

Control Your Feelings

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If we take a look at Luke 6:38 it talks about “giving and it should be given unto you.” If you look at 37 it’s about judging, so we see that it’s the same principle. One tells you to do something and the other tells you not to do something. 37 tells you don’t judge people and 38 tells you to give to people. If you give you will receive abundantly but what’s the issue with the judging? The way you judge people God will judge you in the same way. We won’t get into that study but it is interesting in and of itself the tension between the instruction here not to judge and our job function which is to judge. Let’s go to Matthew 22:36-40.

Previously we went from Matthew 22 straight to Exodus chapter 20 because it talks about the Commandments. People were confused about what the second commandment was. They thought it was number 2 of 10 but the second commandment is actually the last six. I asked if we could actually find the original references. That’s only verse 38 but I wanted to see if we could find verse 39 as well. “Love thy neighbor as thyself.” I want to move on but I’ll just give you the verse. We’ve got Deuteronomy 6:5 for the first commandment and were going to get Leviticus 19:18 for the second. Leviticus 19:18 says, “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.” This is not a definitive definition of loving your neighbor but it is a definition.

What does it mean to love your neighbor? Define what that means but before you answer, where are you going to receive your answer from?

You’re going to get it from the bible. What book? Leviticus 19:18 it tells you what it means to love your neighbor as yourself, it gives you a definition.

It's not comprehensive but it is definitive. It talks about not avenging and not bearing grudges and again we won't spend the time looking into that. 2 Peter 3:12, part of that work of being diligent is the fact of this concept of not avenging people or avenging yourself and not bearing grudges.

What does it mean to avenge? How many of us take vengeance on other people? **What does vengeance even look like to you?**

So, if someone does something to you or they don't do something then you get upset and your behavior or your countenance towards them changes. Someone doesn't do what you would want them to do for you, they behave in a way that you don't think is correct. **Does your behavior towards them change?**

Do you get upset? Do you want to react back at them? Taking vengeance is one of the definitions of not loving your neighbor. The problem with that is the way we define "inflict harm" because people want to take a hard version not a soft version. What's a grudge? Does anyone know the hebrew coding for that? This is an interesting word. H5201 I want to give you all the english words to describe it; keep, bear, grudge, keeper, keepers, kept, reserve or reserving. **What's the primary definition of this word?** Keep. You can either go to the strong's definition of it or we have a few verses of it.

Psalms 103:9. He will notH3808 alwaysH5331 chide:H7378 neitherH3808 will he **keepH5201** his anger for ever.H5769

Song of Solomon 1:6 LookH7200 notH408 upon me, because IH7945 H589 am black,H7840 because the sunH8121 hath lookedH7945 H7805 upon me: my mother'sH517 childrenH1121 were angryH2734 with me; they madeH7760 me the **keeperH5201** of(H853) the vineyards;H3754 but mine ownH7945 vineyardH3754 have I notH3808 **kept.H5201**

Jer 3:12 GoH1980 and proclaimH7121 (H853) theseH428 wordsH1697 toward the north,H6828 and say,H559 Return,H7725 thou backslidingH4878 Israel,H3478 saithH5002 the LORD;H3068 and I will notH3808 cause mine angerH6440 to fallH5307 upon you: forH3588 IH589 am merciful,H2623 saithH5002 the LORD,H3068 and I will notH3808 keepH5201 anger for ever.H5769

Jer 3:5 Will he reserveH5201 his anger for ever?H5769 will he keepH8104 it to the end?H5331 Behold,H2009 thou hast spokenH1696 and doneH6213 evil thingsH7451 as thou couldest.H3201

If I said to reserve something what word would you use? Keep. So, we can see that every occurrence of this word in the Bible is keep. In Leviticus 19:18 it doesn't say keep, it says grudge. What does it mean to grudge? Strong says to guard, figuratively, to cherish. In Brown-Driver Briggs it says to keep, to guard or to maintain. Basically, it means to maintain something, status quos or to guard something.

What does it mean in verse 19, "don't have a grudge." We added the word keep, so it's this idea of holding onto something. Your holding onto bad feelings. You're not allowed to take vengeance and you're not allowed to hold on to anger or bad feelings and you can see that they are related.

When you translate 5201 into english it takes a couple of words to do that. So, to bear a grudge means to hold on to bad feelings. I would say in the verse itself the word 5201 would be what word? Is it the word bear or is it the word grudge? The word is really bear which means to hold onto something, to keep it. That's where you get the word forbear. Then it's going to give the context of what you're keeping or holding onto. When we go to verse 17, it says, "don't hate." You can rebuke but don't suffer (allow) sin to happen but you're not allowed to hate. Verse 16 talks about gossip and verse 15 talks about not doing any unrighteous behavior. When you go to verse 18 and they have the word, keep, the translators are looking for the context on what you're keeping or what you're holding on to.

Well, use the word guarding in connection to vengeance. What are you guarding? Some kind of bad feeling. It's the context that has put the word grudge in there.

5201 isn't the word grudge in and of itself, it's more the word bear. This is a good observation. I had to put the word grudge because that's what the context of the verse is teaching.

If someone does something to you and your holding onto bad feelings and when you hold onto those bad feelings what do you do?

You take your vengeance. That's one definition of what it means if you didn't love your neighbor. If someone does something to you and you get upset, I don't think that's in and of itself wrong. What is the wrong? When does it become wrong? You hold onto it and then what do you do when you hold onto it? Then you act on it by keeping bad feelings towards your neighbor.

What does vengeance even look like? Hard version or soft? If I do something that you don't like and you have a bad feeling and then you have a car accident or you fall over and you hit your head and you lose all your memory. I come to you and you say "hello" and you say "hi" nicely, why is that? Because you haven't been able to keep hold of that bad experience. It hasn't been allowed to grow and fester. If you had a plant that was growing you'd say that was, if you had mold or fungus you'd say that was festering. Festering is an ugly type of growth. It's been festering in your heart and it's been growing, then the person comes to you and you want to show them that you're upset, that's vengeance. If you didn't keep those feelings, if you didn't protect and guard that hurt there would be no expression of anger or hostility or there would be no response. What people tend to want to wait for is this thing called sorry. If you say sorry then they say OK I'll stop guarding this ill feeling.

The real question is how does God behave towards us? Every time you do something wrong to him, does he guard those bad feelings, let them grow and then have them come back to you? Everytime you steal from him does he withhold money or blessings from you that you need to live? If you didn't ask for forgiveness would he start to take vengeance on you? Is this true?

If you are in a relationship with someone and you leave the relationship, that person has two choices. They either let you go or they pursue you, but this is not vengeance for either one of them. Which option does God use? He pursues us when we leave. Every time you do something wrong God never holds a grudge and he doesn't take vengeance on you. This setting that we're talking about is about neighbors.

Neighbors: A friend, a fellow, a citizen, another person, your peer. When we talk about the final destruction we have God and Satan, is that relationship one of neighbors? I would say it's not. I would say that's a relationship between a judge and a criminal. Judges are not allowed to bear grudges or take vengeance. They're just extremely intelligent administrators and all they're allowed to do is go to a code book, check the crime and administer the punishment. That's all there job is, that's not vengeance, it's just doing what the book tells them to do.

The reason why they have to be clever is because the crime is often complicated. There are varying degrees of punishment that are not just fixed. It has to be this way. If a poor person stole money it's a simple crime and so you just go to the book and it tells you what the punishment is. If they stole \$10, the book can't say if you steal the punishment is \$10,000 fine. That would not be comparable. However, if it was a large corporation and they stole 10 million dollars, a \$10,000 dollar fine is not enough. The book will say, if they steal, give them the appropriate punishment. Therefore, it takes a clever person to work out what an appropriate punishment is. But it's not vengeance, because one of the requirements is that you're not allowed to hold on to any preconceived grudges.

So God is not the neighbor when he kills Satan in the lake of fire. This is the problem with Luke 6:37;

37 Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:

What's the context of this judging? It says, "don't judge." So, if you were to judge what would your job be? A Judge. "Don't be a Judge."

Is God the Judge? Yes. Are we supposed to be Judges? Sometimes, of course, we were supposed to be Judges, sometimes.

When are we supposed to be Judges? When we have a relationship between a Judge and a Criminal. What's the relationship context of Luke 6? Neighbors. In Luke 6 the context is neighbors and the neighbor is not allowed to judge another neighbor. But, one of those neighbors is a Judge and one of them happens to be a criminal. In a separate setting the neighbor can judge the neighbor. But that is in a judicial setting not a neighborly setting. So, when people say "you have no right to judge me" and they use Luke 6:37-38 to prove that, they may or may not be correct. Because if we are neighbors then it's correct but we were more than neighbors. We have other job functions and in another capacity you're not only allowed to but you're required to judge.

In the olden days a judge would listen to the case and then he would say "I'll give my judgement tomorrow" they've already been found guilty. When it comes to the next day he'd be wearing a black cap on his head. This is when he will state what the punishment will be for the crime. So, this is what is happening here, he becomes the Executive Judge. He has changed his relationship from neighbor to Executive Judge.

I am confused, we are taught not to judge our neighbors but in certain situations we are required to judge our neighbor? NO, you are not allowed to judge your neighbor. Only in a Judicial setting can you judge your neighbor.

Who are we allowed to judge? We are only allowed to judge criminals not your neighbor.

What if my neighbor becomes a criminal and does something wrong towards me?

No, this is not the right mindset. You can't say, your neighbor who's become a criminal that they've stopped being your neighbor and now they're just a criminal. You can't justify that approach.

The question is how do we know when to judge? I guess that takes some skill and wisdom. But one of the markers is, someone has done something wrong, first of all you don't take it personally. When you do respond, if you respond with a grudge or some kind of vengeance which is a wrong just because you have bad feelings, you are breaking this rule and its sin.

First it's about making sure someone actually did a criminal act and then checking your feelings about how you are responding. It's much simpler than we think.

All of us know when our feelings are hurt, we all know when we want to lash out and want to hurt someone. When we justify our behavior by saying that they did a criminal act, that to me is breaking this law. If you are dead to self you can't be offended. Some people symbolize Satan as a snake and they say if you step on a dead snake it won't fight back.

I like Leviticus 19:18. I want to just add that to the record. I like Deuteronomy 6:5 as well but we did not focus on that one because it's not the Great Test. I wanted to see how easy it is to be lost or to be failing the test. When you get to the edge of the cliff you're just going to fall over. This hard version of vengeance is not the standard. It's this soft version when you have bad feelings, you hold onto them because someone hurt you and you plan and scheme how you can hurt them back.

What's worse is if you hold onto these things you might not be even planning and scheming to take revenge. It just takes a spark to ignite the flame because it's already there. So, you don't even have to say when I meet them i'm going to tell them what I think. You're probably saying that you're going to be good and make sure I don't say anything. Because you've held onto those feelings and you're in a situation and you let it out. You say "I couldn't help it and I didnt even mean it."

This is a really ugly situation, pervasive and very serious. It's everywhere and we are all failing on this test and it's so easy to fail. **How do we not hold onto these feelings?**

The question is, will you have the feelings? It's a natural reaction when we get hurt. Is that a yes? A.T. Jones is quite generous. He says the proper standard of Christianity is that you don't have the feelings. That's where we need to get. So that you're not so easily hurt. All of us never begin that way. There's so much of yourself still alive that we do get hurt. And then the task is not to hold onto that hurt. It's the holding onto the hurt that's the problem. **However, it begins by being hurt in the first place** And Christianity is about getting to a place where you don't get hurt. Most of us are not good at that. Don't hold onto grudges and ask God to take them from you but the best thing is to not have those feelings. The question is "can you live your life where those feelings don't happen to you"? And the answer is Yes. You can because I can give you examples where you don't have bad feelings.

You're at a shop and someone walks in and there's an expensive vase \$6000 they walk past it, knock it over and it breaks into pieces. How do you feel? You could feel bad or you might laugh and think nothing so you can control your feelings. Change the building, this is your house, this is your vase. Now how do you feel, you have bad feelings. What has changed? The building and the vase, everything else is the same. You can see how easy it is to modify human behavior. If they knock over your vase just pretend it's not your house and it's not your vase. Then you have no bad feelings. It's really not that difficult to live above these hurt feelings. **In theory**, in practice it's not that easy. When you have the feelings then you have to deal with things. The reason why it's not that easy is because can you pretend that the vase is not yours? **Why can't you pretend?**

Because everybody has rights. What do you have rights to? Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Property. It's your inalienable right, it's nothing that you earn or that you have to explain. The more stuff you attain, the more happy you are.

So when someone destroys your property it goes deep, it's part of our nature or our innate right to protect our property. That's why God at the end can have vengeance because you start messing around with his property. Without going too deep into that, I want to make a point. It's not that easy not to have feelings when someone touches your possessions or your happiness because you're built to protect that. The question is once you have those feelings what do you do with them?

In Summary:

Let us learn how to deal with our emotions and our feelings. We are forbidden from judging our neighbors. God has commanded us to treat them as we would want them to treat us. We are required to treat them as you treat us. When we are being attacked let us not hold a grudge or take vengeance. God has called us in many situations to judge but help us to do it righteously.