

## How should I deal with difficult people?

Who is the most difficult person you know?

Who is the most difficult member in your family?

<sup>14</sup> Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them; pray that God will bless them. <sup>15</sup> Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep. <sup>16</sup> Live in harmony with each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all! **Romans 12:14-16 NLT**

### Our grace-filled reaction to difficult people.

It starts with our tongue, moves to our heart, then to our minds, and ends with our behavior.

### Jesus' Sermon on the Mount

"You have heard the law that says, 'Love your neighbor' and hate your enemy. <sup>44</sup> But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! <sup>45</sup> In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike. <sup>46</sup> If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. <sup>47</sup> If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that. **Matthew 5:43-47 NLT**

**Our Tongue** - Bless and don't curse

Our tongues get us into more trouble than anything else.

**Our Heart** - "Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn" describes a person who cares about others, who is in tune with their hurts not just so wrapped up in his or her own problems.

**Our Mind** - "Live in harmony with one another"

coming to an agreement with another or seeing things in the same way

**Our Behavior** - "Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all! "

### Have the Attitude of Christ

<sup>1</sup> Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? <sup>2</sup> Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose. <sup>3</sup> Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. **Be humble**, thinking of others as better than yourselves. <sup>4</sup> Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. <sup>5</sup> You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. <sup>6</sup> Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. <sup>7</sup> Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, <sup>8</sup> he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross. <sup>9</sup> Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, <sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth

and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. **Philippians 2:1-11 NLT**

- Jesus modeled **humility**.
- God desires **humility**.

### Correcting Another Believer

<sup>15</sup> "If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back. <sup>16</sup> But if you are unsuccessful, take one or two others with you and go back again, so that everything you say may be confirmed by two or three witnesses. <sup>17</sup> If the person still refuses to listen, take your case to the church. Then if he or she won't accept the church's decision, treat that person as a pagan or a corrupt tax collector. <sup>18</sup> "I tell you the truth, whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven. <sup>19</sup> "I also tell you this: If two of you agree here on earth concerning anything you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you. <sup>20</sup> For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them." **Matthew 18:15-20 NLT**

Strong-willed, hard-headed, opinionated, angry, hurtful, controlling, even dishonest people sometimes show up at church.

Attendance would be mighty low if we restricted church to only nice people who never caused anyone difficulties or made mistakes.

- **Go privately and point it out.**
- **Take a witness.**
- **Take it to the Church.**
- **Be done.**

### Next steps for me today...

- **Choose today to bless others and love them.**
- **Choose today to follow God's word as the only pattern for dealing with relationship strain.**
- **Ask God to forgive you for not valuing people as He does.**
- **Ask God to forgive you for not forgiving.**