

WHEN YOU JUST CAN'T GET ALONG

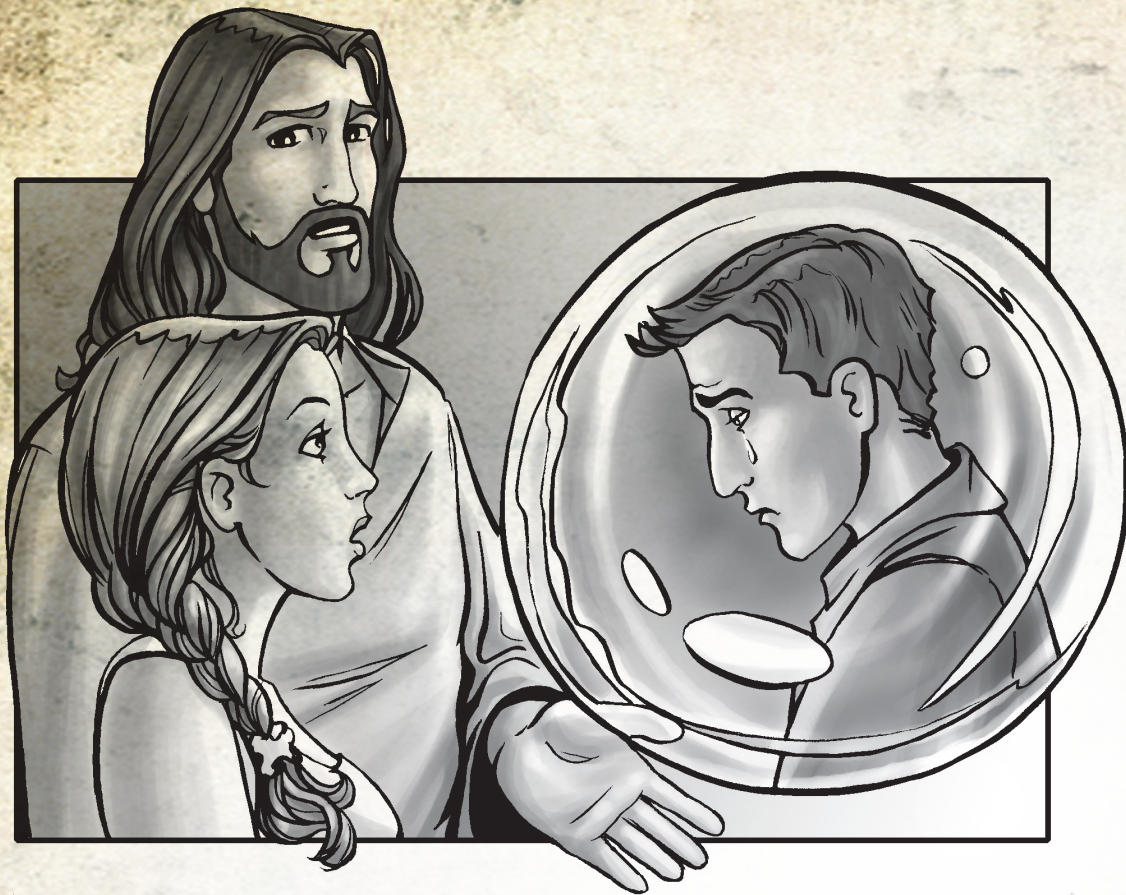
Are there people in your life—maybe at school or at home—that you feel know just how to make your life miserable? You do what you can to avoid them. You cringe when they are around. You feel that they are contradictory and argumentative when around you—and not in a friendly or bantering way. They just seem to have it in for you. You in turn have it in for them, and you are more than happy to avoid them or let them know when they are bothering you.



You don't remember when this all started. It seems it's always been this way. You've always been "at war," and don't know what it's like to be friendly with this person. You assume they must have a nice side to them, but you sure haven't seen it. When you think about it, you *wish* you'd notice their nice side. You know nobody can be all bad.

But there's a problem! You're so used to being mad at this person, annoyed by them, or fighting with them, that you can't imagine treating them nicely. You don't feel like being nice to them, because you don't think they deserve it. After all, you don't think they have been considerate of you. It seems to you that all they've done is go out of their way to bug you, to put you down in private and in public, so how can you feel anything but frustration? So you feel justified in wanting to get back at them in whatever way is within your power.— Whether by tit for tat, or at least by giving them the cold shoulder.





But what if you decided to try to see them differently? Imagine that maybe they act that way because they've been hurt, or because they're scared of something, or because they feel inferior to others—maybe to you? What if they argue with you because it's the only way they can think of to interact with you, or they wish you'd pay attention to them? What if they act irritable and cranky because they're lonely and need a friend?

Thinking about this could help you in taking that first step toward a truce. Think of them as having good qualities, and play detective until you actually find one. It might not be easy—it probably won't be, since you've been at odds for so long—but if you look deep enough, you'll find something good.

If it's difficult to do, you can always ask Jesus to give you the help you need to make this truce. It's worth a try, because you may get a great friend in return. It also will give you good practice, as you might meet more than one such person in your life, so the sooner you can learn to turn foe to friend, the better.

Or you may never be friends, but it'll likely take a lot of misery and frustration out of your life if you can at least learn to treat each other with a civil amount of respect and courtesy.

“Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing”
(1 Peter 3:9 NIV).

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