



◆ STEP ONE

Taking Responsibility

"So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God."

ROMANS 14:12 · ANCHOR VERSE - READ THIS ALOUD TOGETHER TO OPEN

Key Points

READ TOGETHER

- ◆ Take responsibility for your choices.
- ◆ Don't blame others for mistakes - choose how you respond.
- ◆ Focus on what you can control, not what you can't.
- ◆ Owning a mistake is the first step to making it right.

Story One: Ethan and the Broken Window

AGES 6-10

READ TOGETHER

Ethan loved playing soccer in the backyard. Every day after school, he practiced his kicks, dreaming of being the best player on his team. One sunny afternoon, he lined up the ball, ran toward it, and kicked with all his strength. CRASH! The ball soared higher than ever before - straight through the kitchen window. Ethan froze. His stomach tightened as he thought, *"I'm in big trouble. Maybe I could say Anna did it. She was near the kitchen earlier - Mom might believe me."*

He picked up the ball slowly, his mind racing with excuses. But then he remembered something his Sunday school teacher said: *"You can't always control what happens, but you can control what you do next."* Ethan realized he couldn't control that the window was broken now, but he *could* control whether he lied or told the truth.

Taking a deep breath, Ethan walked inside. "Mom," he said quietly, "I'm sorry. I kicked the ball too hard, and I broke the window. It was my choice, and I'll help clean it up."

Mom looked at him for a moment, then gently smiled. "Ethan, I'm proud of you for being honest and taking responsibility. Mistakes happen, but your choice to tell the truth shows you're growing up." Together, they cleaned up the glass and talked about safer places to practice.

That night, Ethan felt peace in his heart. He learned that taking responsibility didn't mean avoiding mistakes - it meant owning up to them, learning, and choosing to do what was right.

Story Two: Madison and the Captain's Band

AGES 10-14

READ TOGETHER

Madison had worked two full seasons to earn the captain's band on her volleyball team. When Coach Reyes finally handed it to

her before the fall season, she wore it like a medal.

Being captain came with jobs, though. Coach asked Madison to organize one extra practice before the season opener and to make sure everyone knew the new serve-rotate rotation. Madison meant to set it up. But between homework, her phone, and hanging out with friends, the week slipped by. She never sent the message.

The opener was a disaster. Twice the team lined up in the wrong rotation, and the referee awarded points to the other side. They lost in straight sets.

In the huddle afterward, Madison's face burned. Before she could stop herself, she turned on Riley, the setter. "You're supposed to call the rotation! That's on you!"

Riley's eyes went wide. A few teammates looked at the floor. Nobody said anything on the bus ride home.

That night, Madison replayed the game in her head. The truth kept surfacing like a beach ball she was trying to hold underwater: *the team never learned the rotation because she never scheduled the practice.* Riley hadn't failed the team. Madison had - and then she had blamed someone else for it in front of everyone.

The next day she asked Coach Reyes if they could talk.

"I already know what happened," Coach said. "I'm more interested in what you're going to do about it."

Madison swallowed. "I need to apologize to Riley. And to the team."

Coach nodded. "Captains go first, Madison. First to work, first to encourage - and first to own it when things go wrong. Anybody can wear the band. Carrying it is different."

Before practice, Madison gathered the team. Her voice shook a little. "Saturday was my fault. Coach asked me to set up a rotation practice and I didn't do it. Then I blamed Riley for my mistake, and that was wrong. Riley, I'm sorry. It won't happen again."

For a second, no one moved. Then Riley shrugged and half-smiled. "We've all been there. Let's just learn the rotation."

Something shifted after that. Practices got sharper. Teammates started admitting their own mistakes instead of hiding them - "my bad, I was late on that block" - because their captain had shown them how. They didn't win every match that season. But they never again lost one because nobody would take responsibility.

At the end-of-season banquet, Coach Reyes told the parents, "The most important play of our season didn't happen on the court. It happened when our captain stood up and owned a mistake."

Madison understood something she would carry far beyond volleyball. Blame spreads a problem around. Ownership starts to fix it.

Jesus' Example

READ TOGETHER

Jesus took full responsibility for the mission the Father gave Him - and He never shifted it to anyone else.

He said of His own life, "*No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord*" (John 10:18). Going to the cross was not something that simply happened to Jesus. It was a responsibility He willingly accepted.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, the night before He was crucified, Jesus prayed honestly about how hard it would be. Then He said, "*Yet not my will, but yours be done*" (Luke 22:42). He didn't run, make excuses, or look for someone else to carry His assignment.

On the cross, His final words were, "*It is finished*" (John 19:30). Jesus completed the work He came to do.

When we take responsibility for our choices and follow through on what God asks of us, we are walking in the footsteps of Jesus.

Why This Matters

READ TOGETHER

God calls us to take responsibility for our actions and not shift blame. In the Garden of Eden, Adam blamed Eve, and Eve blamed the serpent. But God wants us to be honest and take ownership. When we do, we grow in wisdom and strength, and we reflect His truthfulness.

Blame is one of the oldest habits in human history - and one of the most damaging. It breaks trust with parents, ruins friendships, and divides teams. Worst of all, it keeps us from bringing our mistakes honestly to God, who is always ready to forgive.

Taking responsibility works the opposite way. When you own your choices, people learn they can trust your word. Problems get solved instead of argued about. And you discover that confessing a mistake - to a parent, a friend, or to God - brings peace that hiding never can.

Bible Verses

READ TOGETHER

Romans 14:12 - *"So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God."*

Proverbs 28:13 - *"Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy."*

Galatians 6:5 - *"For each one should carry their own load."*

Romans 12:21 - *"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."*

Colossians 3:23 - *"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters."*

Discussion Questions

PARENT LEADS

1. Why is it hard to admit when we've done something wrong?

2. What's the difference between an excuse and an honest explanation?

3. When something goes wrong that isn't your fault, what parts of the situation can you still control?

4. Why do you think God cares whether we take responsibility or shift blame?

5. Has blaming someone else ever made a problem worse for you? What happened?

6. What does taking responsibility look like at school? At home? On a team?

7. Parent's turn: share a time you had to own a mistake - what happened when you did?

Vocabulary Words

READ TOGETHER

Responsibility: Doing what you are supposed to do and accepting the results of your choices. *Example: Completing your homework and chores without being reminded, and owning your mistakes.*

Procrastination: Delaying or putting off something important, often choosing something easier or more fun instead. *Example: Playing video games instead of cleaning your room like you promised.*

Accountability: Being willing to explain your actions and accept the results - good or bad. *Example: Telling your teacher the truth if you forgot to do your project, and being ready to face the grade you earn.*

Blame: Shifting responsibility for a mistake onto someone else instead of owning up to it. *Example: Saying, "It's my brother's fault the milk spilled!" when you were the one holding the cup.*

Extreme Ownership: A mindset of taking full responsibility for everything in your life and leadership - even things that go wrong under your watch. You don't make excuses; you fix problems. *Example: A team captain says, "We lost because I didn't prepare us well enough. Next game, I'll train harder with the team."*

Faith Builder

YOUR MOVE

This week, practice being an **"Owner, Not a Blamer."**

Once each day, when something goes wrong - big or small - own your part out loud. No excuses, no blame. Say what happened, your part in it, and what you'll do next.

It might sound like:

- "I forgot to feed the dog. I'll do it now and set a reminder."
- "I was the one talking during class. I'm sorry."
- "I lost my temper first. That part was on me."

If a day goes by without a mistake to own, look for a responsibility to claim instead - do a chore before being asked, or finish something you started.

At the end of the week, write down:

- What was one thing you owned this week?
- What was the hardest part about not making an excuse?
- How did the other person respond?
- What did you learn about honesty and trust?

Closing Prayer

READ TOGETHER

Dear Heavenly Father,

Thank You for loving me even when I make mistakes. Help me to be honest about my choices instead of hiding them or blaming someone else. Give me the courage to tell the truth, to say I'm sorry, and to make things right. Thank You for the example of Jesus, who accepted the mission You gave Him and finished it. When I face something hard, help me remember that I can't always control what happens, but with Your help I can control what I do next. Make me a person my family and friends can trust.

In Jesus' name, Amen.