

**Schedule of Meeting Times:**

WKAC 1080 AM Sunday 7:30 AM  
*Speaker, Kris Vilander*  
Study Sunday 10:00 AM  
Worship Sunday Morn 11:00 AM  
Worship Sunday Eve 5:00 PM  
*Singing every 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday evening*  
Study Wednesday 7:00 PM

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“[Love] ...does not  
behave dishonorably, it  
is not selfish, it does  
not become angry, it  
**does not keep a record  
of wrongs...**”



—1 Corinthians 13:5 (LEB)

**Servants during February:**

**Songleader:** Stanley (5), Larry (12), Peter (19), Stanley (26)

**Reading:** Mike B

**Announcements:** Stanley

**Table:** Peter, Larry, Mike M, Marty

**Wednesday Lesson:** Larry (1), Stanley (8), Kris (15), Larry (22)

**Meetings:** Pepper Road, Feb 18-22, Caleb Westbrook; Oakland, Feb 19-24, Lowell Sallee; Kelly Spring Road, Feb 24-26, Kevin Clark; Bethel (TN), each Monday 7pm, Series: How we Got the Bible, Scott Richardson

**Hays Mill church of Christ**

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# The Bible . Examiner

“Examine everything carefully...” —1 Thessalonians 5:21 NASB

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# Grudges

by M. W. Bassford

I hold grudges. It is one of my biggest spiritual failings. I’m not a particularly touchy person, so I don’t keep an account of light offenses. However, I do have an excellent memory, and though it is helpful in many other areas, it is not at all helpful here.

When someone betrays my trust, I remember. When someone thwarts my will over something that is important to me, I remember. When someone attacks my character or exalts themselves at my expense, I remember. I remember for a long time.

This is not obvious. When my sister visited for Christmas, she was astonished to learn that I am a grudgeholder. Occasionally, the objects of my grudges find out, when so much resentment accumulates within me that it bursts like a boil (as my poor wife has discovered far too often). Usually not, though.

Nor does my sense of grievance alter my conduct. Even when I resent someone’s actions, I still treat them with kindness. I greet them warmly, praise their achievements, and offer them help as I can. I work hard

at not rejoicing in their failures, even when those failures are due to their treatment of me. Nonetheless, I continue to remember, with that sense of affronted self-righteousness that is unique to holding a grudge. This is evil. It is wrong. I

know there is considerable debate on this issue. Christians love to go back and forth on whether we must forgive someone if they haven’t sought forgiveness. “Do I have to?” They ask. Hint: asking whether we have to carry out a difficult spiritual work is not usually from God.

I think, though, that the debate misses the point. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 13 that love does not keep



an account of wrongs suffered, which is exactly what grudge-holding is. As always, nothing rubs our noses in our imperfections quite like the commandment to love.

We must love; we must not resent. This is essential for our sakes. I know all too well the toxic effect of resentment. Left unchecked, it can poison an entire life.

At the end of my life, then, I find myself in the final battle against my old enemy. Some of my grievances now have dwindled so much that they no longer move me. In other areas, I am able to acknowledge my role in provoking the bad choices that others made. Whatever its disadvantages, terminal illness does bring the gift of perspective!\*

Most importantly, though, I am finally able to admit that I am not in control of my own life. We carry grudges because we feel that we have lost control of something that matters to us, whether that be our reputation or even our autonomy.


In reality, life does not consist of

those things. People may malign us here, but not even the devil will be able to make an accusation stick against us on the Day of Judgment. Others may completely take away our autonomy by killing us as they did Christ, but they cannot keep us from being righteous any more than they kept Him from being righteous.

After that, all that is left is offended pride, and the pride of life is fleeting. In this life I experience ever greater humiliation, as many do at the end. In the life to come, even atheists must humble themselves before the Lord.

If you are a member of my grudge-holding tribe, rethink that. It does not help you, it is not good for you, you cannot justify it, and ultimately, it means that you are letting someone else's carelessness or sin define your life. You are putting resentment where Christ belongs.

I get you (Really! I do!), but it's time to do the hard work of letting go. You will be glad you did, and so will God.

*\*The author of this article suffers from ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease). *

# BLIND TO THE TRUTH

by M. W. Bassford

Upton Sinclair once said, "It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends on his not understanding it." Few better illustrations of this truth exist than the behavior of the craftsmen of Ephesus in Acts 19. They, along with everyone else in the city, are familiar with the miraculous powers of Paul and the large numbers of Ephesians who are coming

to Christ. However, the craftsmen are much more interested in income than in eternal life. Because Paul's success means that they can't make as much money from selling idolatrous shrines, rather than obeying the gospel themselves, they start a riot to oppose it.

Still today, there are plenty of people who would rather serve


Mammon than the Lord. Consider the man who lies because his boss expects it, or the woman who never attends Sunday services because she works every weekend. To their number we can add the denominational preachers who invest countless hours in trying to explain away passages like Acts 22:16 but won't spend five minutes trying to figure out what it means. I've known exceptions, but most people who are required to maintain a doctrinal position to keep their job will continue to maintain it in the face of overwhelming Scriptural evidence.

However, money is far from the only thing that can blind our eyes to the truth. There are few passages that are as straightforward as Matthew 19:9. I've studied the verse with any number of couples before they even obeyed the gospel. Not once has any of those Biblical novices had any trouble figuring out what the text means, even when it had dire implications for their own marriage.

Ironically, the people I've encountered who struggle with comprehension in Matthew 19:9 have much more Scriptural experience than that. 99 percent of the time, they've got a problem. They're unscripturally divorced. They're unscripturally

remarried. They've got a loved one who is unscripturally divorced or remarried.

Then, with such powerful motivation, they return to "restudy" the text. The ones who know enough Greek to get into trouble use their Greek to do exactly that. Others engage in massive Scriptural-reinterpretation projects. I've seen novella-length papers arguing that Christians are still under the Law of Moses, written with the sole goal of applying Deuteronomy 24 to modern marriages instead of Matthew 19. Sadly, none of this changes the teaching of Matthew 19:9 or what the Lord will do on the Day of Judgment.

It's easy for us to shake our heads at how easily others fall into self-deception in their study of the Scriptures. However, these things should call us not to arrogance, but to watchfulness and fear. If others who are knowledgeable about and even devoted to the word can make such grievous errors, none of us are exempt! Money, family, and even the fear of what others might think can render us equally blind. Only through awareness of our own vulnerability and stern commitment to the truth can we avoid stumbling ourselves. 

## Remember in Prayer

**John and Sylvia Pollard's newborn, Paige**, appeared to be doing well and was released, but then was shortly again placed in the PICU on a ventilator; she is still in at Texas Children's Hospital, Houston. I have no further information on **John's mother, Sharon**, who is being treated for heart failure. **Betty** fell on

Thursday, breaking her little finger; she has a doctor's appointment Monday.

**Joyce Smith's** name has been left off this list in error for the past few weeks; please pray for her as she continues to deal with cancer... and don't forget **Buddy Beddingfield**, or our sisters **Carolyn Dennis** and **Dot Hice**. 