

“Loving Difficult People”
December 8, 2013

Review:

- **This year—our Core Values—things our Father has endeared to our hearts RE: our corporate identity and destiny.**
- **Past several weeks—improving our relational skills—we cannot effectively operate unless we co-operate. (i.e., coming together with a view toward moving together)**

PROP- **Our effectiveness in life is greatly affected by our response to “difficult people.”** *(In a “perfect world” no one is offensive—no one gets offended. People say the right things—the right way. BUT we don’t live in a “perfect world.” We live in a “fallen” world, Romans 3:23. James 3:2- “In many things we offend all.”)*

Luke 6:27-35

1. God often uses difficult people to **refine our character**.
 - a. David’s brothers mocked him when he went up against Goliath
 - b. Job’s wife: “Curse God and die”
 - c. Hosea’s wife wouldn’t win “Mother of the Year”
 - d. Eve’s husband threw her under the bus.
 - e. The 1st family on the planet was a dysfunctional one! It’s rare to find a family that doesn’t have at least one “difficult” relationship.
 - f. **Relatives can be the most challenging people to love & honor.** Can’t “un-friend” them. We have no option but to relate to our relatives (NOTE: the word “relate” is in “relative”)
 - g. **Sowing and reaping. “Honor your parents”** (this is “**the first commandment with a promise of**” lifelong blessing (**Ephesians 6:2**). Dishonoring them reaps dishonor in every other relationship. If for nothing else, they gave you life, giving you the opportunity to experience intimacy with God!
2. Some of your **most difficult** people can actually be your **best teachers**. **They reveal things about us by our reactions to them.** They can reveal our best OR our worst.
 - a. You could be amazed at how unfazed you are by their insults, accusations, unkind words, etc.
 - b. Or you can be surprised at what rises up within you: pride, desire to prove them wrong (and prove yourself right), desire for vindication.
 - c. In those moments, ask the Lord- “**Search me**” (**Psalm 51**)—**resist morbid self-analysis; the Spirit of Truth brings a truth that sets us free—not a condemnation that confines.**

3. **Fact is: we like to be around people who see our value—who honor us. We don't like to be around those who devalue us. Most difficult relationships seem to boil down to the issue of honor or dishonor.**
4. **We don't have to react. We can respond (response-ability). Responding with PRAYER—changes our PERSPECTIVE (Luke 6:28ff.).** If we react in the same spirit (as the difficult people)—we give them the power to make us like they are.
5. **What we pass on to others comes back on us (Luke 6:37-38- *“Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned. 38 Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.”***
 - a. **Curse (Psalm 109:17-18- *“He also loved cursing, so it came to him; And he did not delight in blessing, so it was far from him. But he clothed himself with cursing as with his garment, and it entered into his body like water and like oil into his bones.”*)**
 - b. **Bless (1 Peter 3:8-9- *“To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; 9 not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.”*) His blessings will overtake us!**
 - c. **Jack Frost: *“Before I had this revelation of the impact of blessing or cursing others, not knowing this truth brought much harm to my own life. It hindered me from finding rest in the Father's healing love. I would see others' wrongs or receive hurt from people, and my response would be for justice and what was right and fair (for me)! I acted more like God's policeman. I would begin to develop accusatory thoughts or words about those who I perceived had disappointed or hurt me. Then I would become negative, critical, and devaluing toward them in my thought life. I did not realize it, but my own thoughts were coming into agreement with Satan's thoughts. I entered into judgment, and it hindered me from receiving healing and the blessings of God in my life.”* Experiencing the Father's Embrace, page 132.**
 - d. **Jack Frost: *“The biggest problem is, we are usually right about the other person's faults! But you can be right and have the wrong attitude—and be dead wrong! Jesus didn't come to judge and accuse us (John 3:17), Satan did (Revelation 12:10). Jesus didn't “grasp” for***

*position or authority (Philippians 2:5-8), Satan did (Isaiah 14:13-14). Jesus sought to humble Himself. Satan sought to exalt himself. Satan lost his position in God's presence. Jesus was exalted to the right hand of the Father. When we choose the behavior—we choose the consequences!" **Experiencing the Father's Embrace, page 134.***

6. **God has lots and lots of difficult people in His life. And how He responds to them tells us volumes about what He is actually like. Psalm 103:8-12- "He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us." Romans 5:8- "Christ died for us while we were still sinners." He refuses to let broken relationships alter His commitment to love us.**
7. **"Blessing" and "doing good" does not necessarily mean you will be "best friends" with "difficult people." TRUST is crucial to healthy relationships. It can take time for trust to be restored. Sometimes that does not happen. BUT we can still bless them—refusing private words of disdain, ruminating negative thoughts, or joking at their expense. God can grace you to forgive and to bless them!**
8. **Difficult people don't have to stay difficult. (i.e., Paul went from destroyer of the Church → "wise master builder"; Moses went from murderer → meekest man on the earth. Peter went from the epitome of disloyalty—denying Jesus 3 times → preaching one of the greatest sermons resulting in 3,000 people turning to Jesus) i.e., Jim Elliott killed by Auca tribesmen in Ecuador in 1956 [Pic of his son and tribe leader today]**
9. **His Kingdom comes when we respond in the opposite spirit. (i.e., David had lots of difficult people in his life—his wife, **Michal**; his son, **Absalom**—bitter for 40 years, openly undermining his dad; **Saul**—jealous king, insecure, attempting to kill him; **Mephibosheth**—embittered grandson of King Saul, son of Jonathan, refused to honor David; **Joab**—one of David's disloyal team mates yet he honored them all. He refused to speak evil about them. The expanse of Israel's Kingdom reached its heights under David's reign!)**

RESPONSE

Receive His supernatural grace to forgive, love and bless even the most difficult people in your life.