

"Between The Lines" LESSON 1

"THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT"

MAIN FOCUS

*God has forgiven us of so much,
we must forgive others also.*

POWER VERSE

*"If you forgive those who sin
against you, your heavenly
Father will forgive you."*

- Matthew 6:14

BIG IDEA

*"If You Wanna Live Like He Wants
You To Live, You Gotta Learn How
to Forgive!"*

Leader's Info

When someone hurts us or does us wrong, it can be very difficult for us to forgive them. Often, we hold onto the hurt, the pain, the memory of what they have done and choose not to forgive them.

Forgiving someone is hard to do, but NOT forgiving is even worse. For a Christian, that's not even an option. We must not live our lives holding back forgiveness from someone, no matter what they have done to hurt us. If we do, it hurts us much more than it ever hurts them.

In this lesson, the children will look at the parable of the Unforgiving Servant and learn that we must choose to forgive others because God has forgiven us of so much more.

★ **INTRO VIDEO**
"MEET DEWEY WRIGHT"

★ **OFFERING TIME**

★ **PRAISE SONGS**

★ **CHARACTER SKIT**
"FARMER COBB"

★ **POWER VERSE VIDEO**
*"IF YOU FORGIVE THOSE WHO SIN
AGAINST YOU, YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER
WILL FORGIVE YOU." - MATTHEW 6:14*

★ **GAME TIME**
"FORGIVE & FORGET"

★ **WORSHIP SONGS**

★ **ILLUSTRATED MESSAGE**
"IT'S TIME TO FORGIVE!"

★ **"RAP IT UP" VIDEO**

★ **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

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GAME TIME

"FORGIVE & FORGET"

WORSHIP SONGS

ILLUSTRATED MESSAGE

"IT'S TIME TO FORGIVE!"

"RAP IT UP" VIDEO

REVIEW QUESTIONS

ORDER OF SERVICE

1. _____
by _____
2. _____
by _____
3. _____
by _____
4. _____
by _____
5. _____
by _____
6. _____
by _____
7. _____
by _____
8. _____
by _____
9. _____
by _____
10. _____
by _____
11. _____
by _____
12. _____
by _____
13. _____
by _____
14. _____
by _____
15. _____
by _____
16. _____
by _____
17. _____
by _____

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CHARACTER SKIT

Character: Farmer Cobb (a "good ol' boy" redneck type who is simple-minded, but good-hearted)

(Play Track #4 off the Music CD—Farmer Cobb's theme music)

Leader: Well, well, well! It looks like we have a new friend here today!

Farmer: Hidey-ho there, everybody! The name is Farmer Cobb! My full name is "Korn Onie Cobb", but you can just call me Farmer Cobb. I am a farmer who LOVES the Lord, and I am ready to get to hoppin' helping you teach all about the "pair of bulls" today.

Leader: I'm sorry. The what?

Farmer: The pair of bulls. Didn't I hear you say that you were learning about the pair of bulls today? Because I am a farmer—and if anybody knows about bulls it's me.

Leader: I'm sure you do, Farmer Cobb. But, actually we aren't talking about a "pair of bulls", we are talking about Parables. Parables were stories that Jesus told in order to teach us some very important spiritual lessons. Today we are talking about Forgiveness.

Farmer: Really? Well, then I might be in the wrong place. I'm not in a very "forgiving" mood. Things have been going real bad down on the farm.

Leader: Oh no! Sounds serious!

Farmer: It is! And all because of that no-good-snake-in-the-grass-not-so-nice-person Farmer Jenkins!!

Leader: Who?

Farmer: Farmer Jenkins! He's meaner than a wild hog and he smells twice as bad!

Leader: Farmer Cobb, that's not a very nice thing to say! What could he have done that would make you so upset?

Farmer: I tell ya what he did! Two days ago I decided I was gonna make a statue in my front yard of my boyhood hero!

Leader: That's a neat idea. Who did you make the statue of? Was it Superman? Batman? George Washington?

Farmer: Nope! I'm a farmer! It was a statue of John Deere!

Leader: John Deere???

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CHARACTER SKIT (CONTINUED)

Farmer: Yep! All my farm equipment is John Deere stuff! Don't nuthin' run like a Deere!

Leader: OK. So, What does this have to do with Farmer Jenkins?

Farmer: I'm fixin' to tell ya, stop bein' so impatient! Last night Farmer Jenkins snuck onto my farm and stuck ANTLERS onto my John Deer statue!

Leader: He what??

Farmer: That's right! He stuck antlers on that poor little statue's head! And not even deer antlers! They were MOOSE antlers!

Leader: I'm so sorry.

Farmer: It's that old Farmer Jenkins who should be sorry! The statue's so ugly now it scared all my animals! The chickens are laying scrambled eggs! The cows have got the milkshakes! The ducks are all QUACKED UP!!

Leader: That sounds like a really rough time, Farmer Cobb. But at least you've forgiven Farmer Jenkins, right?

Farmer: FORGIVE?!?! HA! I'll GIVE 'em something, alright! Tonight, I'm gonna go on over to his farm and give 'em the business end of my pitchfork! You know what I always say! Pitchfork + bohiney = OUCH!!!

Leader: Farmer Cobb! That's not the right way to be at all! The Bible says we have to forgive others when they do bad things to us! Haven't you ever heard of turning the other cheek?

Farmer: Oh, I'll turn the other cheek all right...*(begins turning in one direction)* but when I come back around to the other side-I'm a gonna poke him again!!! *(spins and jabs the air with his pitchfork)*

Leader: That's not what I mean. God commands us to forgive others, no matter what they have done! God's forgiven you of all of your sins, right?

Farmer: Yeppers.

Leader: Well, we are learning in our Parable today that since God has forgiven us, we should forgive everybody else! It even goes on to say that if you can't forgive somebody, God won't give you any forgiveness when you ask for it.

Farmer: It does??

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CHARACTER SKIT (CONTINUED)

Leader: It sure does. So, rather than trying to pay back Farmer Jenkins—I think you need to forgive him in your heart.

Farmer: Well, I cotton-pickin' guarantee you I better forgive him. After all, I want God to forgive me. Besides, God has already forgiven me of so much. It's the least I can do to forgive other people.

Leader: Now, you're talking.

Farmer: Of course I'm talking. How else could you hear me? Duh!

Leader: No, I mean—oh nevermind!

Farmer: Nevermind is right. I gotta git on out of here and go tell Farmer Jenkins I forgive him. See ya later, mashed potatoes!

(play Track #4 as Farmer Cobb exits)

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GAME TIME

"FORGIVE & FORGET"

Items Needed For Game:

- * Starting line
- * Chalk board or poster board
- * a small container to put the playing pieces in
- * two contestants



Preparation: Print the playing pieces (found on the next page). Cut them up and place them in the small container. Decide a point in the room as the "starting line" and a separate point (at least 15-20 "steps" away from the starting line) as the finish line.

Choose one boy and one girl to participate in the game. Say, "We are talking about how we need to forgive others when they hurt or disappoint us. Today we are going to play a game called 'Forgive & Forget.'" "

How To Play: Both contestants stand at the starting line. They take turns pulling a playing piece from the container and reading it aloud. They follow the instructions on the piece of paper. If their piece says, "Your sister broke your favorite toy. You get mad and break her favorite toy. Move back two steps," that is what they do. If their piece of paper says, "Your Dad ran over your bicycle. You forgive and forget. Move forward three steps," that is what they do.

The first contestant to cross the finish line WINS!!!!

After the game say, "When we choose to forgive, we ALWAYS win!"

"Between The Lines" LESSON 1

"THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT"

GAME TIME (CONTINUED)

<p>Your friend said something mean to you and you stayed mad at him for 3 days! Lose a turn</p>	<p>Your sister hit you and you hit her back. Move back 2 spaces</p>	<p>Your brother broke your favorite CD, so you broke his sunglasses. Move back 3 spaces</p>
<p>Your friend at school tripped you, so you put gum in her hair. Move back 2 spaces</p>	<p>Your best friend said he was coming over, but never came. You told him you wouldn't be his friend. Move back 1 space.</p>	<p>Your brother said he was sorry for ruining your new shoes, but you pored milk into his fish tank anyway. Move back 3 spaces</p>
<p>Your mom sent you to your room so you kicked a hole in the wall. Go back to START</p>	<p>Your dad couldn't take you on his fishing trip so you wouldn't talk to him for 3 days! Move back 1 space.</p>	<p>Your baby sister ate all your halloween candy, so you pulled her hair. Move back 1 space</p>
<p>Your friend hurt your feeling but you FORGAVE AND FORGOT Move forward 3 spaces</p>	<p>Your friends forgot to invite you to their party, but you FORGAVE AND FORGOT Change places with the person of your choice.</p>	<p>Your sister wore your favorite shirt without asking, but you Forgave and Forgot Move ahead 1 space</p>
<p>Your cousin pushed you in the pool as a joke, but you Forgave and Forgot. Move ahead 2 space and take another turn.</p>	<p>Your stranger cut in front of you in line at the movies, but you Forgave and forgot. Move ahead 2 spaces</p>	<p>A boy at school told everyone you were weird, but you Forgave and forgot. Move forward 4 spaces.</p>
<p>Your friend took your doll, but brought it back and said sorry, you Forgave and forgot. Move 2 spaces ahead.</p>	<p>A boy pulled the chair out from under you and you fell on the floor in front of everyone, but you forgave and forgot. Move ahead 4</p>	<p>Your friend told you he wasn't going to be your friend any more, but you Forgave and forgot. Move ahead 2 spaces.</p>
<p>Your neighbor broke a wheel on your bike, but you forgave and forgot. Move ahead 4 spaces</p>	<p>Your baby brother colored all over your homework, but you Forgave and forgot. Move ahead 2 spaces</p>	<p>Your sister shut your finger in the door on accident, but you forgave and forgot. Move ahead 3 spaces.</p>

"Between The Lines" LESSON 1

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ILLUSTRATED MESSAGE

"IT'S TIME TO FORGIVE"

Materials Needed: The Data CD; a fake crown; an apple; a salt shaker

Preparation: Open the PowerPoint presentation on the Data CD titled "Lesson One," begin with the slide titled "It's Time To Forgive"; familiarize yourself with the parable found in **Matthew 18:23-35**



The Message: (title slide)

Today we are looking at the Parable of The Unforgiving Servant. This is an amazing story that Jesus told in Matthew chapter 18. It's called a parable because, although it is a made up story, it has a very important lesson behind it. I am going to need some help retelling this story. So, I need some volunteers. (Choose a volunteer from the audience to come up and play the part of the King. Place the fake crown on their heads and declare them the "King of the world!" Then, choose someone in the audience to come up and play the part of the servant. Tell them to act out the story as you tell it. Have them repeat after you when you say one of the lines they are supposed to say.)

The story Jesus told went like this: "Once there was a King who decided it was time to collect all of the money he had loaned out to his servants. There was one servant in particular who owed him an amount equal to millions and millions of dollars. So, the King said, 'Bring that servant to me.' The servant came into the King's court and knelt down in front of the King. The King said, 'Servant, you have a large debt that you owe me. You must pay it now or else!' The servant was desperate. He said back to the king, 'Oh, King. Please have mercy on me! I promise I will pay it back. Give me more time!'

The king felt sorry for the servant and said, 'I have decided to forgive you of your debt. You no longer owe me ANY money.' The servant jumped for joy. He was so excited to be forgiven of the debt. He skipped out of the king's court whistling a tune. (now, pick another volunteer to come up and play the part of the second servant)

On his way out, he ran into a fellow servant. This servant had borrowed some money from the first servant. It wasn't a lot, just an amount equal to a few dollars. The first servant grabbed the second servant by the throat and screamed, 'Give me my money! You owe me money!' The second servant began to beg, 'Oh, please, sir. Give me more time. I will pay you back. Have mercy on me.' But, the first servant demanded that the second servant be thrown into prison until he was able to pay the debt.

Meanwhile, the King heard about what the first servant had done. He demanded the servant come back to his court. He said, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you your LARGE debt and you can't forgive your fellow servant of a SMALL debt? I command you to be thrown into prison until you pay back every penny of the money you owe me!' And, that's exactly what happened. THE END." (Have your audience give your volunteers a hand and send the volunteers back to their seats.)

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ILLUSTRATED MESSAGE

(CONTINUED)

What an amazing story, kids. Can you believe that the first servant would be SO mean as to not forgive the second servant even after he had already been forgiven of so much? Well, this story is very important because Jesus was telling it to make a point. You see, boys and girls, the King in the story represents GOD. The first servant represents you and me. The second servant represents those who have hurt us that we need to forgive.

Many times we are just like the first servant. We refuse to forgive those who have hurt us. Many times we do that because we are so upset with the person we want to make them hurt just like we hurt. We think by not forgiving them, we are "giving them what they deserve." The sad truth is...

1) Choosing NOT To Forgive Others, Hurts Me More Than It Hurts Them (slide)



You say, "No it doesn't. I don't feel bad at all about not forgiving them. So, how does it hurt ME more than it hurts them?" Let me explain. (pull out the apple) You see this apple? (take a bite) Aren't apples awesome? I mean, they are so sweet and tasty. I love apples. I love apple pie, apple sauce, apple juice. Apples are sweet and tasty. (pull out the salt shaker) But, what happens to that sweet taste when I take this salt and pour it all over the apple (pour a whole lot of salt on the apple)? What happens to that sweet taste? It turns bitter, doesn't it?

That is exactly what happens to us when we choose not to forgive someone. This apple represents our heart and our attitude. God created us to love others and treat them as we would want to be treated. But, when we choose NOT to forgive someone and we hold that in our hearts—it can lead to bitterness. The effect that the salt had on the apple is the same effect that unforgiveness can have on our hearts and attitude. We can become bitter, angry, full of bad feelings that will eat away at our heart and turn us into a person who is just angry and bitter all the time. **Hebrews 12:15** says, "Watch out that no poisonous root of bitterness grows up to trouble you, corrupting many." When you are filled with bitterness, it affects you and everyone around you.

That's one of the ways that choosing NOT to forgive hurts us more than it hurts the other person. But, there's an even BIGGER way that it hurts us...

2) When I Choose NOT To Forgive Others, God Will Not Forgive Me (slide)



You say, "But, you can't say that! God wouldn't do that!" But, it's not ME that is saying it. Jesus says exactly that after He told the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant. In **Matthew 18:35**, Jesus refers to the fact that the King refused to forgive the Unforgiving Servant and says, "That is what my Heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart." WOW!

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ILLUSTRATED MESSAGE

(CONTINUED)

That's what our Power Verse teaches us as well. If we choose NOT to forgive those who have hurt us, then God refuses to forgive US. Why? Because the whole reason Jesus came and died on a cross was so that ALL people could be forgiven. When we choose not to forgive others, we are acting like what Jesus did on the cross was not that important. Forgiveness IS important! And, it is a command from God to us—"Forgive those who have hurt you, just as I have forgiven you."

So, what should we do? If someone has hurt us, what we have done to them is exactly what the King had done to the Unforgiving Servant. We have locked them away in the prison of our unforgiving heart. What we need to do is make a choice today. We need to choose to go to them and set them free from the prison of our unforgiveness. We can do it. Why? Because...

3) Forgiveness Is A Choice! I Must Choose To Set Them Free! *(slide)*



We must go to them and set them free. Maybe you talk to them, maybe you write them a note, maybe you just pray and release them in your heart. But, when you choose to forgive that person, you release them from the prison of your unforgiveness. Then, ask God to forgive you for holding that bitterness in your heart. What you will find after doing that is, after you set that person free—YOU feel free as well! Forgiveness is a wonderful thing!!!

ALTAR RESPONSE: *(play soft music)*

Pray for those who have been holding bad feelings and unforgiveness in their hearts toward others. Many of the children may have been holding feelings in their heart against their parents, brothers, sisters, friends, or enemies. Some of them may need to go to the person this week and tell them that they are forgiven. There's an amazing freedom that is felt when we CHOOSE to forgive!

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"THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT"

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1. What was today's Big Idea?**
Answer: "If You Wanna Live Like He Wants You To Live, You Gotta Learn How to Forgive!"
- 2. What was the name of the reporter in our video today?**
Answer: Dewey Wright
- 3. In our parable today, what did the King do the first time the servant asked him to have mercy on him?**
Answer: He forgave the servant of his entire debt
- 4. When that servant walked out of the King's court, who did he run into?**
Answer: another servant who owed him a small bit of money
- 5. Even after he had his debt forgiven, did the first servant forgive the second servant of his debt?**
Answer: No
- 6. What did the King do when he heard about what The Unforgiving Servant did?**
Answer: He had him thrown into prison
- 7. Today we learned: "Choosing Not To Forgive Others Hurts _____ More Than It Hurts Them."**
Answer: me
- 8. We also learned that "When I Choose Not To Forgive Others, _____ Will Not Forgive Me."**
Answer: God
- 9. Finally, we learned that "Forgiveness Is A _____. I Must Choose To Set Them Free."**
Answer: Choice
- 10. Where was our Power Verse found?**
Answer: Matthew 6:14