



Life Is Complicated. We Can Help.

Difficult People

#nplifeiscomplicated

Week 10

November 15, 2020

Bottom Line: Emotional and spiritual maturity is shown by how you treat the difficult people in your life.

Icebreaker: Did you have a nemesis in grade school, middle school, or high school who made life difficult for you? How did you handle it? Who is your favorite sitcom, cartoon, movie, or literary protagonist? (the person who brings the tension to the story).

Key Verse: *Good sense and discretion make a man slow to anger, And it is his honor and glory to overlook a transgression or an offense [without seeking revenge and harboring resentment].* Proverbs 19:11 AMP

We all know at least one difficult person—you know, the rude, negative, demanding, demeaning, disapproving, and disruptive people. You never can do enough or do it right. How do you deal with them? For starters, we all must acknowledge that everyone of us is a difficult person at times to someone. Second, we must realize that God loves them as He does us. Then we are ready to deal with difficult people. **Refuse to be offended.** Offense is like a deadly virus that multiplies and becomes more and more difficult to fight. Those people and situations we allow to offend us can cause disruption for years. We have to become toughminded but tenderhearted. We must decide to consider the source and realize the person has a story that is producing the problem. Practice patience—it can overlook many things.

Always take the high road. You can't control what others do, but you can control how you respond. Forgive them. Refuse to gossip about them and the problem. Show empathy. You don't know what's going on for them. Seeing the situation from another point of view might change everything. Don't make a quick judgment. God might have put you in their life to help them right now. **Realize you can't please everyone.** Jesus' strength was rooted in the fact that He wasn't concerned about what other people thought of Him. Regardless of the thoughts of anyone around Him, He was going to obey the Father. Make that your focus too. **Stand your ground.** Love is not giving in to manipulation. Nothing in Scripture says to be a doormat for difficult people. Stand your ground with a caring and sensitive attitude. **Pray.** Pray for yourself, asking God to show you if YOU are difficult. What do you need to learn? What might God be wanting to do in you? Then pray for the difficult person. God wants to do something inside of you that will help you get your focus off of the problem, and instead focus on loving God and people.

Let God help you become emotionally and spiritually mature as you respond wisely and kindly to difficult people.

THINK IT OVER >>>

How would you describe a difficult person in your life? What makes them difficult?

Is there anyone you know who thinks you are difficult? Why?

Having an offense can literally paralyze a person. That's what offense does. If you let it in, it can multiply and overtake someone. Have you ever met someone paralyzed by offense? They're stuck in time. You may not see someone for years, but if they're living in offense, they are talking about the same thing that offended them years ago. It gets you stuck in time. Have you experienced this? Reflect and discuss.

Emotional and spiritual maturity is displayed by the way you treat the difficult people in your life. Discuss. How do you treat them face to face? Social media? In groups? When they aren't present?

What does it mean to be toughminded and tenderhearted?

LOOK IT OVER <<<

Carrying an offense forfeits your joy. Discuss.

The more you understand a person, the easier it is to show them mercy and grace. Agree? Disagree? Why?

Explain what it means to "take the high road."

When we have been offended, gossip comes almost naturally. How can we fight that tendency?

Showing empathy is vital with difficult people. Perhaps God has put you here to help them. How can you slow down to see what God might have in mind?

Remember, if you're searching for the acceptance of people, you give them control over your peace. God doesn't want you to be a doormat. Discuss.

How can you stand your ground without being offensive yourself?

NEXT STEPS

1. Evaluate the way you deal with difficult people, and put these principles into action.
2. Ask God for insight into your own “difficult person” characteristics.
3. Pray for emotional and spiritual maturity.

EVALUATION/ACTION

Realizing and reaching your full potential in Christ

Bottom Line: Emotional and spiritual maturity is shown by how you treat the difficult people in your life.

Rate yourself from 1 to 10 1 (never), 10 (always)	1	2	3	4		6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating?										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
Do you know someone who demonstrates this bottom line well? What do you admire about that person?										
What specific action can you put into practice to raise your rating?										
At the end of this week, reflect - where did you see the bottom line show up in your actions throughout the week?										

PRAYER

List group members and their prayer requests for this week:

DAILY STUDY

Want to dig deeper? Check out **The Daily** this week at newpointe.org/daily:

Monday: Romans 12:18

Tuesday: Jeremiah 33:3

Wednesday: Philippians 2:4

Thursday: Luke 4:29-30

Friday: Proverbs 15:1

Don't let the conversation stop here. Keep talking it over with others throughout the week.

(Don't forget to bring this paper to your next small group meeting)