

How Can I Make Myself Easier to Love?

I know we should love unconditionally. But wouldn't it be nice if we attempted to make the conditions more palatable? Let us do away with a rotten attitude that sarcastically demands everybody to love us as we are. Sometimes we are bears and we don't have to be that way. I know God loves us just the way we are, however when He gets hold of us, He never leaves us just the way we are. Thank God! If we can accept the fact that God can change us in one area, why not allow Him to change every area? Lets examine eight ways that we can (through God's strength) make ourselves easier to love.

1. Take the chip off your shoulder.

If you have a hard time getting along with a lot of people the chances are pretty good, you are the main culprit. Sometimes we do not sense our worth and value. And we do awful things to validate approval. The opportunity to offend in the normal course of the day is high, so you don't need to go around picking fights just to see if people will love you for who you are. *"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men"* (Romans 12:18). Don't make people walk on proverbial "egg shells" every time they are around you.

2. Don't be "needy."

God is our source. When conversing, try not to dominate the conversation and preoccupy the time with your world. The best way to have a friend is be a friend. Look people in the eye; respond to their conversation emotionally. Don't play "top that." Someone tells you how he or she is hurting, and then you interrupt with "If you think that is hurting..." Then you go into some detailed explanation of how you hurt more, excel better, desiring your friend to respond the way they were wanting you to respond with them. It is no wonder your acquaintances avoid calling you for advice or counsel. *"A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly..."* (Proverbs 18:24).

3. Do not communicate in anger.

"A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife" (Proverbs 15:18). When your temperature has arisen, there will be far more heat given than light. If we want to make a point, give a message, or give some pertinent information we jeopardize our selling ability with our attitude.

The farmers never sow their seed in a storm. By the same token, when you are in a "stormy" disposition your words will be blown away and they will be totally non-effective.

4. Bring up possible abrasive subjects in a pleasant environment.

The heat of the moment as we just discussed is probably the worst time to say, "And while I'm at it!" If you tell me this is really important, my answer to you is: it can wait. If you find after you have cooled off, the issue you thought was an issue is no longer a problem, let it go. If you cannot let it go and it needs to be discussed, prayerfully look for that opportune time to pleasantly "lay it on the table." *"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven"* (Ecclesiastes 3:1).

5. Find the right and act on it.

Understand this may mean going the second mile! *"And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain"* (Matthew 5:41). Oh, that we would act the way Jesus would have us act. I appreciate what my mom used to tell us when we were bothered and tempted to reciprocate unkindly, "Son, be

Jesus, just be Jesus.” Doing right sometimes means sacrifice. Just be Jesus.

6. Try not to be historical.

A man once said, “My wife is historical!” His friend said, “You mean hysterical.” The man continued, “No, she’s historical. She brings up everything I’ve done wrong in the past whenever I irritate her.” The temptation to do this is strong, especially when we desire to reinforce our argument. As we examine the Bible we see time and time again that God wants us to forgive and forget. How thankful I am that God does not hold our past sins and failures over our heads!

As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us” (Psalm 103:12).

7. Be forgivable.

Often we ask for forgiveness and wonder why things don’t change. It could be we are not consistent with our verbiage. We see we are in a jam and are caught, but we are more sorry we got caught than remorseful over that which caused offense. We are like the little boy who cried, “Wolf!” and friends don’t believe us. We need to back up our “I’m sorry” with good deeds that show we are indeed sorry. *“For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it”* (I Peter 3: 10,11). Keep in mind, if we want friends and family to forgive us, we need to forgive them, as well. *“And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise”* (Luke 6:31).

8. Let Jesus be Lord.

Have you ever noticed how many times Jesus walked on the scene of chaos and uttered the word “peace”? *“And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm”* (Mark 4:39). *“And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you”* (Luke 24:36). *“Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you...”* (John 20:21). *“And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you”* (John 20:26).

The word “peace” is from the Greek word: εἰρήνη: “eirini” which means tranquility of situation (of soul or a nation); exemption from the rage and havoc of war; peace between individuals, i.e. harmony, concord; security, safety, prosperity, felicity. What a need we have at times for Jesus to walk out on the storm that may be raging and utter His comforting word, “peace.” Let us take a deep breath, call on the Lord for help and claim His peace. It is available! Let Jesus be Lord over every event and circumstance. He wants to flower our catastrophic world with His peace. Our Lord said, *“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid”* (John 14:27).

Much good will come when we make a concerted effort to be loveable. Those who know us will go out of their way to be with us when the environment in which we live is “user” friendly.

- Pastor Pope -

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