

Holding Grudges

By Terry W. Benton

Have you ever noticed how miserable some people are? Sometimes it is caused by being long on memory and imagination and short on love and forgiveness. In fact, most of the time that is the case. If a person chooses to remember every unkind or thoughtless word or deed whether real or imagined, that person will be miserable. Either confront the issue head on (Matt. 18:15f) or forget it. If it is not worth confronting in the manner Jesus instructed, then it is not worth holding to one's own misery. Forgiveness is also one of the great medicines where we do ourselves a big favor. The other person is likely oblivious to the issue.

To harbor grudges, to cultivate malice toward others, to refuse to forgive, is going to hurt us far more than the one toward whom our ill feelings have been directed. Here are a few helpful ways to deal with ill feelings:

1. Spend time daily confronting your own weaknesses before the Lord and listen to Him through the Bible in daily reading and meditation. You will see your own weaknesses more clearly. This will often soften the way you look at others.

2. Pray to God for your forgiveness when you look at what your sins did to Jesus in nailing Him to the cross. Yes, you were there in attitude and in sinfulness.

3. Realize what it cost God to forgive you. (Matt. 18:21-35)

4. Realize how costly it is to have an unforgiving spirit when you are forgiven so much.

5. Leave vengeance in God's hands. He will repay what needs repaying. You don't get to handle that.

Talk to God about this burden you are carrying. But, listen to what His word is telling you to do about it. A grudge is bitterness, and it will destroy you and your potential for good now and forever. That is a high price to pay for something you can control through Christ who strengthens (Phil. 4:13).

Classes This Week

Tuesday 8 PM Truth-seekers in Student Center Rm 2227	Thursday 7 PM Ladies Class at the Rouse's on "Giving God Control"
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Brad Marshall (Allie Hosey's Cousin)	Jesse Godwin (Troy's father and Mac's grandfather)	Frank Hand (Laura Humphrey's dad)	Louise Pack (Anna and Christopher's grandmother)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	David Hartsell (Holly and Brad's Father)	Kate Miller (Daughter of Brandon and Erin Miller)
Betty Mcareavey (Mary Ann Roberts' mom)	Audrey Barnett (Joanetta's sister-in-law)	Betty Bradford	Hazel Gilliland and Sherry Carroll (Toni's relatives)
Tom Davis (Walker Davis' Uncle)	Joy Powell (Tori Luther's grandmother)	Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother)	William Smith (Ken Sullivan's brother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	William Herd	Rebecca Davis (Chuck Hahn's Niece)	Holly Law
John M. Rhodes and Bonnie Rhodes Kirkley (Toni Herd's family)	Joe Perkins (Scott Perkin's Dad)	Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephew)	Ellie Vaughn (Scott and Genna's baby)

September Birthdays

- 2-Denise Davis
- 3-Trenton Anderson
- 3-Larry Lauderdale
- 4-Kevin Anderson
- 7-Abigale Gilbert
- 10-BJ Winslett
- 10-Eleanor Weldon
- 10-Matthew Sullivan
- 11-Sheryl Fowler
- 11-Kimberlee Myers
- 12-Jared Johnson
- 13-Adam Saylor
- 13-Rachel LaGrone
- 14-Patsy Ogle
- 16-Brittany Bagents
- 17-Laura Weldon
- 21-Sarah Chandler
- 24-Wade Winslett
- 24-Lauren Johnson
- 25-Ashley Collier
- 26-Ali Ingram
- 28-Katie Pepper
- 29-Preston Loggins

News and Notes

- ☒ - Lets keep in our prayers our expectant mothers, Jessica Anderson and Nicole Pender!
- ☒ - Those interested in hosting or teaching a kids' monthly class for 1st-5th or 6th-12th grade can sign up in foyer!
- ☒ - Those interested in participating in a public Bible reading can sign up in foyer!
- ☒ - Ray Humphrey, Seth's dad, will have rotator cuff surgery on Wed.
- ☒ - Andrew Hahn broke his arm this week.
- ☒ - Please remember Quinton Addison, grandfather of April and Julie, and his family as he is in hospice care.
- ☒ - Several have identified with the University church: **Loggins family** - Matt, Kelli, Alaina, Preston; **Students** - Julie Britnell, Ashley Collier, Katie Martin, Kelli Huggins, Adam Holiday, Jimmy and Ada Owen, Thomas Peek, Haley Gay!

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Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

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Good Success at Home

By Irven Lee



Thoughts to Ponder

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. (Joshua 1:8)

Elders
Walker Davis (334) 703-0050
Larry Rouse (334) 734-2133

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES
Sunday
Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM
Wednesday
Bible Classes.....7:00 PM
E-Mail:
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Larry Rouse
Evangelist and Editor

In the very first part of the book of Joshua the Lord gave this capable leader of Israel counsel on how he could have "good success" in his work in bringing the Israelites into their promised land. The Lord promised that He would not fail or forsake him, but He would see to it that Joshua would divide the land unto the people. That was the divine side of the plan. Joshua was to be strong and of good courage; he was to obey the law of God, turning not to the right hand or to the left; and he was to meditate on the law constantly. Joshua did his part, and God kept His promise. There was "good success" (Josh. 21:45; 23:14).

That kind of reverence for God and respect for His law today will make it possible for a happy young couple to have "good success" in the task of home making. Happiness is a by-product of humble obedience to the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:2). Open violation of this law brings failure in all precious spiritual endeavors.

Finding a good wife who is faithful and worthy, and having a family of well-trained children, is the greatest find a man can make. This is "good success" (Prov. 18:22; 31:10-31;

Does any one know of anything worse in this life than an ungodly home and the divorce which marks the final crash of the failure? Each day of life after that brings some of the bitter taste of the failure to keep God's laws that relate to family life. The aftermath of this spectacle comes to the guilty parties and to the innocent. None escapes the horror.

Psa. 127:3-5). If he has a wonderful home so do his wife and children. If his home is a failure for him, it is a sad experience for his family also. The success or failure of the home affects every member of the family and many more.

Does any one know of anything worse in this life than an ungodly home and the divorce which marks the final crash of the failure? Each day of life after that brings some of the bitter taste of the failure to keep God's laws that relate to family life. The aftermath of this spectacle comes to the guilty parties and to the innocent. None escapes the horror. Relatives, the church, and the com-

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munity suffer also in many such cases. Even the welfare of the nation is harmed many ways by the instability of so many families.

A Divorce To Think About

My telephone rang one day a few decades ago. A woman to whom I sometimes preached called to tell me that her husband had asked for a divorce. There were five young children each only a little younger than the brother or sister just older. They had been living on a very limited budget. It was heart rending just to hear of that husband and father's request.

I went to the man to try to learn his viewpoint. He did talk. He told about a day when at lunch time he happened to eat at the same table with one of the women who worked at the plant where he worked. They talked and laughed and found it pleasant together. They soon sat down together again, and then it became a habit. One day she asked if he were happily married. He thought about that question and "realized" that he was not. I got in on the story when he was ready to desert his family and live with that woman who ate lunch at his table.

You may use your imagination to tell the story of the future. Was he very happy with the woman that was willing to take him away from his wife and children? Would she be a worthy wife like the woman of **Proverbs 31**?

What would the future be for the wife who was left with the children? We may suppose that she, too, had at first been a pleasant companion to the one who became her husband and the father of her children. But now things have changed! He would find bills to pay, noise at his house when he came home, and a tired wife to talk with. He decided that he was not happily married. I wonder if he would have recognized happiness if he met it in the road?

That family of nominal church members were not faithful Christians. I could not list her faults and his, but they were, at least, guilty of not being all they should have been. Repenting and removing the faults would have been the way for them to find a happier situation. Violating the marriage law and deserting the wife he had married and

deserting his children is not the way to go looking for happiness or heaven. A man who will not provide for the physical and spiritual needs of his own family has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel (**1 Tim. 5:8**). He and his own wife could have made a much better home.

Think of what may have happened to the children. They would grow up without a father. Each and every child needs a father to bring him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Children cannot provide for themselves things that cost money. A mother of five young children is in no position to be a bread winner. Those five children, if they still live, are now adults. They were not in those early days taught to be Christians. Do you suppose they are now walking in the steps of Jesus? They did not ask to be born, but their very existence presented a crying need for tender love and care. Each had a soul worth more than the world.

Think of the woman who talked and laughed at the lunch table. Do you think her life has been worth living? She is now old enough for social security if she still lives. Death will soon come to her if it has not already. What then?

Who wins when there are such divorces? Circumstances vary from one divorce to another, but each brings something other than the best. Each is a giant step down toward disappointment for some. A divorce is a legal document obtained by paying court costs, and a copy may be kept as a badge of failure in life's most important undertaking. Some have trophies for outstanding athletic accomplishment, plaques for special honor for faithful work over a period of years, or for some very heroic deed. Divorce papers are not framed and placed with such trophies.

Are you working at the challenge of being a good marriage companion and a good parent? If not, why not? Will the divorce rate ever come down in a wonderful way in America? The influence of Christ is in that direction, so a great religious awakening would bless our country that is now so much under the influence of immoral atheists. "Awake thou that sleepest" (**Eph. 5:14-17; Rom. 13:10-14**). Think of how rewarding "good success" in the family would be to all and how serious failure and divorce would be. See that you walk circum-



The Blight of Bitterness

By R. J. Evans

Some are very bitter toward the Lord's church for it's "lack of love"—but yet the poisonous vitriol that spews out of their mouths is so much greater and more intense than that of the supposed "unloving" brethren they left.

"Pursue peace with all men, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking diligently lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled" (**Heb. 12:14-15**).

Bitterness is a terrible problem. It can blow out the candle of joy and peace in our lives and leave our souls in darkness and despair. Its effects upon people's lives have caused a host of troubles. It is often the root problem for churches that are at unrest and have become divided. It can also cause brokenness and destruction in homes. Thus, bitterness keeps us from being vital, vibrant, and victorious as Christians.

Bitter people become caustic, cynical, and hostile. They are over-loaded with resentment and fault-finding. Deep down, they are angry. Generally, they complain a lot and are full of self-pity. They become disinterested and refuse to participate—becoming cool and aloof—while inwardly they are a scathing volcano of anger and hurt. The above text points out that bitterness causes trouble, "and by this many become defiled." Have you become defiled by bitterness?

Over the past few decades, there seems to be quite a growing number of members of the Lord's church who have succumbed to bitterness. This includes some with whom I have worked and worshipped in years past. Those who become bitter have usually experienced a bad circumstance in their life. A good number became disappointed and disillusioned with their fellow-Christians. I know of some Christians who left the church of Christ, as such, and decided to start their own group, but it wasn't long until their embittered group dissolved. Bitterness never builds up, for it is destructive in nature. We see this all along when people become disillusioned, selfish and disappointed—they go out from us. Most have lost their faith and ended up in some denomination or "community church". It reminds me of what the Apostle John said of some in **1 John 2:19**—"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that

they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us."

Some are very bitter toward the Lord's church for it's "lack of love"—but yet the poisonous vitriol that spews out of their mouths is so much greater and more intense than that of the supposed "unloving" brethren they left. They are "turned off" by what they refer to as "legalistic church of Christ traditions". But, in reality, this usually has to do with brethren who are genuinely trusting in God's grace by faithfully obeying what is authorized by Scripture—

that which has been "handed down" to us by God in His Word.

Truly, it is sad when we are seeing more and more Christians developing a mindset of bitterness toward the Lord's church. Nothing good ever results from this! Their bitterness just moves them farther and farther from God's Word, and fellowship with Him and His people. As long as they remain in their state of bitterness, there is no turning back. This is so tragic!

How can we overcome the blight of bitterness? We must start with true repentance, prayer and a change of attitude. When the Apostle Peter told Simon the Sorcerer to "repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you"—please notice how Peter described the condition of his heart—"For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity" (**Acts 8:22-23**). Also, those who are poisoned by bitterness toward others need to be more loving, kind, and forgiving. "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you" (**Eph. 4:32**). We must place our trust and faith in the Lord, not man—"For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you'" (**Heb. 13:5**). And, last of all, how can we overcome the blight of bitterness? Refer back to our text—replace it with peace and holiness.

Just as the husband is told to "not be bitter" toward his wife (**Col. 3:19**), let us not become bitter toward our brothers and sisters in Christ—those who are members of the Lord's church.

