



Bible Discussion Groups - Autumn 2021

Life Lessons from Luke

Session 3: Conflict and relationships

This Quiz is Murder!

All the famous people in the left-hand column were murdered – either in history or in fiction. Can you match the victim to their killer?

| Victim | Killer |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Julius Caesar | John Wilkes Booth |
| Albus Dumbledore | Brutus and others |
| Archduke Franz Ferdinand | Mark David Chapman |
| Mahatma Gandhi | Claudius |
| King Hamlet | Robert Ford |
| Jesse James | Nathuram Vinayak Godse |
| Bobby Kennedy | Reggie Kray |
| John Lennon | Gavrilo Princip |
| Abraham Lincoln | Jack Ruby |
| Jack McVitie | Bill Sikes |
| Harry Lee Oswald | Sirhan Sirhan |
| Nancy | Severus Snape |

Passage for small group study

Luke 6:27-42 NIV

6 ²⁷ 'But to you who are listening I say: love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who ill-treat you. ²⁹ If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. ³⁰ Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. ³¹ Do to others as you would have them do to you.

³² 'If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. ³³ And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. ³⁴ And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. ³⁵ But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. ³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

³⁷ 'Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. ³⁸ Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.'

³⁹ He also told them this parable: 'Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into a pit? ⁴⁰ The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher.

⁴¹ 'Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? ⁴² How can you say to your brother, "Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye," when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

1. This passage contains one of Jesus' longest pieces of teaching about conflict and relationships. Let's start by getting clear three basic commands Jesus issues in the first paragraph: *Love* (v27), *Bless* (v28), *Give* (v30). These verbs don't sound very surprising, but the contexts in which Jesus applies them are. Why do you think Jesus' first hearers might have found his teaching very surprising and challenging? What is your reaction to it?
2. In the second paragraph, Jesus explains *why* Christians should respond to conflict in these surprising ways. He contrasts the normal behaviour of "sinners" (verses 32-34) with the character of God (verses 35-36). In what way is God's attitude exceptional? Why is that good news for us?
3. If we read just the third paragraph of this passage (verses 37-38), we might conclude that Christians are saved *only* because of the way we treat other people. (The rest of Jesus' teaching tells us otherwise!) How does verse 36 help us to understand these verses in context?
4. The final two paragraphs (verses 39-42) teach us how to behave when we are tempted to criticise others. Can you summarise Jesus' command in a single sentence? What dangers does Jesus warn us of if we disobey this?
5. Many people feel that Jesus' commands in this passage are very challenging, but they are designed to apply to everyday situations. Choose one or two of these scenarios and try to work out how you would respond in line with Jesus' commands:
 - a. Mr A is heard remarking rather too loudly that Mrs B should come off the coffee rota because she never arrives on time when it's her turn, and she spends too long chatting to people at the hatch. Mrs B says she has been on that rota for 40 years and nobody has ever complained before. She says Mr A must apologise or she will resign.
 - b. Mrs C's children are always running up and down in the church car park before the service, making a lot of noise when other people are trying to get into a worshipful frame of mind for the service. Mr D, a senior church member, shouted at Mrs C last week and told her it was a disgrace that she (quote) "let her children run around like animals".
 - c. Miss E, a member of the church youth group, says that the church is failing to attract young people because the traditional hymns are too boring. Her boyfriend (who is not currently a church member) plays the electric guitar and she wants him to be allowed to lead the music group. Dr F, the elderly organist, is not keen.
6. How well do you think you can obey these commands of Jesus in your daily life? Pray for God's help to follow Jesus in the week ahead.

Conflict and relationships

Some quotations (not from the Bible!)

1. Don't get mad, get even.

Robert F. Kennedy, US politician (1925-68)

2. All war is a symptom of man's failure as a thinking animal.

John Steinbeck, Novelist and Nobel Literature laureate (1902-68)

3. In conflict, be fair and generous.

Lao Tzu, Ancient Chinese philosopher

4. An eye for an eye will only make the whole world blind.

Mahatma Gandhi, Father of Indian independence (1869-1948)

5. Peace is not absence of conflict, it is the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means.

Ronald Reagan, Actor and later US president (1911-2004)

6. Happiness is overrated. There has to be conflict in life.

Brad Pitt, Actor and film producer (born 1963)

Closing prayer (The Lord's Prayer)

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your Kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours

Now and for ever. Amen