



Links Players

Mending Fences Now Rather Than Later

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. (Romans 12:18, NIV).

The feud began in 2019 with Brooks Koepka's comment about Bryson DeChambeau's slow play: "I just don't understand how it takes a minute and twenty seconds to hit a golf ball."

The feud came to a head with Koepka's now famous "eye roll" as DeChambeau and his noisy clickety-clack metal spikes walked behind him during a TV interview at the 2021 PGA Championship.

After both men defected to LIV, one writer noted that "their shared experience with injuries, career highs, and personal growth seemed to bring them together. They no longer saw each other as adversaries but as players walking a similar path." By the time of the recent "Showdown," they seemed to have overcome their earlier animosity towards each other.

In the shortest book in the Old Testament—just 21 verses and 440 words—Obadiah writes about the fallout of a family feud that lasted at least 1400 years. Unlike "Koepka vs DeChambeau," the feud was never peacefully resolved and only ended with the destruction of a nation.

The feud began with the birth of Jacob and Esau to Rebekah and Isaac. During Rebekah's pregnancy, the two struggled with each other in her womb. Esau was born first. Jacob came out, grasping Esau's heel. The rivalry did not end there, however.

Jacob's trickery in stealing Esau's blessing and birthright is recounted in Genesis 25 and 27. The hatred between the brothers grew to the point where Esau threatened to kill his brother. Centuries of hatred between Esau's descendants, the Edomites, and Jacob's descendants, the Israelites, followed these events.

When Moses and the Israelites asked permission to cross through Edom on their journey out of Egypt, Edom denied their request. From then on, Edom was Israel's enemy, and the two nations fought frequently.

Obadiah describes the Edomite's misdeeds against the Israelites following the Babylonian defeat of Judah, which included acts of violence against Israel, plundering and looting of Jerusalem, boasting and condescension toward the defeated Israelites, and mistreatment of Jerusalem's survivors. (Obadiah v 10-14).

Even though Esau and Jacob's relationship improved after several decades, the enmity between their descendants did not disappear. The two nations continued to live in perpetual conflict. Obadiah's recounting of Edom's sins reminds us that family strife can often carry forward into generations beyond our lives.

Is there a festering family feud in your life that can be traced back to some family squabble in the distant past? Are any of your relationships broken and needing repair because of some inadvertent slight?

Esau and Jacob's story and Obadiah's description of the Edomites' misdeeds are a helpful reminder to us that long-lasting squabbles are unhealthy and ought to be squelched at the earliest possible time so that we can enjoy the benefits of those important close relationships.

It might be time to take inventory of relationships with unhealed wounds. Is there a way to salvage a relationship now to prevent future harm to those who follow us?

If the answer is "yes," then we need to realize that having a heart of forgiveness and being willing to take the initial step towards reconciliation is a powerful antidote for salvaging an important family or friend relationship.

If that first step is accompanied by prayer and a humble attitude, the chances of restoring the relationship and preventing future generational harm are greatly increased.

As we go forward in 2025, please join me in asking God for humility and an open and forgiving heart directed at healing broken relationships.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help me to search my heart for any of my relationships that are threatened because of something I have done. Give me humility, courage, strength, and an open and forgiving heart to reach out to those in my family or friends to restore those precious relationships.

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