

When a grudge won't budge

Did anyone here ever have a grudge against another person? If you have, you will understand the seriousness of it in your life. You have lost sleep and much happiness while the other guy just goes on his merry way. As we move along lets start with a couple of grudge confessions or stories. First,

Blessings writes, I am not as forward with it as some. I learned how from my mother. But yes I do hold a grudge. The only "nice" thing I can say about it is that I tend to only hold a grudge on the REALLY AWFUL stuff. I tend to hold grudges against molesters, rapists, terrorists, bullies, animal abusers, you know....the scum of the earth. That's just me though.

Another suffer writes, I'm holding many grudges from the past and a few new ones. To start off with, my father abused me when I was little and I lost my whole childhood and had to learn to take care of myself mentally and physically very young. My mom and dad were drug addicts and alcoholics. My mom is clean now and I live with her. My father is still in his troubled state and I haven't heard from him in 6 years. I hold a huge grudge against him for wrecking my childhood and screwing me up. He beat and verbally killed me sometimes. I hold a huge grudge against my mother for letting all of it go on for so long. Now she is very sick and can't do a lot and I still am alone. I'm so angry about all of this. She knows I have a grudge against her. I am very mean and nasty to her. I'm just so sick of putting up with all this junk. Its always one thing after another

This next grudge story is from Mark 6:14-29 John the Baptist ended up having his head brought to Herodias on a platter, because he had told Herod it was against the law for him to marry Herodias who happened to be his brother's wife.

Here John was under condemnation by Herodias because of a marriage that was forbidden, so she allowed her grudge, one brought on because she could no have her way, She allowed it to boil over and before long the head of John the Baptist was laid on a plate. Now, any one of us holding a grudge against someone might not lead to something as physically violent as having someone beheaded, but holding a grudge can be hurtful and harmful to someone else, and it is ALWAYS extremely negative for your own well-being if you hold a grudge. When you hold a grudge,

instead of binding yourself to Christ in love, you are binding yourself negatively to someone else. Instead of turning control of your life over to God, you have negatively turned over the control to someone who only sets off more negative emotions in you.

People hold their grudges, even in church. They say I won't go to that church because they might be there. It goes like this; I can't do this because of him or because of her. I don't go to church any more because of that preacher, you know, that preacher who was the preacher five preachers ago, or three preachers ago, or now.

The holding of grudges, the keeping of score, and the refusal to forgive always represents a profound failure of religious practice. Since it is the job of the church to help teach us to forgive, the holding of grudges represents a second kind of failure.

General Robert E. Lee was asked what he thought of a fellow officer in the Confederate Army who had made some derogatory remarks about him. Lee rated him as being very satisfactory. The person who asked the question seemed perplexed. So "General," he said, "I guess you don't know what he's been saying about you." "I know," answered Lee. "But I was asked my opinion of him, not his opinion of me!"

Well the actions of grudge packing is a bad one to have in our arsenal. Lets look at this problem a little deeper today. First lets look at

I. Grudge defined

We often hear the term "holding a grudge". What is a "grudge", what does it look like, and how does someone "hold it"? "Grudge" is an actual word and its dictionary meaning is: a feeling of resentment or ill will over some grievance, or to harbor resentment.

To "hold or carry a grudge" would then mean: holding onto or carrying around a feeling of resentment over some grievance. In other words, an un-forgiving

attitude leading to bitterness. This seems to be a very unfortunate and burdensome way to live.

The word itself even has a negative sound to it. Say it out loud and you will hear "Grrrrrr...udge" To me that sounds like the beginning of a growl, "grrrrr" and the ending "udge" reminds me of something heavy that won't budge.

So this word's meaning and sound are both negative, and it is not really a word that we should want in our vocabulary. As someone observed Carrying a grudge is like carrying a bag of potatoes when riding in a cart. William H. Walton has an interesting way of explaining it. He said, "to carry a grudge is like being stung to death by one bee."

II. How grudges develop.

The first ingredient is Unrealistic expectations. We expect the other person to be perfect after our difficulty with them. Secondly there is a lack of forgiveness and also a refusal to accept the possibility of change in not only ourselves but in the other person as well

III. The Problem with Holding Grudges

Shevach Pepper, writes that "...to hold a grudge is tremendously destructive. It robs you of your peace of mind, makes you sick, and prevents you from looking for a true solution to your problems. In spite of the harm it does, it is very hard to get rid of a grudge." Author, and hairdresser Aura Mae points out that "holding a grudge is like drinking poison and waiting for the other person to die."

People start to hold grudges because they believe that if by removing themselves from a problem that they are experiencing by never talking to the person that caused the pain again this will be a sufficient solution to their problem. They believe that they will feel less pain by avoiding the individual completely.

One reason that holding grudges is a bad idea is that cutting off all communication with an individual causes them to be unable to seek forgiveness from you. There is

no chance that the conflict that you are having with the individual will be resolved when you do your best to avoid them.

Another problem with holding a grudge is that when you hold a grudge against someone, you cast all the blame for your anger on that individual and are often too proud to admit that you may be at fault in one way or another yourself.

You won't be able to grow or correct similar problems in the future if you simply cut yourself off from the person. When you are holding a grudge, the hate that you are experiencing simmers inside of you and can suck the joy out of your life.

It's quite hard to be happy when all that is on your mind is the wrong that someone has done to you, and the baggage that a grudge creates can hold you down for years.

For all of these reasons, it's easy to tell why you shouldn't hold a grudge. Instead, do your best to focus on the aspects of your life that are good as opposed to the problems that you have. Also, realize that people are all fallible and we all make mistakes.

Life is too short to be hung up on hate for the whole time that you are here. Being unforgiving may make you feel invincible, but it will most definitely cost you happiness in the long run. If you think you don't hate someone or hold a grudge let me ask this, how often do you go out of your way to avoid speaking to them or visiting with them. You see, actions speak louder than words. You might want to rethink this issue

IV. Seven suggested reasons why you should fight through the hurt and not hold grudges:

A. Living in the past influences your future relationships and prevents them from progressing.

B. Negative emotions that accompany grudges drain a great deal of emotional energy and can leave you feeling irritable and anxious.

C. Grudges can contribute to physical stress such as high blood pressure and other health issues.

D. It causes you to divert your attention from other important aspects of your life that require attention.

E. Holding onto feelings of resentment prevents you from truly being healed.

F. Grudges can alter your view of the world and cause you to be less objective when faced with similar situations.

G. You can become consumed from a mental standpoint by plotting revenge or replaying the events of what happened over in your mind.

You see, Grudges have this nasty way of staying with you, like a lingering cough during flu season, and its affects can be hazardous to us. The decision to turn the other cheek is a difficult decision to make because our head and heart are telling us two different things. We may know in our own minds that holding grudges it isn't the best thing to do and that it's holding us back from living the fullest possible life

However, if we haven't let go of the pain in our hearts, then it becomes impossible to even think about moving ahead. Wayne W. Dyer writes The key is to learn from the experience and be a wiser person when similar situations arise in the future.

Approach adversity like it's a new challenge waiting to be conquered.

Remember: You are not stuck where you are unless you decide to be stuck there.

V. Six Goals of Satan in Getting You to Hold Grudges

If there is any way that Satan can assist you to hold a grudge, he will do it. There are *six goals of Satan* which are highly developed when professing Christians hold grudges.

1. To Make Us Put Ourselves in the Place of God

Ever since Genesis 3 Satan's goal has been to make us put ourselves in the place of God.

Nothing helps in holding a grudge like thinking too highly of ourselves. The more exalted we are in our own eyes, the more justified we will feel in holding a grudge against the person who offended us.

If Satan can succeed in making a grudge feel natural or justified, he will have gone a long way toward his goal of making us put ourselves in the place of God.

2. To Make Us Act as If We Are Judge, Not God

Satan aims to make us act as if *we were judge and not God*. Romans 12:19 says, *"Do not avenge yourselves, beloved, but give place to wrath, for it is written: Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord. No, if your enemy is hungry feed him."*

If we hold a grudge, we act as though God were not a just judge. When we carry a grudge, we act as though we are the moral guardians of the world and if we don't hold this wrong against this person, it's going to slip away into oblivion and a great injustice will go unanswered.

But this is sheer unbelief. Vengeance belongs to *God*. He *will* repay. It is his business not ours. So again holding a grudge puts us in the place of God—just where Satan wants us.

3. To Make the Cross of Christ Look Weak and Foolish

Satan aims to make the cross of Christ look weak and foolish. Notice Ephesians 4:32-5:2. *"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore be imitators of God as beloved children. And walk in love as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us."*

The power that frees us from holding grudges goes like this, in the cross of Christ, God satisfied his grudge against us and dropped it. So Paul says, forgive as God in Christ forgave you. When we hold a grudge, we cancel out the cross.

We act as though God did a foolish thing on the cross, since he dropped his infinite grudge against us, but instead, we are going to hold on to our little grudge against so and so. And thus Satan brings the cross of Christ into contempt.

4. To Cultivate Disunity in the Body of Christ

Satan aims to cultivate disunity in the body of Christ so that the grand evidence for Christ's divine reality is shattered. Proverbs 15:18 says, *"A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention."*

Don't forget: Short tempers and long grudges breed strife and disunity in the church. But in John 17:23 Jesus said that unity in the church is great evidence to the world of his reality. And Psalm 133:1 says unity is a good and pleasant or enjoyable thing. Hear the Scripture Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brothers to dwell together in unity!

So if Satan can safeguard and deepen grudges among God's people, he will have achieved a great goal the hiding of Christ's reality from the world.

5. To Crush Broken Christians into Depression

Satan aims to crush broken Christians until they are depressed into uselessness. Paul tells about an instance of church discipline at Corinth in which the offending party repented. Paul counsels in 2 Corinthians 2:7, *Now it is time to forgive him and comfort him. Otherwise he may become so discouraged that he won't be able to recover.*

The burdens of life are so great at times that someone's grudge against us can be the straw that breaks the camel's back. You can destroy a person by holding a grudge against them. This was the very work of Satan from the time of Cain and Abel. That was the beginning of grudges

6. To Help You Destroy Yourself

Finally, by holding a grudge Satan will help you destroy yourself. Satan always throws away his tools in the end once they are used up. We could say it like this: He promises the moon and delivers misery. When the unforgiving servant was thrown into jail, Jesus said to his disciples, *"So also my heavenly Father will do to you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."*

VI .The blessing of grudges avoided

Richard Weaver, a Christian worker, earned his living in the mines. While working he took advantage of every opportunity to witness to the Lord. While most of the men were indifferent, one became offended by his witness, and finally exclaimed, "I'm sick of your constant preaching. I've a good mind to smack you in the face!" "Go ahead if it will make you feel better," replied Weaver. The man immediately struck him a stinging blow. Weaver did not retaliate but turned the other cheek.

Again the unbeliever struck him and then walked away, cursing under his breath. Weaver called after him, "I forgive you, and still pray that the Lord will save you!" The next morning his assailant was waiting for him when he came to work "Oh, Dick," he said, his voice filled with emotion, "do you really forgive me for what I did yesterday?" "Certainly," said Weaver extending his hand. As he told him again the message of salvation, God opened the man's heart, and he received Christ.

VII. How to get over a grudge

Holding a grudge is like having an open wound that does not heal. You feel hurt by someone who has done you wrong. Instead of getting over it, you are reliving painful memories and opening up the wound. You keep the feeling of hurt alive. Holding a grudge is a self destructive behavior. The only one who gets punished by it is your self, not the person who has caused you the pain. Not only do you feel emotionally hurt, but if you do not deal with your grudge, you can also get physical problems.

Stress levels can go up, your muscles can get tensed, your blood pressure may rise, your energy levels become low, etc. If you don't think this is true, then let me ask you, how do you feel when you happen to see that person you are so angry at and holding the grudge against. Do you smile but under the smile is your tummy churning rapidly? So how do we actually let go of that grudge?

The first step of every problem is recognizing that we have a problem. We have to recognize the fact that we hold a grudge and that we are the only ones getting punished by it. When you are ready to admit that this is indeed a problem you are ready to deal with it.

Secondly remember that you have been hurt but there are two sides to every coin. You may have been hurt but you are not completely innocent and you are the hurter as well as the hurting

Thirdly stop opening up that wound! Get control over your thoughts. Your thoughts have an enormous power and help create your future reality. So get rid of your self destructing thoughts and focus on the positive things in your life. Use positive affirmations and say that you are willing to let go.

Fourthly work at forgiving the person who has done you wrong. Forgiveness is one of the hardest things to do. Isn't this true? We feel we need an apology or some sense of justice before we can let things go, but this will not always happen. Forgiveness is the best thing for ourselves because it will stop us from self punishment in the future. Forgiveness does not mean that you have forgotten about what happened, but that you have chosen to let it go. If you do not know how to forgive, start by saying that you are willing to forgive. Forgiveness will set you free!

VIII. Some truths to remember

The truth is none of us is so exalted that we can justify holding a grudge.

The truth is that vengeance belongs to God; he will settle all accounts.

The truth is that the cross of Christ is the wisdom and power of God, not foolishness.

The truth is that the unity of the church is precious beyond words.

Finally, the truth is that it is possible by holding a grudge to commit spiritual murder and suicide simultaneously.

In closing remember

James Alexander Thom, writing in Nuggets says "once armies carried cannonballs with them, afraid they would meet the enemy somewhere and have nothing to shoot at it. In terms of specific gravity, grudges are about as heavy as cannonballs. But it makes little sense to carry them. Most likely, the "enemy" is

unaware of your hostility, and surely would be surprised to learn that you've been stalking him with a cannonball in your pocket. So examine your grudges. Do what armies do when hostilities are over: unload the cannonballs and stack them on the courthouse lawn. Then marvel at how much easier it is to get around."

Someone has offered this penetrating comparison of the difference between revenge, justice, and grace. If someone brutally murders your son and you take things into your own hands, that's **revenge**. If you're content to allow the law and the courts to arrest and punish the offender, that's **justice**. But if you pardon the murderer, adopt him, and take him home to live with you as your son, that's **grace!**

This, of course, is the way God deals with us. He doesn't seek revenge. He doesn't put us under His justice. Instead, He forgives us and adopts us as His children. Now, God calls us to be like Himself!

A Sobering Question for all who hear: Where would we be if God were as unforgiving of us as we are of others, especially as evidenced by the grudges we often hold against them. Where would we be if God expected as much from us as we expect from others yet offer no assistance in meeting those expectations

I trust that if any of us struggle with holding grudge, big or small, that the thoughts of today will help us get victory.