

# different

## Week 6: Don't Repay, Repair

Pray: In your own words, praise God for making you His beloved child.

Relationships – sometimes they resemble wrestling matches. For a time the two of you may dance around the issues. But sooner or later there's contact and all the grudges come out. Resentment, repayment, revenge become the rules of engagement. Before you pin your opponent, before your adversary takes you down, God has a different strategy.

Read: Genesis 32:22-32

Watch: "Grudge Match"

Reflect

1. Describe a relationship in your life that is not as close as it once was. What caused the distance? Were there any attempts by you or the other person to restore it?
2. Jacob has not seen his older brother since stealing the blessing from Esau. He knows Esau plans to kill him. What types of issues cause rifts and break relationships? In your opinion, which issues are repairable and which are irreconcilable?
3. On the night before his fearful showdown with Esau, Jacob wrestles with an angel, God's representative. Before releasing the angel from a headlock, Jacob demands a blessing – the same thing he stole from Esau. What does this say about Jacob's character?
4. God blesses Jacob by giving him a new name: Israel which means "he struggles with God." It reveals his darker side. How does this new insight prepare him for his meeting with Esau? Read Genesis 33:1-11. How do you feel about receiving constructive criticism and what do you do with it?
5. With great humility, Jacob offers Esau gifts to reconcile their relationship. Instead of revenge, Esau embraces his brother. Paul writes, "Live in harmony with one another. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Do not take revenge. Live at peace with everyone." (Romans 12: 17,18). Repairing a relationship instead of repaying with revenge requires a cost. What might that cost be? How high are you willing to go? Where do you draw the line?

Steps:

Harmony is the blend of several voices singing different notes. Harmony in a group requires unity but not uniformity. What are some practical steps you can do to encourage harmony at work, school or home?

Share with your group one step of faith that will help you be different this week. Ask one person to hold you accountable to this step. Examples:

- A. Select one of your relationships which only slightly distant. What step can you take this week to reconnect?
- B. For a greater challenge, take a step to repair a broken relationship by seeking forgiveness for your part in the breakdown regardless of what they did or how they respond.
- C. Create an action item of your own.

Pray: As you pray, ask Jesus to help you repair your relationships and to forgive as you've been forgiven.