



GEEKS UNDER GRACE

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Hotel Transylvania 3: Summer Vacation (2018) | Love and Forgiveness | BIBLE STUDY

Facilitator Note: We encourage facilitators to take this Bible study and expound on it throughout the week, allowing it to be a springboard for deeper conversation and personal meditation.

PRESS START

Everyone needs a vacation sometimes, even Dracula. God rested on the seventh day and set aside times for people to rest and replenish their energy. **What would be your dream vacation? What would you want to do? Who would you spend time with?**

EQUIP

Forgiveness can be an incredibly difficult thing. Sometimes it even seems impossible. There is only one thing that allows us to truly forgive someone: Love. It did not matter that Erica tried to kill Dracula multiple times; he had no trouble forgiving her once he found out because he had “zinged” and knew his love was real. His love did not stop with Erica, but he rushed to save her father without question. He knew hatred would only continue the feud that had lasted hundreds of years.

Monsters and humans had been enemies for centuries until the monsters finally realized the fighting and hatred were only hurting both sides. Dracula has learned in each of the Hotel Transylvania movies that monsters and humans can get along. In this newest addition to his adventures in hospitality, Dracula finally learns what it really means to love someone, even when they might not love you back.

Because he was unable to forgive monsters, Van Helsing lived a miserable life and dragged his great granddaughter into it as well. He spent all his time hunting monsters and had no time for the people he cared about. Dracula showed them both that hate was not the way to solve problems, just like Jesus came and showed us only love can save us.

LEVEL UP

We see another example of forgiveness coming from a spirit of love in the Bible in **Luke 15:11-27**. Jesus tells the story of a young man who was tired of waiting for his father to die so he could get his inheritance, so he asked his father if he could have it right then. The father agreed and gave the son his inheritance and the son ran away and spent all the money on worthless things.

He quickly ran out of money and realized he would have to go home to his father; the father he had abandoned, insulted, and taken advantage of. He knew he had wronged his father and was afraid to return, but before he even got to his father's home, the father saw him coming and ran out to meet him. He forgave his son before he even asked, embraced him, and threw a welcome home party in his honor.

Luke 15:20 *“So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him.”*

The father loved his son and had no trouble forgiving him. It came naturally, without even being

asked for. When we love someone, we understand their value. We know they are important and worth something to God and us. Forgiveness and love do not always come easy, especially when people have hurt us. Sometimes we do not feel like loving someone.

Love is not a feeling we experience when we are with someone—it is a mindset that someone else is valuable. You don't have to feel anything for a diamond ring to know it is worth something. You don't have to have a warm, fuzzy "zing" towards a human to know they are valuable. God created them that way, so they just are. If the father had held onto his anger and focused on that instead of how much he loved his son, then he would not have been able to forgive his son when he realized his mistake and came home. The story would have ended very different and certainly not with a party.

We get a glimpse of this unloving attitude from the older brother at the end of the story, in **verses 28-32**. The older brother was jealous of the younger son who had come home and been forgiven. He had stayed angry when the younger brother left and did not let that go. The grudge he held prevented him from offering forgiveness because he did not have love for his brother.

Jesus loved us so much he died for us, even though we were still his enemies at the time. While he was on the cross, he asked the Father to forgive those who were crucifying him (**Luke 23:34a**). He asks us to do the same for other people in **1 John 4:11** when John says *"Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other."*

The only way we can really forgive each other is if we love one another. Christ demonstrated he loved and forgives us and calls us to do the same with everyone.

MOD

Think of a time when you were hurt by someone close to you. How did you feel? Were you able to reconcile with that person?

Often when we are hurt, we don't "feel" loving, but we don't have to like someone in order to show them love because love is action, not feeling. What are some ways we can show love when we don't feel loving? How can we show forgiveness?

Why do you think the older brother was unable to forgive his younger brother? What are some things that stand between you and forgiving someone else?

How does our willingness to forgive compare to Christ's willingness?

PRAY

Does anyone have anything we need to pray about?

Pray and thank God for loving us even before we asked for forgiveness. Ask Him to help us love and forgive others just as he has done for us.

THE NEXT LEVEL

1 Corinthians 13:4-5 *"Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged."*

Romans 5:8 *"But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners."*

Matthew 18:21-22 *"Then Peter came to him and asked, 'Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?' 'No, not seven times,' Jesus replied, 'but*

seventy times seven.”

Colossians 3:12-14 *“Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other’s faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.”*

Ephesians 4:31-32 *“Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.”*

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*Scripture taken from the New Living Translation (NLT).
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