

September 4, 2021

Lev. 19:18 *“Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.”* (NIV)

Holding a grudge or seeking revenge are two things that spawn from un-forgiveness in our hearts. When we choose not to forgive someone, we set ourselves in the place of the one and only Judge of the heart, the LORD Himself. The reason that judging should only be in the hands of the LORD is because He alone is perfect. He alone has all wisdom and knowledge. The scriptures are replete with instances of false judgments by those who are not connected to the heart of God. Even the prophet Samuel had to be reminded about this in his search for the new king of Israel - **1 Sam. 16:7**, *“But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”* (NIV)

We should instead, be loving people, not looking for ways to condemn. I recall a conference that I attended a few years ago. One of the conference leaders was encouraging us as pastors, to gain a focus outside the walls of our church. Too often we have huddled “our” group of people together with a focus ‘inward’ and lost sight of those who truly need the touch of the Savior. He then made this statement about the ministry every Christian has in their own neighborhoods. What if when Jesus said, “love your neighbor as yourself,” He really meant it? This question has stuck with me for a number of years. How can we act like we really love people if we are not willing to love our neighbors; reach out to them and meet their needs? Do you pray for your neighbors? Do you look for opportunities to minister to them in Jesus’ name? It is in the sinful nature of man to seek revenge or bear a grudge. It is in the spiritual nature of the LORD to forgive. **Eph. 4:32**, *“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ, God forgave you.”* (NIV)

Dear LORD, please help us to forgive as we have been forgiven by You. Help us to see our neighbors as lovable when sometimes they seem un-lovable. Help us to be reminded of the way that You have forgiven us and loved us with an everlasting love. In Jesus Name, Amen