

It's Not About You!

*"Too many Christians, just like their unsaved counterparts, are impressed by appearances rather than structure; are seeking thrills and excitement rather than substance; are more apt to respond to emotional manipulation rather than to rational discourse... **The problem is that the main business of entertainment is to please the crowd, but the main purpose of authentic Christianity is to please the Lord.**"* (Gary Gilley, taken from 'This Little Church Went to Market').

The Lord's church is not in the entertainment business. It's a spiritual relationship (John 18:36; Romans 14:17; Ephesians 1:3, 22-23). It is not wrong to enjoy worshiping the Lord and hearing the message of Christ proclaimed, but the goals of our public assemblies are to glorify God (1 Corinthians 10:31) and to edify one another (1 Corinthians 14:26) not to entertain. If you don't find the worship assembly to be fun, just get over it. That's not our purpose. It's not about pleasing you or me. It's about pleasing the Lord. "For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ" (Galatians 1:10b). "We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him" (2 Corinthians 5:8-9).

- by Keith Sharp

Faultfinders

When I think of faultfinding, I think of Judas Iscariot in Jn.12:1-8, who complained that Mary wasted the perfume she poured on Jesus' feet. A much better use of it, he reasoned, would have been to sell it, and give the proceeds to the poor. Or I think of the Jews in Jesus' day, who found fault with John the Baptizer because of his ascetic lifestyle, and yet were able to find fault with Jesus, even though they perceived Him to be exactly the opposite (Lk.7:31-35). Or I think of Naaman, who, not content to have found a prophet who could cure his leprosy, was outraged that he didn't do it his way (2 Kings 5:9-12).

Some people seem born with nitpicking complaints on their lips. There is no way to please them. But in truth, faultfinding is a learned trait that Christians must unlearn. 'These are grumblers, finding fault,' reads Jude 16. This supercritical behavior can be devastating when leveled against a fellow believer. It crushes initiative, hurts feelings, wounds relationships, and tempts sensitive disciples to think, 'I'll never try again.' It is a sin. The Golden Rule and the motivating principle of love (I Cor. 13) show it to be wrong. And Christians, of all people, should stop it.

Remember the motive behind Judas' faultfinding? 'Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it' (Jn. 12:6). Many faultfinders today are driven by envy, greed, or some other ignoble cause. Don't be a harsh, petty critic of your brethren. To do so is to make sure that God will find fault with you.

- by Jim King

Do What's Right -- Anyway

People are often unreasonable,
Illogical, and self-centered;
Love them anyway.

If you are kind,
People may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives;
Be kind anyway.

If you are successful,
You will win some false friends and some true enemies;
Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and frank,
People may cheat you;
Be honest and frank anyway.

What you spend years building,
Someone could destroy overnight;
Build anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness,
They may be jealous;
Be happy anyway.

The good you do today,
People will often forget tomorrow;
Do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have,
And it may never be enough;
Give the world the best you've got anyway.

You see, in the final analysis,
It is between you and God;
It never was between you and them anyway.

(author unknown)

“Blessed Are The Meek”

People generally have the idea that a "meek" individual is one that is extremely quiet, withdrawn, timid, and one who finds it very difficult to be confrontational or straightforward. It is thought that it would be hard for a "meek" person to hold or defend a strong opinion or conviction. Even modern dictionaries define this characteristic as "unduly patient or submissive; spiritless." Such definitions miss the mark.

Jesus was described as "meek" (Matthew 21:5), yet He never hesitated to express the truth. His strong rebukes of the hypocritical Pharisees (Matthew 23) certainly show Him as bold, courageous, and confrontational. Moses was said to have been "very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Numbers 12:3). But we well remember how he boldly demanded the freedom of the Israelites from Pharaoh and ultimately led the people out of bondage. Do you begin to see that Biblical usage of the word "meek" is far different than the modern concept?

W.E. Vine says: "The meaning of 'prautes' is not readily expressed in English, for the terms meekness, mildness, commonly used, suggest weakness and pusillanimity to a greater or less extent, whereas 'prautes' is nothing of the kind. The common assumption is that when a man is meek it is because he cannot help himself; but the Lord was 'meek' because he had the infinite resources of God at His command. Described negatively, meekness is the opposite of self-assertiveness and self-interest; it is equanimity of spirit that is neither elated nor cast down, simply because it is not occupied with self at all" (Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, p. 738)

"Meekness" is one of the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22,23). We need it! Let's be sure that we are "showing all meekness to all men" (Titus 3:2).

- by Greg Gwin