

## Lesson 9 | Responsibility and Restitution

**Objective:** Cultivating a responsible and compassionate attitude that seeks to restore peace through restitution, reconciliation, and forgiveness.

**Bible Reading:** Exodus 22:1-6

**Memory Verse:** "Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor." **Romans 13:7**

### BIBLICAL TOPIC

In the previous lesson, we reflected on the laws of war and how God wanted to lead His people towards true peace. That same teaching continues here, but in a closer area, which is, peace among people. Wars between nations are born of hearts full of pride, and conflicts between people arise from the lack of justice, humility, and forgiveness. Therefore, along with the laws that regulated war, God also established laws of restitution, to teach His people to repair the damage and restore harmony.

In the law of Moses, when someone caused loss or harm to another person, whether theft, accident, or negligence, he had to return what he had damaged and add additional compensation. This measure not only sought justice, but also reconciliation. For example, whoever stole a sheep had to return four, and whoever damaged his neighbor's field had to replace what was destroyed with the best of his own land (**Exodus 22:1-6**). With this, God taught that true justice does not consist only in punishing, but in repairing and healing human relationships.

Restitution was not a simple economic act, but an expression of genuine repentance. It involved recognizing the mistake, assuming the consequences, and seeking peace with others. This principle is also observed in the life of Zacchaeus, a tax collector who, despite the contempt of the Pharisees, sought to act with justice and restitution. When he met Jesus, he declared: "Look, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." (**Luke 19:8**). With these words he showed that he was striving to comply with this part of the law. Jesus, recognizing his dedication and sincerity, replied with joy: "Today salvation came to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham." (**Luke 19:9**). Thus, the Messiah confirmed that the value of a restorative heart surpasses human judgment and religious appearances.

God knew that damage is not only caused by weapons or wars, but also by words, actions, or indifference. That is why he taught that forgiveness must accompany restitution. It is not enough to return what is lost, it is necessary to heal the wounds of the heart. The book of Proverbs teaches that "Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins." (**Proverbs 10:12**). Forgiveness allows us to reach the level of love that God shows us through his Son and with it reach true peace and holiness.

In the New Testament, Jesus taught that forgiveness is the basis of every relationship with God. Before offering an offering, He instructed with the following: "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother and then come and offer your gift." (**Matthew 5:23-24**). The teaching is clear, there can be no communion with God as long as there is enmity with others. True worship requires a clean heart and a willingness to forgive.

Restitution and forgiveness go hand in hand. The first restores justice, the second restores peace. Both reflect the character of God, who not only forgives us, but also restores us. Through Jesus, we learn that reconciliation begins within the heart, when we let love triumph over resentment. In this way, the promise of a deeper peace is fulfilled in that, the one that does not depend on human agreements, but on the transforming power of God. **Romans 12:17-21**

Just as in war God taught His people that true victory is obedience, in human relationships, He teaches that triumph is in reconciliation. Peace is not imposed by force; it is built with justice and is consolidated with forgiveness. Restoring damage and forgiving from the heart are the steps that bring us closer to the ideal of a holy person, just and in harmony with their Creator.

### **CHURCH ACTIVITY**

In the company of the brothers of the youth society, organize a practical case dynamic entitled "Restoration brings healing." Present brief examples of situations where trust has been broken (a misunderstanding, an offense, or a mistake). Each group will propose a form of restitution and a way of exercising forgiveness. In conclusion, share how the application of these principles can restore peace in the church, the family and in the community.

### **HOME ACTIVITY**

Answer and reflect on the following questions and share your answers in the next session.

- What is the difference between asking for forgiveness and returning?
- Why does restitution show genuine repentance?
- What lesson does the example of Zacchaeus leave on the restoration of human relationships?
- How can you apply restitution and forgiveness to maintain peace with others?