

ILLINOIS LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

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This month's topic for consideration regards a problem that is common among all people, including Christians, and yet we shall see that God's Word – the Holy Bible – urges: **Don't hold grudges!**

"Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door." (James 5:9 KJV)

Comment: In the above Scripture verse the term "grudge" – according to the original Greek word – means to sigh, moan, complain, and to groan with grief. But notice that God's Word warns us NOT to grudge against our fellow Christians! Sadly, because we are all sinners, we sometimes hold grudges against one another for years; and, such behavior often causes divisions in congregations to the point where people leave church as they refuse to be reconciled and will no longer gather together in worshiping the Lord. Nevertheless, Jesus Christ will judge all people at His return in glory. Therefore, sincere repentance of all sin and a change in behavior is necessary, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Corinthians 5:10 KJV) Thankfully, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9 KJV) Accordingly, don't hold grudges!

"Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD." (Leviticus 19:18 KJV)

Comment: The rule for God's people in the Old Testament applies to God's people – Christians – in the New Testament era as well, for Jesus Christ our Lord summarizes God's Law thus: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Matthew 22:37-40 KJV) Hence, let us never forget, "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." (Romans 13:10 KJV) Accordingly, don't hold grudges!

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging." (1 Peter 4:7-9 KJV)

Comment: Note well that "charity" – Christian love – is to be practiced by us Christians, especially among ourselves, as we are to be hospitable to one another, not grudgingly but willingly. "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." (Galatians 6:10 KJV) Accordingly, don't hold grudges!

The Lord Jesus instructs us: **"when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses." (Mark 11:25-26 KJV)**

Comment: Jesus makes it crystal clear as to how important it is that we be forgiving, rather than holding grudges, for if we are unforgiving then we need not expect God to forgive us our sins. Accordingly, don't hold grudges!

Let us seriously consider what we pray every time we pray the Lord's Prayer. "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matthew 6:9-15 KJV)

Comment: Again, Jesus makes it crystal clear as to how important it is that we be forgiving, rather than holding grudges, for if we are unforgiving then we need not expect God our heavenly Father to forgive us our sins. Accordingly, don't hold grudges!

"Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took *him* by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." (Matthew 18:21-35 KJV)

Comment: Observe that we are to willingly forgive our fellow men repeatedly! Our Lord repeatedly forgives us our immensely great debt of sin! Hence, we are to be forgiving of our fellow human beings again and again, and we are to forgive from our hearts; that is, we are to be genuinely forgiving as our Lord God is with us. Accordingly, don't hold grudges!

"For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment." (James 2:13 KJV)

Comment: The foregoing Bible verse reminds us how vitally important it is for us to be merciful, rather than holding grudges, "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we

live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in *his* brother's way." (Romans 14:7-13 KJV)

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." (Ephesians 4:31-32 KJV)

Comment: God's Word is clear, for if we truly think about how loving and merciful God has been and is toward us, then we will desire to be loving and forgiving toward each other. Accordingly, don't hold grudges!

"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you." (John 15:12 KJV)

Comment: The Lord Jesus Christ's command to His followers is a tall order, for note well that we Christians are to love each other as Jesus has loved us. Jesus loved us so very much that He paid for our sins by willingly dying for us, shedding His holy and precious blood while nailed to the cross of Calvary. Thus, we are to show genuine self-sacrificing love. Accordingly, don't hold grudges!

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others*? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5:43-48 KJV)

Comment: Jesus our Lord desires that we go so far as to love our enemies, blessing them, praying for them, and doing good to them. Accordingly, don't hold grudges!

God grant that we all make progress in sanctification of life, that we be more and more fruitful in the faith of Jesus Christ, showing Christian love to all people. Let us sincerely repent of our sins, trusting in Jesus for forgiveness, because, "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." (1 John 1:10 KJV) Then, let us go forward with the Lord's help, striving to be more Christ-like in our behavior toward other folks.

m.e.l.