



LESSON 35

3rd and 4th Grade

Principle: Not taking vengeance. Letting God judge

Bible Character(s): David

Scripture Reference: 1 Samuel 24, Romans 12

ATTENTION VOLUNTEER: Today's lesson covers the topic of revenge. Children from foster or adoptive homes or children who have experienced abuse or neglect of any kind could be very sensitive to this lesson. A child should not be forced or coerced into sharing a story unwillingly. There does not need to be the awkward silence waiting for a child to share if they are not ready. Should a child choose to share an experience of deep hurt, their response should be welcomed and heard, as well as communicated to the coach or children's director to further address the situation. Please don't hesitate to let your coach or children's director know if you need assistance at any time during this lesson.



PERSONAL PREPARATION: Before this weekend, please read 1 Samuel 24 and Romans 12:17-21. Saul is searching for David, in order to kill him, when he happens to enter a cave where David and his men are hiding. David had the opportunity to kill Saul, but he passed it up. David trusted in God's goodness and sovereignty, knowing that God was the ultimate judge and that God would deal with Saul as He had planned. David did not try to take matters into his own hands. How often do you try to take control of a situation instead of allowing God to work? Do you take revenge on someone who has hurt you or wronged you? In what ways are you not trusting in God's goodness and sovereignty in your life? God wants us to trust Him with our lives, and give Him our problems from the start. He does not want us to take control to get what we want. Spend some time reflecting on how God wants you to lay down your pride and selfishness in order to allow Him to take control.

PLUG IN TIME - 5-10 minutes as the kids begin to arrive

Arrive early to check the supplies in the bin and review the lesson. Write today's principle on the whiteboard. Remember to greet all campers upon arrival; meet their parents; welcome and introduce all visitors. Create a welcoming cabin for all campers!

What is Revenge?

Supplies:

Worksheet – "Revenge is" section (1 per camper)

What does it mean to get revenge on someone? (To get back at them; to hurt someone who has hurt you; to get even with someone.) (Give each camper a worksheet. Read each phrase to the campers and help them think through which phrases represent revenge. Have the campers circle the revenge phrases.) **Have you ever felt like you wanted to get back at someone, or get revenge on him/her? What did you do when that happened? Did you try to get back at him/her or not?** (They will use the rest of the worksheet later in the lesson.)



BIG GROUP Time - 35-40 minutes

As you line up, remind campers we are going to have fun as an entire Camp Grace group! We are going to live out GRACE by **Glorifying God** through worship, **Respecting All Leaders**, and **Accepting Responsibility** to listen with attentive ears, minds, and hearts - fully **Celebrating Christ** with passion! We should **Encourage Others** to do the same, by not distracting them from their worship of God.

***Take your cabin flag to Big Group.**

The Bridge to Small Group

Today we are going to learn about the way in which God wants us to respond when we are hurt or wronged by others. We will see how David responds when he has the opportunity to get revenge on Saul.

Small Group Time - 25-30 minutes

Getting Started

If your cabin did well in Big Group, acknowledge it. If not, take a couple of minutes to talk about how they can do better next time.

What did you learn about in Big Group? Who was the staff member worried about in the skit today? (Butch Blocker.) **What was he planning to do?** (A prank.) **Why did he want to pull a prank on Butch?** (To get back at him.) **What did he learn from the Bible about what God says about revenge?**

Last week we saw David volunteer to fight. Who did he fight against? (Goliath.) **How did David fight Goliath?** (David trusted in God to fight his battle for him.) **God was faithful to help David defeat Goliath. Just like God fought David's battle, God fights our battles too if we give them to him.**

After David's fight with Goliath, David became friends with Jonathan, Saul's son. In fact, they became best friends. Jonathan warned David that Saul was angry, jealous, and wanted to kill David. David then left to live away from Saul. Saul continued to be the king of Israel.

Today, we're going to continue to see what happens with David and Saul. Saul found out that David went into the wilderness of En-gedi ("in-geh-dee"). Let's read the Bible in 1 Samuel 24 [NLT].

1 Samuel 24:2-4

2 So Saul chose 3,000 elite troops from all Israel and went to search for David and his men near the rocks of the wild goats.

3 At the place where the road passes some sheepfolds, Saul went into a cave to relieve himself. But as it happened, David and his men were hiding farther back in that very cave!

4 "Now's your opportunity!" David's men whispered to him. "Today the LORD is telling you, 'I will certainly put your enemy into your power, to do with as you wish.'" So David crept forward and cut off a piece of the hem of Saul's robe.

Getting Even or Forgive



The purpose is for the campers to think about times in their own life when they wanted to get revenge against someone, and to study what God would want us to do in these situations.

Supplies:

Worksheet – circles side (1 per camper)

Teacher's Guide – "Get Even or Forgive Situations" (2 per bin)

Have campers turn worksheets to the side with the red and green circles, then have them fold the paper in half to make a sign with the red circle on one side and the green on the other. The green circle will represent forgiveness and the red circle will represent get even.

Read through and discuss the situations and responses. If the response shows forgiveness, have the campers stand up and show the "forgive" side of their signs. If the response demonstrates getting revenge, the campers should squat down and hold up the "get even" side.

Tie It Together



David had the perfect opportunity to get revenge on Saul for trying to kill him. David's men encourage him to take advantage of the opportunity. Can you think of any times in your life when you wanted to get revenge on someone for something they did to you? What happened? Did you have friends encouraging you to get revenge? Do you think getting revenge is the right choice to make? Why or why not? Do we have the right to judge what others deserve? Let's see what the Bible says in Romans.

Romans 12:17-21

"17 Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. 18 Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.

19 Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say,

*"I will take revenge;
I will pay them back,"
says the Lord.*

20 Instead,

*"If your enemies are hungry, feed them.
If they are thirsty, give them something to drink.
In doing this, you will heap*

burning coals of shame on their heads.”
21 Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.”

What does this passage tell us about revenge? (Allow responses.) Romans 12 tells us not to pay back evil with more evil. We are to do everything we can to live in peace with everyone. Do we have the right to judge what others deserve? (Allow responses.) No, we cannot judge what others deserve, but we can decide how we will respond when we get wronged or harmed by someone. We can choose to either give them what we think they deserve, which would be repaying evil with evil, or we can choose to show grace to them just as God has shown grace to us for our sin.

David had his chance to take Saul out when Saul was most vulnerable. Do you think David chose to repay evil with evil, or show grace to Saul and leave the judgment up to God? (Allow responses.)

Let's continue reading the Bible and find out.

1 Samuel 24:5-7

5 But then David's conscience began bothering him because he had cut Saul's robe. 6 "He said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do this to my lord the king. I shouldn't attack the LORD's anointed one, for the LORD himself has chosen him." 7 So David restrained his men and did not let them kill Saul.

Even though Saul was angry at David and tried to kill him, David knew that Saul was still the king of Israel and that God did not want David to kill Saul. David was still under Saul's authority, and he was ultimately under God's authority. David chose to obey God and did not kill Saul. He knew that God would judge Saul. David was not responsible for correcting Saul's actions.

Saul left the cave, and then David came out and called to Saul. He bowed down to Saul.

1 Samuel 24:9-15

9 Then he shouted to Saul, "Why do you listen to the people who say I am trying to harm you? 10 This very day you can see with your own eyes it isn't true. For the LORD placed you at my mercy back there in the cave. Some of my men told me to kill you, but I spared you. For I said, 'I will never harm the king—he is the LORD's anointed one.' 11 Look, my father, at what I have in my hand. It is a piece of the hem of your robe! I cut it off, but I didn't kill you. This proves that I am not trying to harm you and that I have not sinned against you, even though you have been hunting for me to kill me.

12 "May the LORD judge between us. Perhaps the LORD will punish you for what you are trying to do to me, but I will never harm you. 13 As that old proverb says, 'From evil people come evil deeds.' So you can be sure I will never harm you. 14 Who is the king of Israel trying to catch anyway? Should he spend his time chasing one who is as worthless as a dead dog or a single flea? 15 May the LORD therefore judge which of us is right and punish the guilty one. He is my advocate, and he will rescue me from your power!"

In verse 12, David said, "May the Lord judge between us." What did David know about God for him to have had that response? (Allow responses.) He knew that God is sovereign. Genesis 1:1 says, "In the

beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” God created all things and therefore He rules over all things. Even though Saul was the king of Israel, God is the Heavenly King and the King of Kings. God is King over Saul. David knew this, and he knew that God was in control. David did not try to do this his way. He pointed out to Saul that he could have killed Saul, but he chose not to. David recognized that it was God’s place to judge Saul, not his place.

Just like David did not have the authority to judge Saul, we do not have the authority to judge others. When we try to judge others based on our own standards of what is right and wrong and what is deserved, we are lessening God’s sovereignty and placing ourselves above Him. Abraham calls God “the Judge of all earth” (Gen. 18:25) and God says of Himself, “I, the LORD, speak only what is true and declare only what is right.” (Isaiah 45:19) We do not have the right to decide what is right and wrong and what punishment is deserved. God declares what is right and He is our judge. God freely gives us grace even though we do not deserve it and He wants us to show grace to others when they do not deserve it.

Letting Go and Letting God



The purpose is to look at different situations to see the difference between a vengeful response and a forgiving response.

Supplies:

Worksheet – “Letting Go and Letting God” side (1 per camper)

Have campers turn to the “Letting Go & Letting God” side of their worksheets. Have the campers read the situations out loud and then fill in their answers. Then have them share their answers and talk about the difference between responding with vengeance and responding with forgiveness for each situation.

Tie It Together



What did you want to happen in each situation? Did you want the person who did something wrong to be punished for it? (Allow responses.) The sin in our heart causes us to want to get revenge, but God wants us to give situations to Him and trust that He will handle it however He feels necessary. We are to forgive instead and love our neighbors more than we love ourselves. Forgiving and loving others can be a hard thing to do when we feel like they deserve to be punished for harming or wronging us, but God already forgave us of our sin when all we deserved was death. We can forgive others and show them grace just like God forgave us and showed us grace. God is the final judge, and He calls us to forgive others instead of judging their actions.

The Courtroom



The purpose is to remind the campers that God is the creator of all and sovereign over all. He is the judge and should rule over all our relationships.

Supplies:

Worksheet – gavel section (1 per camper)

Markers/crayons

Have each camper write the following verse and verse reference on his/her gavel: "May the Lord judge between us." 1 Samuel 24:12. You may need/want to write the verse and reference on the white board to help them know how to write it. Go over the verse as they color the gavel.

Tie It Together



David recognized God's authority over everyone and everything. He is the creator of the world and therefore He is sovereign over all; the heavens and the earth are His courtroom. We do not have the responsibility to judge others. God is the final judge. Instead, God calls us to forgive others just as He has forgiven us. We can give everything to God because we can trust Him to judge others' actions.

Prayer Time

Spend some time in prayer to close small group time. Thank God for His forgiveness of our sin, and ask Him to help us forgive others as He has forgiven us.



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