



FACING UP TO IT

LESSON 126 → Matthew 5:38-48; Romans 12:17-21

Ivan got himself into trouble, and it wasn't much fun facing up to it.

Ivan sat in the office gripping his chair, waiting for Mr. Marquez, the principal, to return. The second hand of the large clock on the wall clicked ahead methodically. Almost one o'clock. Ivan sighed unhappily and stared at the scuffed toes of his tennis shoes.

How had he gotten himself into this mess anyway? It just didn't seem fair. Harrison had started it all, and where was he? Down at the gym like everybody else in the P.E. class. Ivan had been the one who got caught.



KEY VERSE

I WILL LOVE EVEN MY ENEMIES.

Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you.
— Matthew 5:44

Ivan and Harrison had never really been friends. In fact, ever since the beginning of middle school the reverse had been true. It seemed they were always in a position of being against each other. They were the two best basketball players in their P.E. class, so were always competing on opposite teams. They had been rivals in the school spelling bee the year before. And for the past three years they had been in most of the same classes contending for the best grades, the most friends, and the teachers' attention. Now this!

Ivan thought back to how it had started. The day before, after the bell rang for lunch, all the students were talking and laughing as they went into the cafeteria. Ivan and Harrison had both been in the line to get a hamburger. Though they hadn't said anything to each other, Ivan had caught Harrison looking at him with a sort of speculative gleam in his eye.

The duty teacher, Mr. Paulsen, was late arriving so there was more noise and roughhousing in the cafeteria than usual. Just as Ivan was about to sit down, Harrison had pulled Ivan's chair back. Ivan dropped to the floor with a thud! The cafeteria erupted with laughter as Ivan sat there, red faced, with his hamburger upside down on the floor beside him and chocolate milkshake splattered all over his jeans. He didn't need to turn around to know who had done it. Harrison! He clenched his teeth. Slowly getting to his feet, he looked around. Harrison had disappeared into the crowd, and Mr. Paulsen was arriving on the scene, wanting to know what was going on. Ivan seethed inside, but there was nothing he could do at the moment. He spent the rest of the day thinking of ways he could get back at Harrison.

Today, Ivan had implemented his plan. He made sure he was in homeroom early, and hid around the corner. As Harrison started for his seat, Ivan stuck out his foot and Harrison went sprawling! His books went in all directions, but

this time there was no laughter. In the doorway stood Mr. Taylor, the homeroom teacher, glaring at Ivan.

So, here Ivan sat, waiting for the principal—the first time since he had started school.

The door opened a little wider and Mr. Marquez came in. As he sat down at his desk he looked over at Ivan.

“Well, Ivan, what’s the problem between you and Harrison?” Ivan's sullen look and lack of response prompted him to continue. “I'm willing to listen when you're ready to talk.”

Ivan kicked at an imaginary speck on the floor and stirred uneasily in his seat. Mr. Marquez was waiting for some answer from him, but . . . what to say?

“It doesn't seem like you have anything to say, Ivan,” Mr. Marquez began, “but I do. From what Mr. Taylor tells me you tried to excuse your actions by blaming Harrison. But there is no excuse for deliberate actions that may result in injury to someone. Of course, we aren't excusing Harrison either.

“Because this is your first offense, we are not sending a report to your parents or taking other disciplinary actions. But we are going to ask that you apologize to Harrison. Will you do that, Ivan?”

Ivan nodded his head, relieved that his parents wouldn't find out what he had done. And he was really glad inside that his anger hadn't caused Harrison to break an arm or receive some other serious injury.

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If Ivan had been a Christian, how might he have handled this situation with Harrison? How would you handle a similar situation?

RIGHT FROM ROMANS

Match the beginnings and endings of the verses from Romans 12. Write the correct numbers on the lines given. When matched correctly, there will be twelve things you can do to live pleasing to God.

- Be kindly affectioned
- Not slothful
- Given to
- Bless them
- Rejoice with them
- Provide things honest
- Live peaceably
- Weep with them
- Avenge not
- Overcome evil
- Continuing instant
- Recompense to no man evil



1. one to another (vs. 10)
2. for evil (vs. 17)
3. yourselves (vs. 19)
4. in the sight of all men (vs. 17)
5. with all men (vs. 18)
6. with good (vs. 21)
7. that weep (vs. 15)
8. in prayer (vs. 12)
9. which persecute you (vs. 14)
10. in business (vs. 11)
11. hospitality (vs. 13)
12. that do rejoice (vs. 15)

