

Letting Go

Did something ever make you so angry that you held a grudge for years? I encountered this recently when I recalled a woman who had been with us on a trip in 1984. She had brought many pieces of luggage on the trip and required help (read demanded) to carry all her luggage. On the last day of the trip, she came up to my husband and told him it was his turn to carry her luggage. My husband and I had been sharing the load where we each carried one carry-on and one piece of luggage. Although he would at times take the heavier pieces. Her plans were that I would now carry 4 bags of luggage (two suitcases and two carry-ons) because she had too much, and it was his turn. Her husband had wisely stayed at home. We had been told one carry-on and one piece of luggage per person. She had a truckload. We had seen her insisting that others help her, but I told her no, that my husband would be helping me. She went into a tirade at me about my selfishness and the fact that I had bought a small diamond in Israel at a diamond dealer. I honestly did not see the connection between me carrying 4 bags of luggage and buying a diamond and my husband's turn to carry her baggage. We ignored her demand and avoided any more contact with her. This continued for as long as I knew her. Although I did attempt to speak to her once and she turned away from me, so I gave it up. I thought of this the other day and thought, 1984, time to let this one go. I try not to be, but I am very good at grudges. Not so good at remembering why I am standing in the middle of a room looking around for a hint as to what I am there for, but good at grudges. I do not want to be good at grudges but good at forgiveness, good at remembering the funny stuff like when my husband tried to carry a trunk lid holding it over his head, from our '57 Chevy down the back steps and went flying off the porch. He had brought it into the house to fix a spot of paint on the inside of the lid. I had objected but he insisted and put it in the dining room and painted it and then left it to dry overnight. When he went to take it back outside to put it back on the car, he missed a step. He was careful to not damage the trunk lid but when I laughed and told him he looked like a poor man's version of the Wright brothers, he had no sense of humor. He did tell me later that he was happy I enjoyed it so much. Grudges are heavy and forgiveness lifts that load, but laughter is really the greatest.

James 1:19-20 My dear saints, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for anger does not produce the righteous life that God desires.

Lord, we thank you for the day you have given us. May we be worthy of the gift. Be with those who are ill and those who grieve, give them good health and blessings. Be with our church may we follow your path in all we do. Be with those who are suffering through a horrible war, be their hope and guide. Be with our families, bless them and give them safety. Be with Pastor Don, bless his ministry, grant him healthy days and restful nights. Bless him as he is a blessing. Be with his family, bless them. Please be with our Bishop and Leaders, give them wisdom and courage. May our church truly be your church and may we be the hands and feet of Jesus, the Christ. It is in Jesus' name we offer our prayers. Amen

Grace Epperson