

Study guide for “Ice Ridge”

GRUDGES

In the story, we see a number of heavy issues arise during the life-and-death battle for survival. The first one involves the lead character, Pete, and a grudge he holds against his ex-girlfriend, Dana. His primary grudge is rooted in his belief that Dana hasn't forgiven him for their breakup despite her outward appearance of being at peace with it. Psychologists have studied the factors leading to this kind of grudge. One of the key reasons we hold onto grudges is that we have misunderstandings and wrongful assumptions about another person's views on a matter. We have a tendency to project negative intentions on behalf of the other person, and this causes a feedback loop of negativity.

1) Do you hold any grudges?

2) Have you ever had to forgive someone for deeply hurting you?

3) If so, and you feel like sharing, what did the process of forgiveness look like?

What does the Bible prescribe to help us handle our grudges?

“Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses.” (Proverbs 10:12)

It's also important to consider that Jesus told us to forgive because the Father is the ultimate forgiver Himself.

“And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.” (Mark 11:25)

Due to our rebellious and self-focused natures, we often don't feel as inspired by Jesus' words in Mark 11 as we should. Sure, the statement, “If we don't forgive, the Lord won't forgive us” sounds like an incredible truth that should lift us up to a spirit of forgiveness. But, we often toss it aside because judgment on ourselves probably won't come for some time. Our fleshly natures press us to think about what will make us feel best in the moment.

Take a look at this scripture:

“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.” (Ephesians 4:32)

We are called to be tenderhearted and loving towards those who've wronged us (or who we've perceived have wronged us). Look to loving compassion as Christ has called us for the inspiration to forgive. I want to offer one final verse to think about:

“And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.” (Luke 6:31)

Did you notice that Dana risked her own life to save Pete after he relieved her of the risky attempt to save Tyler in the slipping vehicle?

FEAR & BRAVERY

Pete is entrenched in fear throughout most of the story. Dana, however, is a doer and problem-solver without seeming to fear the immediate risks.

1) Do you associate more with Pete or Dana? Some of both?

2) Have you ever been in a traumatic trial (not necessarily one of life and death, but one that was extremely stressful)?

3) Can we prepare ourselves for great trials in advance before having to confront them, both trials we can see coming and trials we have no idea are in our future?

A friend recently said to me that intense fiction and non-fiction stories—whether written, filmed, or spoken—help prepare us for great trials. The Bible itself is loaded with such true stories for exactly this purpose. And, it is filled with encouragement for when times and circumstances get tough:

“Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.” (Deuteronomy 31:6)

“For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.” (2 Timothy 1:7)

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.” (Proverbs 3:5)

We can look to a few important stories in the Bible for practical applications of these principles. Moses stood up against Pharaoh time and time again under God’s command and care, knowing that Pharaoh was one of the deadliest men on earth. Despite Moses’s own doubts about the effectiveness of his first speech to Pharaoh, he obeyed and God delivered the Jews while raising Moses up as a great leader. Daniel refused to pray to false gods despite being threatened with death if he did not obey. When he was cast into a lion’s den for disobeying the law, God saved him from death. David was able to confront Goliath and defeat him because David had been prepared for the fight in advance. He had ward off lions and bears many times to protect the livestock under his care.

In our story, Pete’s fear leads to selfish acts. He doesn’t want to take the risk of freezing on the road, so he presses for a shelter of rocks by the roadside. When it comes time to pull Tyler out of the vehicle, Pete doesn’t want to climb back down the hillside or get in the vehicle to unlatch Tyler. He was not prepared during his walk in life prior to this trial.

4) Have you ever been in a situation where you battled these two states of mind: selflessness vs selfishness? If so, did you feel guilty about the situation?

Some Biblical wisdom:

“Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.” (Philippians 2:4)

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:12-13)

Although not stated directly in the story, Pete gets back in the car for two primary reasons. One, he knows that he caused the accident and feels guilt over it. Two, he senses that it is his chivalrous duty to protect Dana and take the greater risk.

5) Is chivalry an old fashioned notion? The Bible speaks on this:

“Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like MEN, be strong.” (1 Corinthians 16:13)

Throughout the Old Testament, men are called to be strong leaders who rely on the Lord. King David, his son King Solomon, and the greatest prophets were called to be leaders who relied not on their own strength and wisdom, but the Father's. To be clear, a strong, Godly man is one who doesn't rely on himself. A Godly chivalrous man is aware that he cannot take credit for the good things he does. Therefore, such men know they cannot be haughty and do not place women below themselves. Godly men know that the Father is doing great things through them by His power, not their own.

This doesn't mean that women are not called to do great things. Abigail, through tremendous bravery and wisdom, turned from her husband's selfish and Godless behavior and risked her life to speak with David before his wrath reigned down on her town. Queen Esther risked her life to save her people by seeking the king's presence without being summoned—a trespass that called for execution. Mary bore and raised Jesus. These are just a few examples of great Biblical women. Yet men are continuously called to be leaders and risk-takers. Jesus trained the disciples to carry the Good News to the world. To deny the chivalrous calling of the Old and New Testament would be out of character with the Bible as a whole.

6) Bonus question: Is any part of Pete's argument correct regarding the two of them not going back to the SUV and risking death?

7) Bonus Question: Consider that Pete, like all of us, feels guilt for not doing what is morally right and just. Most likely, he has never been educated in the ways of the Bible. What does this say about the Father's absolute truth regarding morality and justice?

FEAR OF A LONG-TERM UNKNOWN FUTURE

After the three characters in our story survive the cliff disaster, they're hit with another sobering trial: will they survive the freezing night if no one comes by and saves them? Psalm 23:4 is a classic verse that deals with this situation:

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”

1) How do you deal with not knowing the outcome while walking through trials in your own life? Jeremiah 29:11 offers more truth about the Father's plans for us, even in great trials:

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.”

2) If It turned out to be an unhappy ending for someone in circumstances like those in this story, how could it be said that God provided for their welfare in the face of tragedy or death? This question is one of the toughest we face as Christians. Dealing with unexpected death when we have asked the father to deliver us (or people we know) is one of the hardest human trials. Revelation offers us hope in these circumstances:

“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” (Revelation 21:4)

We have eternal life that offers us peace and joy that cannot be fully imagined!

>Bible = ESV