

## The Discipler's Commentary

Answer Outline for the Discipler

Luke 17

Chapter 17 covers various teachings by Jesus while “on the way to Jerusalem” (v. 11). This is the third and final time Luke mentions Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem. Though there are many illustrations in chapter 17, there are no parables. The transition from the end of chapter 16 to the beginning of chapter 17 is based on relationships; that is, how we treat others. In chapter 16, relationships focused on how we treat the poor. In chapter 17, relationships focus on how we treat one another.

17:1-2 – Jesus’ teaching on stumbling blocks.

- *The discipler will want to explain to the disciple the meaning of the words “stumbling blocks” and “millstones.”*
- *Explain that stumbling blocks can come in many forms: temptation to sin, false teachings, enticement by the world, et cetera, and can come from many directions, even other Christians.*
- *Ensure that the judgment in verse 1 (“woe”) is directed, not toward those who fall due to stumbling blocks, but those who create the stumbling blocks in whatever form they may take.*

Lesson: Temptations to sin or be led astray are inevitable.

- *Explain to the disciple that running into stumbling blocks is inevitable and unavoidable.*
- *Explain that stumbling blocks can even come through well-meaning or misled Christians.*

17:3-4 – Jesus’ teaching on forgiveness.

- *This is a very important section of Scripture for the disciple to understand and apply personally.*
- *It may be helpful for the discipler to have the disciple read the parallel passage in Matthew 18:21-35 to help see the spiritual consequences for failure to forgive one’s brother.*
- *It may also be helpful to read the other parallel passage in Matthew 18:15-20 regarding the word “rebuke.” The disciple will need to know that the word means something slightly different in Greek than it does in English.*
- *Ask the disciple if there is ever a time that one’s brother should not or cannot be offered forgiveness. (The answer is no.)*
- *Ensure that the disciple understands the meaning of the word “to forgive” in Greek.*
- *Ask the disciple if there is anyone in his or her life that needs to be forgiven. (Note: the discipler cannot appropriately teach this lesson unless he or she has also been continually offering forgiveness to others. This point may require some personal introspection.)*

Lesson: One of the ways we Christians are identified is by our willingness to forgive.

- *Ask the disciple why the act of forgiveness is so important to God.*
- *Ask the disciple why all Christians should be identified by their willingness to forgive.*

17:5-10 – Jesus’ teaching on faith.

- *Show the disciple how this next section of Jesus’ teaching relates back to the subject of forgiveness.*
- *Ensure that the disciple understands that the faith referred to here is actually a statement on obedience to offer forgiveness.*
- *Ask the disciple if there is anywhere in the NT where an apostle tried by faith to uproot a mulberry tree and throw it into the sea! The symbolism of the tree and the sea will need to be explained.*
- *Show how Jesus’ next teaching on thanking the slave relates, not to faith, but to obedience.*
- *Make sure that the disciple understands that it is not the quantity of the faith that is the subject here, but the quality of the obedience.*

Lesson: One of the characteristics of Christians is that living by faith is what we do.

- *See if the disciple can determine the relationship between the sweet fruit of the mulberry tree and the image of the sea. (I.e., the gospel going to the Gentiles.)*
- *See if the disciple can adequately describe what it means to live by faith, and how that relates to forgiveness.*

17:11-19 – Jesus’ encounter with the ten lepers.

- *The disciple may need to know that nature of the disease called leprosy and why it causes so much disfigurement.*
- *The disciple will certainly need to know how having leprosy affected a person’s spiritual life and access to the temple.*
- *See if the disciple can find the relationship between the fact that one of the lepers was a Samaritan (considered an unclean person) and being the only one who returned to Jesus to give thanks.*

Lesson: There is a difference between being healed and being saved.

- *Ask the disciple the difference between being “healed” and being “saved.”*
- *See if the disciple can find the love messages in the first 19 verses, especially the last story about the lepers. How does love play a role in the life of the true disciple, and how is that illustrated in the first 19 verses.*

17:20-21 – Jesus’ teaching on the kingdom of God.

- *The discipler will need to explain the Jewish leaders’ concept of the “kingdom of God,” as to what they were expecting, and what they were really asking Jesus.*
- *Let the disciple determine what the meaning of “in your midst” means. (Note: there are two views here.)*

Lesson: Don’t go looking for the kingdom of God in any other place than in yourself.

- *See if the disciple can come to the conclusion “where” the kingdom of God is. The disciple should walk away with the understanding that the kingdom of God today is within himself (herself).*

17:22-36 – Jesus’ teaching on the (His) Second Coming.

- *Make sure the disciple understands the concept of “one Messiah, two comings.” This can be readily seen in verse 25 with the words, “But first....”*

Lesson: The key to determining when the second coming will occur is to live like it’s happening today.

- *Make sure the disciple understands the main theme of verses 26-36 in terms of “readiness.”*
- *Ask the disciple how he or she is becoming “ready.” Make sure that the emphasis is on relationships.*

17:37 – Jesus’ warning about false teachers.

- *The disciple will want to discover the relationship between “vultures” and false teachers.*

Lesson: Wherever the people of the kingdom gather, expect there will be predators (scavengers).

- *The discipler will want to have at the ready some examples of false teachers and false prophets who are at work today. There are many, many examples that can be gleaned from Christian apologetic websites. The goal here is to ensure that the disciple does not fall prey to these “vultures.”*