

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

March 20

2022

Do Not Carry A Grudge

A man who observed an old farmer plowing a field with his mule once said, “I don’t want to tell you how to run your business, but did you know that you could save yourself a whole lot of work by saying ‘gee’ and ‘haw’ to that mule, instead of just pulling on the reins?” The old farmer stopped, pulled out a handkerchief from his pocket, mopped his brow, and said “I reckon you’re right, but this critter kicked me five years ago and I ain’t spoke to him since.”

Now, this little story may bring a smile to your face, but the fact of the matter is, it illustrates very well the price that many pay when they carry a grudge. You see, when defined, a grudge is: “a persistent feeling of resentment or ill will toward another.” Sadly, there are many (even some Christians) who are carrying around grudges each and every day without realizing the price that they are paying for doing so.

Therefore, brethren, we need to beware of the ill effects of carrying around a grudge, and we need to strive

to be a people who avoid bearing grudges toward one another. For, even the children of Israel were instructed to avoid bearing grudges when they were told, “You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself...” (Leviticus 19:18). Now, I encourage us to take heed to those words of the Lord that was spoken to the children of Israel, and I likewise encourage us as His children today to make proper application of the need to not carry a grudge against one another.

Let’s be a people who love our neighbors as ourselves (Matthew 22:39; Romans 13:10). Let’s not be angry with a brother without a cause, and if there is a problem, let’s make an honest effort to make it right (Matthew 5:22-24), and let’s have the courage to go to another who has offended us, in an effort to resolve that issue (Matthew 18:15). Often times, many ill feelings are formed due to a misunderstanding, and this can usually be simply resolved by talking it out.

Likewise, let’s remember, if a brother sins against us, and he repents, we are not to feel ill toward him, but rather we are to forgive him (Luke 17:3-4). Last, but certainly not least, may we never forget the need to forgive; for, as Jesus teaches, our forgiveness from our Father in heaven hinges on our forgiveness of others (Matthew 6:14-15). So, do not carry around a grudge, but rather be one who makes every effort to put behind you any feelings of resentment or ill will that you may have for another.

✍️ Brad Phillips

“You’re In A Marathon, Not A Sprint!”

A marathon is defined as “any long-distance race ... a foot race on a course measuring 26 miles, 385 yards.”(Webster’s). In defining the word “sprint,” we learn that it is “to race or move at full speed, esp. for a short distance, as in running, rowing, etc.” (ibid.). Just as the definitions for these words are different, so is the training for each sport.

In sprinting, one wishes to get from point A to point B in the quickest time, expending all energy to get there before one’s competitors. In the case of a marathon, one wishes to get from point A to point B as quickly as possible but must also realize that he cannot expend all energy in the beginning, or he will not even finish the race! In a marathon, one tries to build up to a certain speed and maintain a consistent pace for the rest of the race. If a sprinter and a marathoner were to race one another, a sprinter might outrun the marathon runner initially; but after a short distance, the sprinter is winded, while the marathon runner is just “hitting his stride,” ready to run the rest of the race.

Why are we making this contrast? It is because such an illustration fits the lives of many Christians. It is unfortunate that some new Christians “burn out” rather quickly after becoming a Christian. These Christians are excited about having a new relationship with Christ and their brethren and wish to learn more and more. In fact, they are sincere in their desire to want to do all that they can for Christ. However, after a few months, they become tired (“winded”?) and realize that this particular course is longer than they thought. It is to last for the rest of their lives and they were not considering that possibility (I Cor. 15:58). It is impossible to run for a time and then “coast” on our momentum. We must keep moving, but some have already become “winded” and tired and have given up.

Why does this happen? There might be several contributing factors, but ultimately, I believe a fact forgotten by many is that living as a Christian is a marathon, not a sprint! Hebrews 12:1 compares the life of a Christian to a race. We read, “Therefore since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.” Notice that we are to run this race of life “with endurance.” This race will not be completed in a day or a week. The race a Christian runs demands that we endure for the rest of our lives (Matt. 10:22; II Tim. 2:3, 4:5; Jas. 5:11)! Are we conditioned and trained in the right way? We need to be if we are to make this commitment to Christ.

Furthermore, we read in II Timothy 4:7 the apostle Paul’s words that

he has “finished the race.” When did his “race” end? It ended at his death. He realized he was soon to die and understood that his “marathon” was quickly coming to a close. Yet, he also understood that he could not let up in his running. This is because he knew that if he had preached the truth to others but did not himself obey it, he would be “a castaway” (I Cor. 9:24-27). These are but a few passages that compare a man’s life to a race completed at death. Yes, friends, let us appreciate the fact that a Christian’s life is a marathon that demands our endurance, faithfulness, and stamina if we will see Heaven! Living as a Christian is a marathon, not a sprint.

As Christians, why don’t we take the time to examine ourselves (II Cor. 13:5) and make sure we are still running the race as we ought? Perhaps you have become “winded,” downtrodden, and just want to give up. Take this opportunity to return to the Lord and renew your commitment to the race that leads us from earth to Heaven. Remember that there are folks who are cheering you on in this marathon (Heb. 12:1). They want you to succeed, but they cannot run the race for you! We all have a race to run, so let us do it with patience, zeal, and a firm resolve that we will not allow temptation and the allure of this world to trip us up! Let us keep our eyes on the goal of Heaven (Col. 3:1-2) and “look to Jesus” (Heb. 12:2) as we press “on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14)!

✍ Jarrod M. Jacobs

Our Gospel Meeting Is Coming Up April 3-8 ***Speaker: Lanny Smith***

Belleville church of Christ

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www.bellevillechurch.net

Schedule of Services

Sunday Bible Study	9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship	4:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study	7:00 p.m.

Evangelist

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