

## Lesson 10, May 3, 2026, Increased Faith Luke 17:1-10

**Bible Truth:** Jesus teaches His followers that even the smallest amount of genuine faith can rebuke sin.

**Memory Verse:** “Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him” (Luke 17:3)

### Lesson Aim - Key Takeaways:

Jesus describes four essential marks of mature discipleship:

1. guarding others from stumbling,
  2. practicing radical forgiveness,
  3. trusting God with mustard-seed faith, and
  4. serving with humility rather than entitlement.
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### 1. Background & Context

Luke 17 sits within a section where Jesus is teaching His disciples how to live in the tension of the “already/not yet” Kingdom. These teachings are not random—they form a cohesive picture of what Kingdom people look like in community.

Jesus is shaping a community that:

- protects the vulnerable,
- forgives repeatedly,
- trusts God deeply,
- and serves without demanding recognition.

This is discipleship at its most practical and most challenging.

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### Names That Matter:

1. Author: [Luke](#) The author of the Gospel of Luke, traditionally believed to be a physician and companion of the Apostle Paul. He is writing to provide an orderly account of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

## 2 . Jesus

The central figure in this passage, Jesus is teaching His disciples about the inevitability of stumbling blocks and the serious consequences for those who cause them.

## 3. Disciples

The immediate audience of Jesus' teaching. They are followers of Jesus who are being prepared for their future roles in spreading His message.

4: Location: Jesus was teaching His disciples while traveling toward Jerusalem, moving along the border between Samaria and Galilee.

### **The Lesson: Luke 17:1-10**

1Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe *unto him*, through whom they come!

2It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.

3Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

4And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

5And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.

6And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.

7But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?

8And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?

9Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

10So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

## What's Happening Here?

### Part 1: Forgive Others (Luke 17:1-4)

#### 2. A. Luke 17:1-2 — The Seriousness of Causing Others to Stumble

In **Luke 17:1-4**, Jesus is teaching His disciples how to live faithfully and lovingly in community — even when sin and hurt inevitably happen.

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##### 1. Offenses Are Inevitable — But Don't Be the Cause (vv. 1-2)

- Jesus begins with a sober truth:  
In a fallen world, people will stumble, sin, and hurt one another.
- But He warns that causing someone else — especially a “little one,” meaning a believer who is young or vulnerable in faith — to fall away is a grave offense.
- The image of a **millstone around the neck** and being cast into the sea shows how serious it is to lead others astray or harm their faith.

##### Teaching Point:

Discipleship is communal.

Your life affects someone else's faith—either strengthening or weakening it.

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##### 2. Watch Your Own Heart (v. 3)

“Take heed to yourselves” means to stay spiritually alert.

- If someone sins against you, **rebuke** them — address it honestly, not with bitterness or gossip.
  - If they repent, **forgive** them — immediately and sincerely.
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##### 3. Forgive Repeatedly — Even When It's Hard (v. 4)

Jesus raises the standard:

- If someone sins against you **seven times in one day** and repents each time, you must forgive.

- The number seven symbolizes completeness — meaning forgiveness should be continual, not conditional, unlimited forgiveness.
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## In Summary

Jesus is shaping a community marked by:

1. **Responsibility** — don't cause others to stumble.
2. **Accountability** — confront sin with truth.
3. **Mercy** — forgive freely and repeatedly.

## Discussion Questions

- What are modern ways believers can cause others to stumble?
- How can the church better protect “little ones” today?

## Teaching Points:

Forgiveness is a lifestyle, not an event.  
It reflects God's own mercy toward us.

## Discussion Questions

- Why is forgiveness so difficult even when repentance is present?
  - What is the difference between forgiveness and reconciliation?
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## II Have Genuine Faith (vv. 5-6)

In Luke 17:5–6, Jesus is responding to His disciples' heartfelt cry for stronger faith — and He turns their request into a lesson about *trusting God's power, not the size of their belief*.

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### 1. The Apostles' Request: “Increase our faith” (v. 5)

After hearing Jesus' command to forgive repeatedly (vv. 3–4), the disciples feel overwhelmed.

They realize that kind of mercy seems impossible without deeper faith.

So they ask, “Lord, increase our faith” — hoping for *more quantity* of faith, as if faith were a measurable resource.

But Jesus redirects their thinking.

Faith isn't about *how much* you have; it's about *who* you trust.

### Teaching Point:

You don't need *more* faith—you need to use the faith you already have.

### Discussion Questions

- When have you felt like your faith was “small,” yet God still worked?
  - How does this teaching challenge our assumptions about spiritual maturity?
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## 2. Jesus' Response: The Mustard Seed (v. 6)

Jesus replies that even faith as small as a mustard seed — one of the tiniest seeds known in His time — can command a sycamine tree (a strong, deeply rooted tree) to uproot itself and be planted in the sea.

This is powerful imagery:

- The mustard seed represents *genuine, living faith* — small but potent.
- The sycamine tree symbolizes *deeply rooted obstacles* — things that seem immovable.
- The sea represents the realm of impossibility.

### Meaning:

Even a little faith, when alive and anchored in God, can overcome what seems impossible.

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## In Summary

Jesus is teaching that:

1. Faith isn't about *size* — it's about *substance*.
  2. Real faith acts on God's word, trusting His power to do what we cannot.
  3. Even the smallest seed of belief can move what's deeply rooted — fear, bitterness, doubt, or sin.
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## (vv. 7–8)

Jesus is still answering the disciples' request from verse 5: *"Increase our faith."*

But now He shifts the conversation. He teaches them that faith is not just about power (mustard seed faith) — it's also about posture.

This passage is about humility in serving God.

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### 1. Jesus uses a familiar household example (vv. 7–8)

- In their culture, a servant (or bond-servant) had clear duties. If he worked in the field all day, he didn't come inside and immediately sit down to eat. He first finished his responsibilities — preparing the master's meal — *then* he ate.
  - Jesus isn't endorsing harsh treatment; He's using a common social structure to make a spiritual point:
  - A servant doesn't expect special treatment for doing what he was assigned to do.
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### 2. The servant doesn't expect thanks for doing his job (v. 9)

- **Jesus asks:**  
"Does the master thank the servant for doing what was commanded?"
- The implied answer is no — not because gratitude is wrong, but because the servant was simply fulfilling his role.

#### **The point:**

Obedience to God is not a favor we do for Him. It's our rightful response to His lordship.

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### 3. Jesus applies the lesson to His disciples (v. 10)

*"So likewise ye... say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."*

This is not Jesus calling His disciples worthless.

The phrase "unprofitable servants" means:

- We don't serve God to earn status.
- We don't obey to get applause.

- We don't take pride in our obedience.
- We don't act like God owes us something.

It's a posture of humble, grateful obedience.

### **Teaching Point:**

Humility is the posture of a true disciple.

Obedience is not a favor to God—it is our joyful duty.

### **Discussion Questions**

- How does entitlement show up in modern Christian life?
  - What does humble service look like in a culture that celebrates recognition?
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## **Pulling It All Together: The Four Marks of a Mature Disciple**

### **1. Responsibility**

We guard others' faith, not damage it.

### **2. Forgiveness**

We forgive repeatedly because God forgives repeatedly.

### **3. Faith**

We trust God even when our faith feels small.

### **4. Humility**

We serve without demanding credit.

These four traits form a portrait of a disciple shaped by the Kingdom rather than the world.

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## **4. Life Application for Adults**

### **A. In Relationships**

- Be mindful of your influence—your words, habits, and attitudes shape others.

- Practice forgiveness as a spiritual discipline.

### **B. In the Church**

- Protect the vulnerable—new believers, youth, the wounded.
- Serve without needing a platform or applause.

### **C. In Personal Faith**

- Stop waiting for “more faith.”
- Act on the faith you have today.