

LOVE LETS GO, 1COR.13:5

40 Days of Love #4

◆ **Intro:** Over the years ago I've done a little informal survey and digging, and came up with a Top Ten list of Irritating Things. You know, little things that tick you off. Before I give you the list, go ahead and take 1 minute to tell another person a form of rudeness that really irks you. If you can't think of one, you can just say, "When the pastor makes me take one minute to talk to someone during church." In a minute I'll share some.

- ◆ 10) You answer the phone and the caller says "Who is this?"
- ◆ 9) There's no parking left but some arrogant sports car took two spots.
- ◆ 8) People who stand so close when talking to you that you can't bring them into focus.
- ◆ 7) People who *stand* on the fast side of moving walkways in airports.
- ◆ 6) drivers texting in the right turn lane at a red light.
- ◆ 5) When the volume display interrupts the video on you smart phone.
- ◆ 4) Paying \$3.50 at an ATM to get my own money!
- ◆ 3) The non-melodic, incessant, body-vibrating, pound of the subwoofer of the punk two cars ahead of you at a stop light.
- ◆ 2) When there's no one in the theater but you, and the very next patron, who is at least a head taller, choses the seat directly in front of you.

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◆1) The ice cream truck's 77th pass on my street playing the same Jamaican tune. (Come on, take the hint pal!)

◆It's a rude, rude world, isn't it? So we're in the 4th week of 40 Days of Love and the Bible says that love is NOT rude. Here's today's text:

◆*"It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs." 1 Corinthians 13:5, NIV.*

◆You can feel the rub already, can't you? If love is like that, and we're going to be better at loving people, we might have to let go of our pet irritations! Lots of loving moments, and loving relationships are systematically destroyed by little rudenesses, small missing courtesies, and little digs. Marriages fall apart, not because of domestic disturbances, but because the small polite manners you had when first dating have been abandoned: no little notes of affection, no favorite candy in your lunch, plenty of observations of your flaws, lots of reminders of your slip ups... How are we ever going to get better at loving people who make us mad, or wrong us, or are rude to us?

◆**1. God wants me to forgive it, not relive it.**

◆Yeah, yeah. We knew we were gonna hear something like that in church. Forgiveness is better than bitterness. Loving in response to rudeness is the higher bar that God expects. But how will we get there? Produce that? Why can't I let go of that? Why do I keep such a long record of wrongs against me?

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◆ Any Star Trekkies in the house? In one Star Trek film a Romulan Warlord wants Spock to witness the dissolving of his planet into a time warp black hole, because Spock failed to keep the Romulan planet from dissolving into one 30 years earlier. He can't let go! Even when defeated by good Captain Kirk, and offered rescue from the black hole himself, he chooses to die, so strong is his grip on his hurt. What a dummy, right? But isn't that what we do? Your brother says he's sorry, or your spouse says she's sorry but we're not ready to forgive them. They need punishment, but who are we really punishing? We're living death in our own homes!

◆ "I'm sorry, dear. I didn't mean it like that. Please forgive me."

◆ "No, I don't believe you're really sorry. You do this all the time... You think it's all better by just saying sorry?"

◆ Or

◆ "You made me look like a wuss when you told everyone I still sleep with my pooky bear! How could you? I'll never forgive you for this, not even after I die!"

◆ Why are we like this? Well for one, we glorify revenge in our stories and films. We believe in our sinful core that getting back will make things better. That justice will sooth the soul. But while justice is virtuous, it is not able to do that. Justice can't free the damaged soul. But forgiveness can.

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◆ *"Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. Do your part to live in peace with everyone, as much as possible. Dear friends, never avenge yourselves (what? are you kidding?). Leave that to God. For it is written, "I will take vengeance; I will repay those who deserve it," says the Lord. Instead, do what the Scriptures say: "If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink, and they will be ashamed of what they have done to you." Don't let evil get the best of you, but conquer evil by doing good." Romans 12:17-21, NLT.*

◆ Love let's go. That's what God does with you and me. Doesn't the holy word say...

◆ *"You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea." Micah 7:19, NIV.*

◆ How can I do that? What can help me chose that? Well, here's a clue...

◆ **2. It's my pain that keeps me from letting go.** Think it over. Why do we want revenge? Same reason we don't forgive. We hurt. Anger is always about hurt of some sort. See someone full of rage? That person is full of hurt, probably hurt piled up over a long time. Sometimes we just want to get even with people to prove that our pain was wrong to have been. We want people to know how we hurt because we think if they knew, then maybe they'd value us more...feel for us more...love us more. We want

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revenge because what we really want is love, but it is not true that revenge will get us that. When I am mean back to another, or at least refuse to forgive, I am in some small way crying out to be worth taken seriously, in other word's, loved.

◆And so we give one another the silent treatment because "I should be taken seriously." And we determine never to do business with so-and-so again because I should be taken seriously, and not ripped off. And we carry words that our parents said to us in the sixth grade all the way to the retirement home (I've talked with people like this.) In our hurt we are keeping records. But love keeps no record of wrongs. Why? Because

◆**3. Keeping records of wrongs destroys the record keeper.**

That's right. It will destroy me! It's all in the text, right?

◆v5 "keeping records of wrong" is paired with being "rude", and "self-seeking", and "easily angered." These all live together. The record keeper is easily angered because he keeps seeing, reliving, the record. Road rage, for example, is not about a passionate desire for efficient traffic functions. It's about busy, busy people who are in a hurry probably because they are trying to do more than a healthy person ought to do, and maybe trying to own more than they need, and who have troubles that pile up for lack of time to address and deal with them, so that not even their hurried weekends to the cottage are really easing their soul. So in the end not letting go actually helps make me more selfish

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and rude. Unforgiveness has been likened to drinking poison and waiting for the other person to die. Resentment is resending it around and going through it again. It's going to wear you down. When we hold a grudge, or hold onto a hurt (we call that bitterness) we are not hurting that person! They probably aren't even thinking about us! We are really allowing them to keep hurting us.

◆ *"Do not bear a grudge against others. But settle your differences with them so you will not commit a sin because of them." Leviticus 19:17*

◆ Don't repeat it; delete it. Don't relive it; forgive it. Psychology has shown us that what we think about most, we move toward. That's why your viewing habits or your listening habits can actually cause you to eventually choose and/or do things you don't believe in or want! Resentment does the same thing; it can actually help you become like the person you so dislike.

◆ **4. Love lets go by facing it's offenses.** You can't forgive something you don't face or name or see or know. This is where competent Christian counsellors are extremely helpful. The truth is some of us were hurt as kids, maybe by our parents, or by others. Some of us have unfinished business, or patterns learned in childhood that are keeping us from becoming better at loving our family members. If you want to be better at loving even those you already care about, you're going to have to deal with

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your past issues. Know why? Humans can't hold hurts inside. They always come out in some form or another. Maybe in venting on your kids, or snapping at your spouse. Maybe in the way you cuss at employees. You can not avoid your pains. If you hate your father for something he did or didn't do... if you hate your mother, or your uncle, or whoever... it's going to come out of you. I recommend from experience that the safety of a wise listener is a great way to process the troubles you've seen. You are fooling yourself to think you can keep them in.

◆ **Love lets go by keeping a short list of losses.** Many things cause us stress. The more a person has at any given time the more likely they are to suffer from mental illnesses. Lets say, you lost your job (stress points), and then you had to move (stress points), and at the same time your mother died (stress points) and your son graduated (eu-stress points); you could easily be a candidate for major clinical depression through no fault of your own, just lots of stressors adding up.

◆ But you can keep your list of losses short by dealing with them, talking them out, praying over them with God.

◆ "Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers over all wrongs."
Proverbs 10:12, NIV.

◆ "He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends." Proverbs 17:9, NIV.

◆ That brings us to some more insights.

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◆**C.** The more I turn sovereign justice, revenge, wrongs -over to God, the less judgmental, bitter, and anxious I will be.

◆*"When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly." 1 Peter 2:23, NIV.*

◆You see? God's Son is the perfect example. He didn't have to fret that his in-law was going to hog the inheritance, because he in the end, God judges justly. He didn't have to brood because someone accused him of something someone else did, for he knew that God judges justly. Entrust your sufferings to God and then go to sleep. God will be up all night anyway! Here are some practical steps:

◆1) So you think back through your life, or even your week. What were the things that made you want to blow up or run away (fight or flight)?

◆2) Then you need to pray over each item out loud. Tell Jesus how it felt, how it hurt. This is facing it. Then you decide to forgive it. Forgiving you see, is not pretending you weren't hurt. It is deciding that you will not hate the one who hurt you. Do this regularly to keep your pile small or your list short.

◆3) After that, when you experience the fight or flight impulse again, the signal of danger or hurt, or when the devil brings the memory back up to "repeat it", you remember that you gave that one to God already.

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◆**Conclusion:** Love lets go. As we close, I want you to think of the people in your life that have hurt you. I invite you in prayer to let go of them. Let them off the hook. Not because they didn't mean it. Not because they deserve it. But because that's the way Love is. That's the way your loving Father in heaven is with you. And that's the way that will bring you peace. Lets pray. You pray these words for yourself.

◆Abba, I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired. I've had enough of dragging my hurts around the surface of the earth. I'm tired of wasting emotional energy on people who've hurt me. Jesus, forgive me my sins and fill me with your Spirit of forgiveness. Reveal to me anyone, or anything you want me to give up to you. Forgive my unholy responses to damaging people. Help me overcome evil with good. Help me to see their burdens and brokenness so you can grow love in me for them. Let the memory of them from now on be my reminder that I turned them over to you. You work out justice. I'll give away your love. Please help me Jesus. Amen.

Children's message

What would you do if you had 4 small cookies on a napkin next to you and someone sat down next to you and reached for a cookie?

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Well you could slap their hand,.

Maybe shout at them.

You could move away.

You could jump on the and fight for your cookie back.

You hand them one and smile.

Which one do you think God would do?

Well there once was a lady in an airport with a small package of cookies she received on the plane. She sat down to eat her cookies while waiting for her next flight. The cookies were on a table next to her and a man on the other side reached over and took one and ate it. She was shocked! But said nothing and ate one herself. Then the man reached for another! She couldn't believe it! Taking her cookie just like that. She pretended not to notice and took one herself. Best be kind and not rude, you know. Finally there was only one left and the man picked it up, broke it in half and handed her one with a smile. Well she didn't know whether to smile back or not. She just couldn't imagine how someone could be so rude. She tried to be polite, ate the half cookie and stood up to go catch her plane. On the way she looked into her purse and there was her own package of cookies!

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She had been eating the other mans cookies. He didn't yell at her. He didn't slap her hand. She thought she was being nice, when in fact she was the rude one and the other man was being loving!

The Bible says love is not rude, it is not self seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no records of wrong. 1Corinthians 13:5

That man was being like God.