**1. Motivate**

What event in your life made you feel like you had finally experienced “being an adult”?

* getting a driver’s license
* leaving home to go to college
* graduating from college
* going to get a marriage license without parents to sign permission
* getting a job
* moving out of home to go to a first job

A video introduction for the lesson is available. View it at <http://tinyurl.com/3c5rdph3> If you have no wi-fi where you teach it works better to download the video to your computer from <http://tinyurl.com/yb87aybt>

* filling out form 1040
* traveling on an airplane by myself

**2. Transition**

Those are milestones in our maturing experiences.

* Our faith is also a maturing experience.
* Faith matures as you humbly obey God.

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 Mature Faith Forgives

Listen for a warning.

Luke 17:1-4 (NIV) Jesus said to his disciples: "Things that cause people to sin are bound to come, but woe to that person through whom they come. 2 It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin. 3 So watch yourselves. "If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. 4 If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, 'I repent,' forgive him."

How did He illustrate the severity of being the cause of someone being tempted to sin?

* better to be thrown into the sea
* with millstone tied around your neck
* sounds like the idea of mafia giving you concrete overshoes
* note this is not condoning suicide
* more an example of hyperbole

How can we guard against tempting others to sin?

* living in submission to God’s Holy Spirit
* allow God’s Word to affect how you live
* read it and heed it
* be quick to seek forgiveness yourself – you find you don’t want to have to keep doing that
* pray that God will guide your words, your behavior

What steps did Jesus offer for dealing with someone who offends us?

* watch yourselves
* if you see someone succumb to temptation and sin go to them in person
* “rebuke” them, reprove, reproach, reprimand, warn, admonish strongly
* go in love, encourage one another in faith
* if/when he repents (turns away from the sin) forgive him
* do this repeatedly if necessary

How are we to deal with the repeat offender? What principle of forgiveness was Jesus promoting?

* if he repeats 7 times, forgive 7 times
* probably this is not a limit
* forgiveness knows no limitation, forgiveness is to be habitual
* you don’t keep a ledger book to keep track of offenses and forgives
* Note this does not mean continuing to live with habitual abuse (parent, spouse, child)
* you can still forgive, but not continue to expose yourself to the danger

What do you find most difficult about forgiving the same person repeatedly?

* Why do they keep doing that?
* every time they do it, it HURTS
* again, God does not expect us to continue on in an abusive (physical, emotional, verbal) situation
* it means their asking forgiveness begins to be meaningless
* they don’t really seem sorry, they don’t seem to regret their action – even though they say so

Though not explicit in these verses, why do you think being willing to forgive calls for a mature faith?

* when we refuse to forgive, we are forgetting how much we have been forgiven by God
* takes wisdom and tact to go to someone and confront them
* also takes wisdom and love to not act in ways that causes others to sin

3.2 Mature Faith Goes into Action

Listen for faith in action.

Luke 17:5-6 (NIV) The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" 6 He replied, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you.

In the context of this passage, why would the disciples make this request?

* maybe they (like we) find it hard to forgive, especially repeatedly
* could have been referring to the occasion when a man told Jesus, “Lord I believe, help me with my unbelief.”
* it’s easy to say, “Just believe”, but harder to put it into practice

Consider the effectiveness of living by a mature faith rather than trying to determine quantity.

* In one sense, our faith is not strong or weak like a muscle in our body
* Strength of faith doesn’t depend something like on how hard we squint our eyes when we pray, or raising hands, or kneeling instead of sitting
* Strength of faith depends on the object of our faith – who or what are we depending on?
* If I put my sincere faith in a defective chair and it collapses on me, strength or sincerity of faith doesn’t matter
* If I put my faith in a sturdy chair and it holds, it’s because it is a good chair, not the quantity of my faith
* Mature faith will be *totally convinced* that the Object of our faith is Almighty God who is loving and sovereign

How do these concepts fit in with Jesus’ example of the mustard seed?

* a small seed is compared to “small faith”
* small faith in a big God can accomplish big things
* small faith might be times when we come totally to the end of our own resources and have nowhere else to go but to God
* we throw ourselves on the mercy and grace of God, believing that only He can meet our need
* then the answer that comes is often way bigger than we could have imagined
* we know for sure that it is God who has accomplished it

What are some ways God has increased your faith on your spiritual journey?

* studying the attributes of God
* reading how God worked in the lives of individuals in Scripture
* reading God’s promises
* seeing God working in the past in my life, in the lives of my family
* remember that God took care of it then, He can do it again
* seeing God answer prayer
* seeing God change people’s lives

What are the obstacles that prevent believers from acting in faith?

* lack of knowledge about God
* Satan’s lies that they believe
	+ when you did “that”, God doesn’t love you any more
	+ your problem is too small for God to pay attention to
	+ your problem is so big, even God can’t fix it
* you need to confess and repent of your own failures
* we get upset when God doesn’t answer prayers that are outside of His will and purpose for us
* we don’t believe God is the ultimate power and authority
* we are not convinced of God’s love for us, His desire to accomplish good things in our lives

3.3 Mature Faith Does Not Seek Acclaim

Listen for who is in charge.

Luke 17:7-10 (NIV) "Suppose one of you had a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Would he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, 'Come along now and sit down to eat'? 8 Would he not rather say, 'Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink'? 9 Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? 10 So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.'"

What are the anticipated answers to the rhetorical questions used in telling the story?

* Would he say come eat with me – **no**
* Would he say fix my meal, serve it – **yes**
* Would he thank him for obedience – **no**

What attitude should we have in working for the Lord? How are we to look at our faithful service to the Lord?

* God is our master
* we have submitted to Him

What kinds of things might we be tempted to wish for as a result of our involvement in church ministries?

* too often we serve in a church role and hope to get noticed
* we might be willing to give towards a new facility only if our name is on a plaque
* we hope to gain “fame and fortune” by singing, playing, teaching, mentoring
* maybe some feel they should get paid for involvement in ministry (sing, teach, play an instrument)

What should be our attitude toward serving the Lord in practical ways?

* God calls us to obedience, service in His kingdom
* we are serving in Spiritual ministries for eternal rewards
* It’s true that some roles of a ministry are professional or vocational, but the Body of Christ is called to minister to one another as lay persons, ordinary folks
* our rewards are spiritual rewards, not financial or recognition

⇨ This is another element of mature faith

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

Application

Clean the Slate.

* Have you caused someone to stumble?
* If possible, ask if you could meet to talk and ask to be forgiven.
* Is there someone you need to forgive?
* Has someone hurt you or wronged you?
* Choose to start the process of forgiving that person this week.

Pray.

* Is there something that God is leading you to do, but you have found it difficult to take the leap of faith and just do it?
* Ask God to increase your faith and take the plunge.

Dare.

* Step outside your comfort zone by serving a friend lavishly, and even anonymously.
* See what happens!

Word Search



Humph! This looks like an easy one. There’s four words in the first row! And no backwards or bottom up words. There are some diagonals. The words will remind you of your Bible Study. I see “millstonette” but I don’t think that’s in the passage. Can you find more words than that the people in that other class? Help is available at <http://tinyurl.com/yb87aybt>. And the color page! Humph! And the Crossword!