

## How to Keep from Being a Difficult Person

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • May 13, In the year of our Lord, 2018

Scripture Reader and Reading: Jacob Noveske – First Samuel 25.14–17

Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Phil Joseph – Songs on Love

### Prelude:

**I. Some things that I have observed in almost 38 years of preaching.**

**II. Why are some people difficult?**

**III. What can we do to keep from being difficult?**

### Persuasion:

**I. Are You Already a Difficult Person?**

A. First Corinthians 13.4–8a – Replace “love” with your name

**4 [Don] suffers long and is kind; [Don] does not envy; [Don] does not parade [himself], [Don] is not puffed up; 5 [Don] does not behave rudely, [Don] does not seek its own, [Don] is not provoked, [Don] thinks no evil; 6 [Don] does not rejoice in iniquity, but [Don] rejoices in the truth; 7 [Don] bears all things, [Don] believes all things, [Don] hopes all things, [Don] endures all things. 8 [Don] never fails... (1Co 13.4–8a).**

B. Psalms 139.23–24 – Ask God to show you

**23 Search me, O God, and know my heart;  
Try me, and know my anxieties;  
24 And see if there is any wicked way in me,  
And lead me in the way everlasting.  
(Psa 139.23–24)**

1. Will God answer such a prayer?

2. Yes, He will:

a) He is the One who teaches us to repent of wickedness.

b) He is the One whose will our prayers must consider.

c) Therefore, if we pray for Him to show us whether we are difficult,

(1) He will do it, because

(2) it is His will and

(3) He wants us to repent of any and all evil within us.

C. Observe how others react to you

1. We often do not see ourselves as others see us.

2. We are biased for ourselves,

**25 There is a way that seems right to a man,  
But its end is the way of death.  
(Pro 16.25)**

**6 Most men will proclaim each his own goodness,  
But who can find a faithful man?  
(Pro 20.6)**

D. Listen to the Book of Proverbs

**8 Do not correct a scoffer, lest he hate you;  
Rebuke a wise man, and he will love you.  
(Proverbs 9.8)**

E. Watch Jesus and the Pharisees

1. As you watch them in action,

2. do you find yourself imitating Jesus or the Pharisees?

F. Do you exhibit the works of the flesh or the fruit of the Spirit?

1. Galatians 5.19–23 Your name for “the flesh” and “the Spirit”

G. Does love top a list of godly characteristics in your life?

1. Colossians 3.12–14

H. Do you exhibit wisdom and understanding?

1. James 5.13–18

I. Do you boast in your oddness, difficult nature, uncooperative spirit, et al.?

J. Can you admit you are wrong?

1. Do you blame others for your wrong?
2. Do you acknowledge faults, but claim that others made you do it?

## **II. How Then Can I Keep from Being a Difficult Person?**

### A. Seek to Understand Rather Than to Be Understood

1. Everyone wants to be understood, but
  - a) if you only focus upon that,
  - b) you will get frustrated, because
    - (1) your dealings with people will become one way only.
    - (2) All the focus will be upon you.
2. Pray: (Francis of Assisi)

**O divine Master,  
grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;  
to be understood, as to understand;  
to be loved, as to love;  
for it is in giving that we receive,  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.**

### B. Humble Yourself Before God and Submit to Him

1. By this you acknowledge that you are not God.
2. Have you ever met a person
  - a) who humbled himself before God and submitted to Him, but
  - b) was also a difficult person?

### C. Understand How God Works

1. When we have preconceived ideas on how God should work,
  - a) we get frustrated and
  - b) show it toward God.
    - (1) Preconceived ideas crucified Christ.

2. Israel in the wilderness provides an example of this kind of thinking.

#### D. Exercise Self-Control

1. Every difficult person I know has problems exercising self-control,

- a) if not in all areas of life,
- b) at least in some crucial ones.

2. Self-control is of the fruit of the Spirit.

a) Galatians 5

**22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law (Galatians 5.16–26).**

b) Look at the associates of self-control.

#### E. Glorify God

1. This is the point of life.

2. Consider what sin is according to Romans 3.23.

- a) Difficult people rarely give consideration
- b) to glorifying anyone other than themselves.

3. If you make glorifying God the goal of your life,

- a) you will see the issues of your life
- b) from a different perspective.

(1) Rather than frustration with the fact that things do not go your way,

(2) you will see your circumstances as ways of glorifying God.

4. Consider Haman

#### F. Help Others

1. Difficult people do not serve others, but

- a) expect to be served.

2. Helping others is why Christians still live on the earth.

a) Ephesians 2.8–10

G. Read the Book of Proverbs

1. It comes right out and tells you what a difficult person is.
2. It also shows you the successful way in life.
3. Today is the 13th day of the month, so consider Proverbs 13.