



Zoom Bible Study ~ Improving Your Relationships

Session 5 ~ February 9, 2021

We have looked at 10 principles to improve our relationships. They are:

#1 ~ Put Others First

#2 ~ Rejoice and Weep with Others

#3 ~ Go the Extra Mile

#4 ~ Love Unconditionally

#5 ~ Speak Kind Words

#6 ~ Be a Good Listener

#7 ~ Be Dependable

#8 ~ Be Loyal

#9 ~ Put on Compassion

#10 ~ Humble Yourself

The Christian life is without question learning to put in place paradoxical principles, such as:

If you want to be first, be willing to take the most humble place.

If you want to be great, become a servant.

If you want to know real life, die to your own desires.

Amazingly, however, these principles lead us to fulfillment, joy, contentment, and effectiveness as a follower of Jesus Christ. John writes: “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3).

Last week we began discussing difficult types of people, as we addressed the people in our lives who are lazy. Here are four more difficult types.

Dealing with a *Condescending, Arrogant* Person

What does *condescending* mean?

What does *arrogant* mean?

If you have ever dealt with a *condescending* or *arrogant* person, which of these terms would apply to that person?

- Talks down to people
- Unteachable
- Knows it all
- “Been there and done that” attitude
- Name dropper
- Treats others as though they are dumb or stupid
- Frequent body language and facial expressions that indicate aloofness, disgust, disapproval, etc.

Dealing with a Domineering Person

What's the difference in domineering and arrogant?

With a domineering person, it is humbling to keep your mouth shut and not bark back at them. It is even more humbling to take their direction and let them get by with it! And there may be times when that's the right thing for us to do. God is interested in developing Christ-like characteristics in us, and sometimes he uses unfair and uncomfortable circumstances for that purpose.

Why is it particularly humbling to work or live with someone who is domineering and bossy?

Which of these responses to a domineering person would be a way for you to humble yourself?

- Refrain from any verbal response.
- Be willing to do what they ask/demand, even though you are not required to do so.
- Respond in a quiet, controlled manner.
- Explain that you are not required to follow his/her instructions, but you are going to do so anyway.
- Remind him/her of the chain of command in the organization and who you report to.
- Smile when that person barks orders at you, and then ignore.
- Refuse to join in any character assassination of this person.

Dealing with a Vindictive, Hostile Person

Jesus said that we are the light of the world ([Matthew 5:14](#)). This is a great privilege, but it comes with its challenges.

John 3:19-20: This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed.

John 15:18-21: If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember what I told you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me.

Jesus gives us a clear warning of relationship problems we will incur because we are believers in him and carry his light into our dark worlds. And our culture is increasingly sinking lower and lower in harshness, hate speech, hate crimes, cruelty. But you and I were put by God into this generation at this time in history. It gives us an increasing opportunity to shine as lights in darkness.

[Matthew 5:16](#): In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

What are some things this vindictive type of person might do in response to your "light"?

Consider [1 Peter 2:19-21](#): For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God. But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

Jesus said a remarkably revolutionary thing when he said:

Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you ([Matt. 5:11-12](#)).

If you have sincerely suffered from relationships on your job simply because you took a stand as a believer, or live a Christian lifestyle, you are to consider it a compliment!

Paul wrote to the Corinthian believers:

But thanks be to God, who always leads us as captives in Christ's triumphal procession and uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere. For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are an aroma that brings death; to the other, an aroma that brings life. And who is equal to such a task? ([2 Corinthians 2:14 - 16](#))

When we know Jesus – and the better we know Jesus – it will give us a certain aroma and it will be attractive to some and repulsive to others.

Keep in mind that quite often people who have the most adverse reaction to a Christian witness or a Christian lifestyle are the ones under conviction, the ones who may be the closest to the Kingdom.

Dealing with the Negative Person

I'm quite certain you have had to deal with someone who was habitually negative! It's really important that you refuse to let their negativity infect your mind, because believe me, it can do so quickly.

There's a study that says if we have a positive experience, we tell three people, but if we have a negative experience, we tell eleven. So, we are all attracted to negativity.

Some kind words spoken to that negative person might be the key to getting him or her to get past that negativity and become more positive. However, consider another verse about words as given to us by wise Solomon in [Proverbs 23:9](#):

Do not speak to fools, for they will scorn your prudent words.

What are ways to keep yourself positive when you're around negative people often?

- Recite out loud all you have to be thankful for.
- Don't let little stuff get to you. If it doesn't matter in 24 hours, just let it go.
- Sing good Christian songs to yourself.
- Remember that you know the end of the story - Jesus wins. Keep an eternal perspective.
- Say something positive every time a negative person says something negative.
- Don't spend any more time with a negative person than you have to, or than God directs you to!

Conclusion

As we examine our relationships with these difficult types of people, we must constantly be aware of the fact that the problem may not always be the other person's. It would do us all good to take a close look at each of these and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to us if we're guilty of any of these difficult characteristics in our relationships with others.

Notice [1 Peter 2:12](#): Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

Here are the difficult types we've talked about:

Lazy

Condescending/arrogant

Domineering

Vindictive/hostile

Negative co-worker

Even if it means humbling yourself, swallowing your pride, going the extra mile, speaking the truth in love, or accepting unfair treatment, obeying God's principles will improve these relationships. I'm not promising you that the difficult person will change, but I will promise you that you will change and God will give you coping power you've never had before. Go for it!



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