



March 10/11, 2012

Genesis 27:41-46

*"In the Grip of a Grudge"*

Pastor Gary Hamrick

Pastor Gary's message about grudges is probably one that he could teach on every single week, because every single week it would mean something to someone. That's because as long as there are people, there will always be offenses, and as long as there are offenses, there will be people who harbor a grudge. Since there will always be grudges, there will be a need for forgiveness.

Many people today are bound by grudges and the accompanying bitterness, resentment and anger. For many, the mere mention of the subject causes them to feel uncomfortable, because deep down inside they know that this is something they need to deal with, but they either haven't or won't deal with the negative effects of holding a grudge.

One reason some people don't want to deal with grudges is because they get comfort from resentment toward others or they feel justified in their anger or bitterness. Some hold a grudge because they don't want whatever it is that bothers or offends them to be minimized or dismissed as though it were no big deal. The fact is, that to the person involved, it was or is a big deal, and it may even be a big deal to God. But what's even bigger to God than what happened is for what happened not to keep a person bound. The Lord wants people to be free!

Satan, on the other hand, wants nothing more than to see people held captive by their resentment. Satan is the one encouraging people to embrace, nurse, coddle or revel in a grudge, and Satan is always about the business of keeping people in bondage and captivity to sin.

It's Jesus who does the work of releasing prisoners and setting the captives free! In [Luke 4:18-19](#), speaking of himself, Jesus said, *"The Spirit of the Lord is on me,*

*because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”<sup>1</sup>*

Jesus wasn't referring to prisoners in a cinderblock, concertina wire, bars on the windows jail. He was referring to freeing people who are bound by any number of sin issues that have made them a prisoner. This message is about one of the most important things God wants to do in our lives, and that's to set us from is the grip of a grudge.

### The Bible Commands Us Not To Bear A Grudge

1. [Genesis 27:41](#) tells us that Esau *“held a grudge”* against his brother, Jacob, and his grudge was so significant that he actually thought about killing Jacob.
2. Not every grudge involves thoughts of murder, but every grudge is rooted in bitterness and resentment over an offense.
3. Having a grudge means to “harbor feelings of bitterness, anger or resentment towards another.”
4. [Leviticus 19:18](#) - *“Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.”*
5. The Hebrew word for grudge is *natar*, which means, to guard or cherish anger.
  - a. It is not simply being angry, because not all anger is sin.
  - b. It is to hold on to anger, protecting it in the heart.
6. In [Mark 6:17-19a](#) we read about Herodias, who *“nursed a grudge”* against John the Baptist.
  - a. Herodias held a grudge that wasn't even legitimate!
  - b. Her problem with John the Baptist was that he spoke the truth about the her adulteress life with Herod (Herodias was the wife of Herod's brother, Philip).
  - c. She not only nursed a grudge, she coddled it and it fueled such resentment within her spirit that it led her to the murder of John the Baptist!
  - d. John the Baptist was killed, not as a martyr of the Gospel, but as a victim of a grudge.

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<sup>1</sup> Jesus was reading from [Isaiah 61:1-2a](#).

### Holding A Grudge Often Leads To A Greater Offense

7. You have to wonder, as you picture in your mind Herodias holding a platter with John the Baptist's head on it, was she really comforted by the fact that she was responsible for the beheading of John the Baptist?
8. Revenge does little to bring healing; it simply fuels the desire for more revenge.
9. Pastor Gary used the illustration from an Oprah Winfrey program several years ago in which women were interviewed to talk about their cheating husbands.
  - a. Oprah: "How did you deal with your husband's unfaithfulness?"  
Woman: "My husband has all these \$1,000.00 Armani suits perfectly lined in our closet. I went into the closet with a pair of scissors and I cut off the left arm on every single every suit!"
    - i. The studio audience howled with laughter and everyone was giving each other high-fives, while Oprah encouraged this woman by saying, "You go, girlfriend!"
    - ii. The reality is that long after the studio lights were turned off and the high-fivers had all gone home, and there was no more cheering, adoring crowd, it's likely this woman went home all alone and cried herself to sleep; and all of the cut off sleeves in the closet didn't bring healing to her heart.

### Holding A Grudge Alienates Friends And Ruins Relationships

10. The conflict between Jacob and Esau, led to a grudge that divided their family.
11. Jacob had to flee from his home because of all that took place after the wicked scheme cooked up by his mother, Rebekah, had unfolded.
12. Rebekah wanted Jacob to go away for a little while, at least until Esau's rage subsided, however, it would be more than 20 years until Jacob and Esau saw each other again.
13. Rebekah died during the 20-year gap, which means she never saw Jacob, her favorite son, again!
14. [Hebrews 12:15](#) - *"See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many."*
15. What many people don't understand is that holding a grudge does not just affect that person; it affects everyone else around them.

16. There are strained marriages and estranged families in every town, city, state and country around the world, because someone is holding on to a grudge.

### Holding A Grudge Lords Authority Over Another

17. **Genesis 50:15-21** - *“When Joseph’s brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, ‘What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?’ So they sent word to Joseph, saying, ‘Your father left these instructions before he died: ‘This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly.’<sup>2</sup> Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father.’ When their message came to him, Joseph wept. His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. ‘We are your slaves,’ they said. But Joseph said to them, ‘Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don’t be afraid. I will provide for you and your children.’ And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.”*
- a. Joseph refused to take the position of power and vengeance, which he understood to be in God’s hands.
  - b. Joseph took the position of humility and forgiveness.
18. God calls each of us to forgive, and to find release from the grip of a grudge.
19. It is important to remember that forgiveness doesn’t mean that you deny the hurt caused by another; it simply means you won’t let the offense define you.
20. **Proverbs 19:11b** - *“A man’s wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense.”*
21. **Colossians 3:13** - *“Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”*
22. Corrie ten Boom<sup>3</sup> used the following illustration regarding forgiveness.

“Forgiveness is the key which unlocks the door of resentment and the handcuffs of hatred. It breaks the chains of bitterness and the shackles of selfishness.

If you have ever seen a country church with a bell in the steeple, you will remember that to get the bell ringing you have to tug awhile. Once it has begun to ring, you merely maintain the momentum. As long as you keep pulling, the bell keeps ringing. Forgiveness is letting go of the rope. It is just that simple. But when you do so, the bell keeps ringing. Momentum is still at work. However, if you keep your hands off the rope, the bell will begin to slow and eventually stop.”

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<sup>2</sup> There is no biblical record that would prove that Abraham did or did not make this statement.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.corrietenboom.com/history.htm>

23. God does not dismiss offenses as no big deal, in fact, he records every tear in heaven, according to [Psalm 56:8](#),<sup>4</sup> and he will punish those who have done wrong.

### Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [Genesis 27:41-46](#) to provide an overview for this study.
3. Discuss Pastor Gary's definition of a grudge. (See #3 above)
  - a. Read and discuss [Leviticus 19:18](#).
  - b. Has there been a time in your life when you "cherished anger"?
4. Read and discuss [Mark 6:17-19a](#).
5. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's comment about revenge.
  - a. "Revenge is like Chinese food, it tastes wonderful at the moment, but it doesn't really satisfy, because pretty soon you're back for more!"
6. What was your reaction to Pastor Gary's retelling of the Oprah Winfrey TV program he watched regarding women whose husband's cheated on them? (See #9 above)
7. Have you experienced or have you known someone who had a divided family that was the result a grudge?
  - a. Is there a church you're aware of that has experienced this type of division?
  - b. Is it your observation that grudges leaves "wounded and dead people all over the field"?
  - c. What is your reaction to the fact that Rebekah never saw her favorite son, Jacob, again?
8. Spend time talking about Joseph's willingness to forgive his brothers rather than punish them severely, which, by the way, was an option that was completely within his power and authority to do.
  - a. Read and discuss [Proverbs 19:11b](#).
  - b. Talk about experiences you've had when you or someone you know has made a conscious, deliberate decision to "*overlook an offense.*"

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<sup>4</sup> "Record my lament; list my tears on your scroll — are they not in your record?"

9. Read and discuss [Colossians 3:13](#).

- a. Read the story of church conflict and the incredible steps some people took to ensure that the grudge they held was widely known.

Church conflicts happen for pretty unusual reasons. In the 1890s there was a small Baptist church in Mayfield County, Kentucky. The church had just two deacons, and those two men seemed to be constantly arguing and bickering with each other. On a particular Sunday, one deacon put up a small wooden peg in the back wall so the pastor could hang up his hat. When the other deacon discovered the peg, he was outraged. "How dare someone put a peg in the wall without first consulting me!" The people in the church took sides and the congregation eventually split. Over a hundred years later, residents of Mayfield County still refer to the two churches as Peg Baptist and Anti-Peg Baptist.<sup>5</sup>

10. Allow the people in your group to discuss the Corrie ten Boom illustration Pastor Gary used in this message. (See #22 above)

11. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: seek the Lord's healing, whether it concerns being the offender or being the one who was offended; (have someone prepared to read [Colossians 3:13](#)) pray and mediate on the Scripture; allow the Holy Spirit to free them from the grip of a grudge.

\* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.sermoncentral.com/illustrations/sermon-illustration-dan-erickson-stories-986.asp>