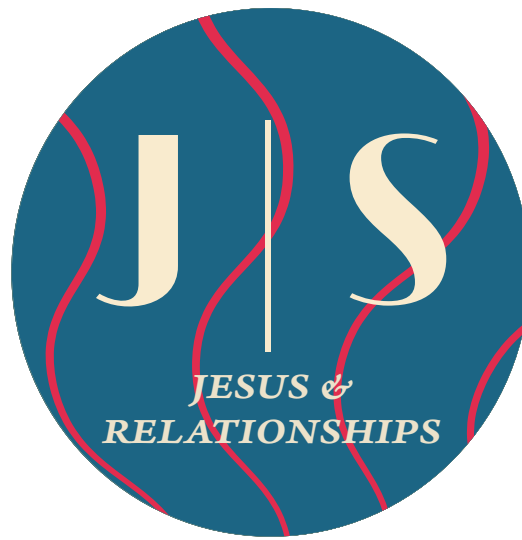
Close your class by allowing the students time to pray. Then, pray for them to pursue Christ-centered relationships free from anger and hostility.

- Don't forget to distribute the devotions to your students this week. If you're printing them, have them available for students as you wrap up class. If you're texting a link, posting them on Social Media, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU...

- *Do you have questions about a lesson?*
- *Something that worked particularly well you want to share?*
- *Something that didn't work you want to bring up?*

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## LESSON 3: DEALING WITH A DIFFICULT RELATIONSHIP

**WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO LEARN:** Jesus laid out the right way to deal with conflict in a relationship.

**WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO DO WITH WHAT THEY'VE LEARNED:** To help define the modern day equivalent of Jesus' conflict resolution strategy, and to commit to following it.

**Scripture Focus:** Matthew 18:15-17

**OVERVIEW:** Jesus' teachings don't always prescribe a plan of action. Often they deal with concepts, ways of applying God's truth to the world around us. But in this passage, Jesus gives what amounts to a step-by-step process of how to deal with conflict in a God-honoring way. The cool thing will be for you and your students to practice what good Bible students call "bridging the cultural gap." Your goal will be to take Jesus' teachings from this passage and come up with a practical equivalent for modern day application. Then, challenge your students to embrace this model for dealing with conflict in a way that is in line with someone who seeks to live as Christ lived.

### TEACHER PREP VIDEO

The Jesus And Relationships Teacher Prep Videos are short videos designed to help you grasp the main points of the lessons as you prepare to teach.

To access your "Jesus And Relationships Lesson 3 Teacher Prep Video," click on the URL below.

- <https://youthministry360.com/jesus-and-relationship-teacher-prep>

### BIBLE BACKGROUND

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide some context for the Scripture you'll be studying. The Details give you background info for each book, The Setting informs you what's happening in and around the passage, and The Main Point gives you an overview of how the passage will be used in the lesson.

- **What do we mean by “context”?** In every ym360 Bible study lesson, you’ll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By “context” we mean at the very least helping students know who wrote the book, when it was written, and why it was written.
- **What’s The Big Deal?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don’t get a “big picture” understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God’s plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the Bible Background to help summarize the context.

## THE DETAILS

- **Author:** Matthew, a former tax collector, was a disciple of Jesus and a firsthand witness to the stories he relates in his gospel.
- **Time frame:** Most people hold to Matthew’s gospel being written in the late 50’s or 60’s AD, though there are some who think it was written after the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD.
- **Purpose:** Matthew was writing to a primarily Jewish audience to convince them that Jesus was indeed the long-awaited Messiah. But he was probably aware of a Gentile audience, as his gospel makes the case that the saving truth of Christ is for all nations.

## THE SETTING

In Matthew 18, Jesus is giving a discourse on what life in the Kingdom of God should be like. He continues this through chapters 19 and 20, right up to the point of His triumphal entry and last days on earth. He speaks of relationships, forgiveness, and life together in His Kingdom as His followers.

## THE MAIN POINT

The main point of this lesson is for teenagers to commit to implementing a way of doing relationships that goes contrary to what our society says is the right way. They should see that Christ’s example and instructions lead them to maintain an attitude of humility when dealing with others, along with a heart of forgiveness and compassion when in conflict. Though some relationships will go through each step Christ lays before us and still aren’t reconciled, the end of verse 17 implies openness to restoration at any point repentance comes about.

Students who live as Christ-followers are to look different to the world around them. In order for this to happen, they must act differently. The way they handle relationships is part of this. Though it may be difficult and go against their fleshly desires for revenge, vindication, and being right, following Christ means dealing with others with tenderness, compassion, and humility.



# LESSON PLAN

The Lesson Plan contains three elements: An introductory activity called The Lead-In; the Bible study section called The Main Event; an application-focused segment called The Last Word.

## THE LEAD IN

- **Goal:** To help students begin to think about the concept of dealing with difficult relationships through biblical conflict resolution.
- **Set-Up:** You'll want to do prepare a few different conflict scenarios that your students can respond to. You can find an example of what these look like by clicking on the following link:
  - <http://www.ncpc.org/programs/teens-crime-and-the-communty/community-works-session-enhancements/section-1/session-7/role-play-scenarios.pdf>
  - Feel free to simply use the examples listed from the link above. But many teachers may find that creating your own allows you to engage with your students in a more relevant way.
  - Regardless of what you choose to do, you'll need to be prepared to either print and distribute the scenarios to your students, or to read them aloud and process them as a group.

**FIRST**, divide your students into three groups. Then, depending on how you've decided to present the conflict scenarios, move forward with presenting the scenarios to your group. Either facilitate the discussion as a group, or allow students to discuss within small groups. Make sure for whatever scenario you choose, you work as a group to determine the best way to handle the conflict scenario.

**THEN**, once students have completed their discussions bring them back together and lead them in a short discussion by **asking something like:**

- **How prevalent is conflict in your life? Would you say it's something you deal with a lot? Or not very much?**  
*Answers will vary.*
- **If you're being honest, how likely are you to handle conflict in a way you would consider healthy?**  
*Answers will vary.*
- **What does conflict in your relationships make you feel like?**  
*Answers will vary.*

**FINALLY**, transition to The Main Event by **saying something like:**

- **This is the third moment where we will look at what Jesus had to say about relationships. As you may have guessed, this lesson is about conflict. There are many different ways people handle conflict. Unfortunately, in our world, many choose to handle conflict in ways that may be hurtful, damaging, or even dangerous. As Christ-followers, we are instructed to handle conflict resolution in a very specific way. Let's take a look at how Christ has instructed His followers to work to resolve conflict.**

## THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** To help your students understand that Jesus laid out the right way to deal with conflict in a relationship.
- **Set-Up:** None

**FIRST**, make sure students get caught up on what you've studied so far. See if anyone can recall what you learned the last two weeks. Use the following bullet points to help if needed:

- **Lesson 1:** You learned that understanding and grace are keys to Christ-centered relationships.
- **Lesson 2:** Students learned that there is no room for anger or hostility in Christ-centered relationships.
- **Lesson 2:** Students were challenged to evaluate whether or not they had lost their temper with someone recently, and if so, to commit to making amends.

**THEN**, have students set up the Bible study by identifying some things that may cause conflict between friends. They may answer with things that seem petty or unimportant but make sure you acknowledge all of their serious answers. Ask them to then list some ways teenagers may deal with these conflicts. After allowing time for answers and some discussion, transition by **saying something like:**

- **There are many ways to handle conflict as we have just discussed. People handle this in different ways, often based on the situation (whether it is something they consider minor or very important), the relationship they have with the other person (if they consider the other person a valued friend or someone they don't want to bother with), or their own personality (one person may be passive and pretend the problem doesn't exist while another may be more aggressive and act out in anger). However, if we are trying to live our lives as Christ-followers, we must handle conflict according to the way He has instructed.**

**NEXT**, have students open their Bible to Matthew 18. As they are finding the passage, explain to them how Jesus often did His teaching in parables, or stories, that make His instruction relatable. Some of these parables were symbolic or metaphorical and required a certain level of interpretation. But explain that when it comes to handling conflict in relationships with other Christians, Christ was very clear in describing a step-by-step process.

**THEN**, read or have a student read Matthew 18:15-17 aloud. Begin your discussion by having students think about common ways people today, may handle conflict. Use the following questions to guide your discussion of this passage:

- **When people your age have disagreements or conflict, how do they normally respond at first?**  
*Answers will vary* but should include the fact that most will often tell other people their side of a story rather than deal with the person they are in conflict with. There is a sense of building teams or sides.
- **Look at verse 15. What does Jesus tell us is the first step to handling conflict? Why do you think that may be difficult?**  
*Answer:* You are to go to the person you have a conflict with and discuss it between the two of you.

**Say something like:**

- **There are many reasons why people choose to bring other people into a conflict rather than approaching the other person one on one. When people feel they have been wronged, they often find comfort in having people to support their side of the story or point of view. In very severe conflicts, this is ok, because it could be a safety issue. (Please seek immediate help if you have been put in physical danger.) But if this is not an emergency situation, then sincerely try to work it out with the other person first. For a Christ-fol-**

lower, talking about conflict with other people is never the first step to take. There may come a point where other people may need to be involved, but you may also be surprised at how quickly a conflict can be resolved by simply talking it out.

Then, ask:

- **According to the passage we read, what is the second step to handling conflict?**

*Answer:* Take one or two others along to talk to this person again.

- **How do you know you need to take this step?**

*Answer:* If the person you are in conflict with will not listen or try to work out the problems.

**NEXT**, have students turn to Deuteronomy 19 and have verses 15-17 aloud. Continue the discussion with these questions:

- **When Jesus tells His followers to “take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses,’” He is quoting from part of the Law that is found in Deuteronomy 19. Based on the response of the first confrontation and the passage you just read from Deuteronomy, why do you think Jesus would have you include other people in conflict resolution at this point?**

*Answer:* The person you are having conflict with didn't listen the first time and may be angry. They may be defensive or willing to say anything that would allow them to appear innocent or victimized. Bringing one or two along serves the purpose of having witnesses in the event of false statements being made. However, when you choose the right people, they can also offer wise counsel to both people involved.

- **Notice that Jesus doesn't tell us to choose one or two people who will see your side, agree with you, or defend you even if you're wrong. So how should you choose the people who will go with you? Are there certain traits they should have?**

*Answer:* Though answers may vary, be sure to point out the following things: These people should be wise. They should be able to see the story from both sides and be willing to help both people see where they may be wrong. If conflict is to be handled according to Christ's commands, they should also be Christ-followers.

It's important for students to understand that Jesus was not encouraging the offended person to find someone who would simply support them, back them up, and help them to be right. His desire is for Christ-followers to work toward reconciliation in relationships. To help students understand this, **say something like:**

- **We live in a culture that often encourages a “me first” attitude. We are told we must look out for ourselves. When two people have an argument or experience conflict, they typically desire to be right more than admit wrongs. Christ calls His followers to behave differently. We see in this passage that He calls His followers to use all possible avenues to restore relationships.**

Then, ask:

- **As with the first step of reconciliation in verse 15, there are two possible responses. What are these?**

*Answer:* The other person will either listen, and the relationship is on the way to reconciliation or they won't listen and it's necessary to take one more step.

**THEN**, have students look again at Matthew 18. Read the first part of verse 17, the third step in dealing with conflict. Ask:

- **After you have tried to fix your relationship one on one and with mediation from others, Jesus offers one more step if those don't work. What is the third step?**

*Answer:* Bring it before the church.

- **This is not something we are accustomed to seeing in the church today. What are some ways we can put this instruction into practice when dealing with conflict in relationships?**

*Answer:* This step, in essence, brings the first two together. They build together rather than stand-alone. Students may have a variety of ways of addressing this. Some ideas may include meeting together with a small group leader or your student minister. This meeting should also include the people who were part of your second meeting.

- **Is there any guarantee that this is going to work to reconcile the relationship? If none of these steps work, what does Jesus tell His followers they should do?**

*Answer:* No. “Treat him as you would a pagan or tax collector”

- **In Scripture, men like Matthew and Zacchaeus, were described as tax collectors. Based on what you know about their stories and their interactions with Jesus, what does this say about how we should ultimately treat someone who refuses to reconcile a relationship?**

*Answer:* You cannot force them to restore the relationship, however, if the day comes when they are repentant and willing to reconcile the relationship, every effort should be made for restoration. Though people like tax collectors and pagans were known to behave in opposition to Christ’s ways, grace and forgiveness were always available for them. We must have the same attitude and willingness to forgive that Christ demonstrated.

**FINALLY**, transition to The Last Word by leading students to think about their own attitude when dealing with someone who has hurt or offended them. **Say something like:**

- **For us to have true reconciliation and for Christ’s steps to resolving conflict to work, we must go into this process with the proper attitude. That attitude is one that should mirror Christ’s own attitude.**

## THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** To help define the modern day equivalent of Jesus’ conflict resolution strategy, and to commit to following it.
- **Set-Up:** Have either a large piece of paper and markers. Write the title “Steps to Reconciliation” across the top.

**FIRST**, have students turn to Philippians 2 in their Bibles. Read or have a student read verses 1-11. **Say something like:**

- **These verses give a description of Christ’s attitude and instruct His followers to have this same attitude. What is one word that can be used to summarize this attitude?**

*Answer:* Humility (showing tenderness and compassion, considering others first).

- **Why does our attitude matter when resolving conflict?**

*Answer:* If we go into this process with an attitude of pride instead of humility, true godly reconciliation will never occur.

**THEN**, create a list on the large paper with your students. **Say something like:**

- **The first step to experiencing resolving conflict is making sure we have a proper attitude.**

Begin the list by writing “1. Attitude of Christ=Humility” on the paper. Then, have students recall the discussion and complete the list with something like:

2. Approach one-on-one
3. Include one or two others
4. Bring it to the church
5. Separate yourself
6. Maintain attitude of grace and forgiveness

**NEXT, say something like:**

- **This list is one that comes from Christ. It isn't something we sat together and made up. If we want to live as Christ-followers and live our lives as He did, then we must follow His instructions. Will you commit to handle future conflict this way?**

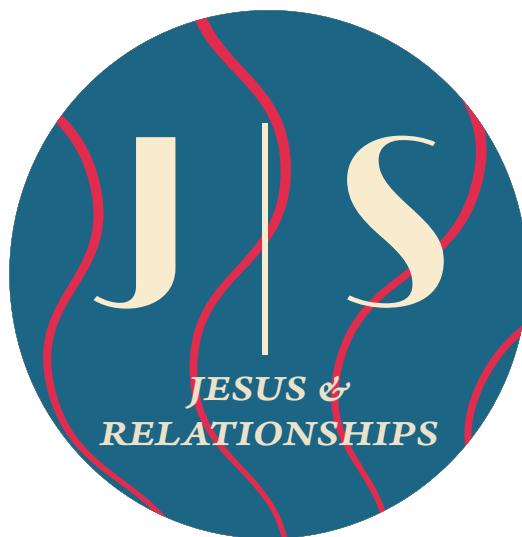
**FINALLY**, allow students to reflect on this. Challenge them to take this seriously, as odd as it may sound from a worldly perspective. Encourage any feedback or questions. Then close in prayer.

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## LESSON 4: RELATIONSHIP NUMBER 1

**WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO LEARN:** Their relationship with Jesus must be the number one relationship in their lives.

**WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO DO WITH WHAT THEY'VE LEARNED:** To evaluate their relationship priorities and make any necessary changes.

**Scripture Focus:** Matthew 10:34-39, Luke 14:26-27, 1 John 4:20-21, John 13:35

**OVERVIEW:** There's no doubt about it: this is a passage that is hard for our modern ears. Jesus was shooting pretty straight here. Why? Because He knew two things: First, He knew that He must be the most important relationship in His followers' lives. Anything less would be a pale version of faith. Second, Jesus knew that this level of priority goes against our sin natures. We allow relationships with family, friends, and even love interests to take precedence over our relationship with Jesus. Here we see Jesus using strong language to make a point. Jesus knew that for many people, loving Him would drive a wedge between the meaningful relationships in their lives. That may or may not be the case for your students. But Jesus' words here are still true: our relationship with Him must take priority over every other relationship in our lives.

## TEACHER PREP VIDEO

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To access your "Jesus And Relationships Lesson 4 Teacher Prep Video," click on the URL below.

- <https://youthministry360.com/jesus-and-relationship-teacher-prep>

## BIBLE BACKGROUND

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## THE DETAILS

- **Author:** Matthew, a former tax collector, was a disciple of Jesus and a firsthand witness to the stories he relates in his gospel.
- **Time frame:** Most people hold to Matthew’s gospel being written in the late 50’s or 60’s AD, though there are some who think it was written after the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD.
- **Purpose:** Matthew was writing to a primarily Jewish audience to convince them that Jesus was indeed the long-awaited Messiah. But he was probably aware of a Gentile audience, as his gospel makes the case that the saving truth of Christ is for all nations.

## THE SETTING

In Matthew chapter 10, Jesus is commissioning His 12 disciples for the mission ahead of them. He is speaking to them to prepare them for what is to come and informing them of some things they may expect to encounter. While following Jesus may have seemed exciting at first, He is preparing them for a rude welcome and changes in relationships that they may not expect.

## THE MAIN POINT

Ultimately, Jesus is instructing them that He is to be their priority and most important relationship. Following Him means dying to selfish desires and pleasures, as well as complete obedience and abandon to Him alone. While it is in our nature to seek approval from other humans or fulfill our own desires, a Christ-follower is determined to trust and obey Christ first and foremost.

# LESSON PLAN

The Lesson Plan contains three elements: An introductory activity called The Lead-In; the Bible study section called The Main Event; an application-focused segment called The Last Word.

## THE LEAD IN

- **Goal:** To lead students to begin thinking about what it means to make Jesus the priority in their lives.
- **Set-Up:** You'll need to arrange to play the Lesson 4 "Lead-In" PowerPoint Game located in your Lesson 4 folder (you can simply read the questions off of the "Lead-In" PDF if you don't have the ability to show a PowerPoint slideshow).

**FIRST**, arrange to play the "Lead-In" PowerPoint game. The game asks questions about foods that Americans claim as their favorites, and is meant to get students thinking about naming something as a favorite or a priority.

**THEN**, after you have played the game, have a group discussion about some of the students' favorite things using the following questions (all answers will vary):

- *What is your favorite sport/hobby?*
- *What is the best book you've ever read?*
- *What is the best place you've ever visited?*
- *What is one thing you want more than anything else?*

**FINALLY**, transition to The Main Event by **saying something like:**

• **There are many people, things, and interests in this world that we value and hold important. While these things are different from one person to another, we all have things we would consider to be a priority... something we want more than anything else. While there are many things we value, as followers of Christ, we should keep Jesus as our priority. Scripture tells us we are to love Him more than anyone or anything else.**

## THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** To help your students understand that their relationship with Jesus must be the number one relationship in their lives.
- **Set-Up:** None

**FIRST**, make sure students get caught up on what you've studied so far. See if anyone can recall what you learned the last three weeks. Use the following bullet points to help if needed:

- **Lesson 1:** You learned that understanding and grace are keys to Christ-centered relationships.
- **Lesson 2:** Students learned that there is no room for anger or hostility in Christ-centered relationships.
- **Lesson 3:** Students learned that Jesus laid out the right way to deal with conflict in a relationship.

**NEXT**, have students open their Bibles to Matthew 10. While they are doing this, use the Bible Background to give them some information about the passage. Then, once they have found the passage, read or have a student read Matthew 10:34-36. After reading, **ask students:**



- **Is there anything in this passage that seems a little off or wrong to you?**

*Answer:* Considering one of Jesus' names is Prince of Peace, it seems strange that He would say He has not come to bring peace. He commands us to love one another (the second greatest commandment) yet He says He has come to set families against each other.

**THEN**, before reconciling this, **say something like:**

- **Let's check out some more passages. Maybe they will help us to figure it out.**

Have one student find Luke 14:26-27, another find 1 John 4:20-21, and a third student find John 13:35. Have the first read the passage from Luke. **Then say something like:**

- **This seems to say something very similar but it uses a harsher word. In this passage, what does Christ say someone who wants to follow Him should do in regards to their family?**

*Answer:* Hate his/her family, including parents, siblings, and children but also hate his/her own life.

- **If we read only these passages and take them 100% literally, what do we learn about the relationships a Christ-follower has?**

*Answer:* If a follower is acting against their family or they hate those closest to them, they probably wouldn't have any relationships! They would likely not be the kind of person others would want to be around.

Explain that at this point, this kind of behavior seems to go against much of what Jesus' teaching and life represented. There must be something more to this.

**NEXT**, instruct the second student to read 1 John 4:20-21. **Ask students:**

- **What are your thoughts after hearing this?**

*Answer:* Answers will vary. Point out that these verses seem to be in direct contradiction to the others that you just read.

Have the third student read John 13:35. **Say something like:**

- **Ok, here's another passage where Jesus seems to contradict Himself! Is anyone else feeling a little confused?! Is Jesus contradicting Himself, or going against what we believe about the Bible and Jesus' character? As God, Jesus is incapable of deceit or dishonesty. So, what does it all mean? Let's check it out.**

**THEN**, have students return to the key passage, Matthew 10:34-39. **Read verses 34-36 aloud again. Say something like:**

- **The idea of a sword typically brings about the image or idea of war and violence. However, in this passage, the sword that separates two sides in a "battle" is a metaphor for the separation that is inevitable between those who follow Christ and those who don't. It is a symbol for the conflict and division that are likely to come our way.**

**Ask:**

- **Can you think why there may be conflict between these two groups of people, even within a family?**

*Answer:* Following Christ leads a person to hold different beliefs, convictions, and ideas. It also leads to a different behavior. These things will not align with what someone who doesn't follow Christ values.

- **So when Jesus tells us He didn't come to bring peace and we must hate those closest to us, is He giving us permission to treat them poorly? Can we use our beliefs and love for Christ to belittle or insult them?**

*Answer:* Absolutely not! We are still to display His character which includes humility, love, and compassion for others.

**NEXT**, explain that you're going to clear this all up now. What are they really to learn from this passage? Read or have a student read the remaining verses in the passage, verses 37-39.

- **How does verse 37 clarify what we have read previously?**

*Answer:* Jesus did not say we are not to love our families. However, He makes it very clear that we are to love Him more than any other.

**Say something like:**

- **Jesus doesn't want to be "just another person" to His followers. He requires a commitment from His followers that places Him in a position of top priority. When He says we must hate our mother and father, as well as all other family members, He is making a comparison. Jesus is saying that the love we have for Him should be so strong and hold such weight that the love we have for others should not even come close. He wants our total and unqualified allegiance to Him.**

**THEN**, focus on verses 38-39 (reread if necessary). **Ask students:**

- **What do these last two verses say about the love we have for our own lives?**

*Answer:* Taking up one's cross is a picture of death. It implies leaving behind one's own desires, preferences, and goals for the sake of following after Christ.

- **If someone wants to follow Christ like this, what are some areas of their life that may be affected?**

*Answers will vary.* But they may include making decisions that please Christ rather than others, having the character of Christ even if it isn't popular, choosing a career that allows for sharing the Gospel versus one that makes a lot of money.

Explain to students that following Christ is going to affect our relationships. It will force us to end some, it may cause tension in others, but ultimately, it will make our relationship with Christ stronger. His Word is clear that we can't please both man and God. Each of us must make the decision of whom we will follow.

**NEXT**, direct students to think about how following Christ may impact their relationships with their parents. Remind students that one of God's earliest commands was that children must honor their parents. **Ask:**

- **How can you show love, respect, and honor to your parents while also keeping Christ as the number one relationship in your life?**

*Answers may vary* but should include the point that when we love Christ and He is "number one" we will imitate Him, leading us to love others more than we love ourselves and serve them in humility. This attitude of humility will lead to an attitude of honor and respect. THIS pleases God.

**FINALLY**, transition to The Last Word by saying something like:

- **Keeping Christ as the number one relationship in our lives isn't going to guarantee that all of our relationships will be perfect. There will still be plenty of conflicts. We will still have disagreements. However, there are two things we must remember. First is that Christ has been very clear that we are to love Him most. He is to be the number one relationship in our lives. This means that He is the first we seek to please, regardless of whether other people agree with us or not. Second, when we love and follow Christ, we love others as we love ourselves. This will require that we die to ourselves and our own desires. It will mean showing kindness when we want to retaliate. It will mean putting the needs of others first when we are tempted to be selfish.**

- **Goal:** To have students evaluate their relationship priorities and make any necessary changes.
- **Set-Up:** Have a handout for each student with a copy of the hymn lyrics below on one side and a blank page on the back, along with a pen or pencil for each student.

**FIRST**, ask students to name what they think are some of the songs people in your church enjoy singing most. **Say something like:**

- **While there are many great hymns that have been sung for many, many years, there is one that is particularly good for this lesson. Rhea Miller wrote the old hymn “I’d Rather Have Jesus” in 1922. The lyrics are:**

*I’d rather have Jesus than silver or gold;  
I’d rather be His than have riches untold;  
I’d rather have Jesus than houses or land;  
I’d rather be led by His nail pierced hand.*

*I’d rather have Jesus than men’s applause;  
I’d rather be faithful to His dear cause;  
I’d rather have Jesus than worldwide fame;  
I’d rather be true to His holy name.*

**Say something like:**

- **The writer of this hymn identified exactly what we’ve talked about today. There is a choice that must be made. Do you want to please humans? Do you want man’s applause? Do you want to be popular? Or would you rather have Jesus? While it seems like the answer is easy, acting on that answer usually isn’t.**

**THEN**, have students turn their paper over to the blank side. Instruct them to think about the relationships in their lives and start a list, leaving some space between each. This list may contain anything from the distant relationship they may have with a teacher or other acquaintance to those as close as their best friend or family. **Say something like:**

- **All of these relationships are important in your life for one reason or another. But none of them can be the most important.**

**THEN**, have students consider how they may need to make some adjustments in order to place the priority on their relationship with Christ over these. Next to each relationship, instruct them to make some notes on what adjustments and changes they have identified that need to be made.

**FINALLY**, close by giving students time to pray over their list and with a time of you praying for them to intentionally place Christ as the number one priority in their lives.

- Don’t forget to distribute the devotions to your students this week. If you’re printing them, have them available for students as you wrap up class. If you’re texting a link, posting them on Social Media, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU...

- *Do you have questions about a lesson?*
- *Something that worked particularly well you want to share?*
- *Something that didn't work you want to bring up?*

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at [feedback@youthministry360.com](mailto:feedback@youthministry360.com).