

BIBLICALLY LOVING THE LADIES IN YOUR CHURCH

- I. Introduction
 - A. Some people are easy to love and some are not.
 - B. "Overcoming evil with good" and "giving a blessing instead."
 - C. Loving others regardless of whether they are a difficult person or not. This includes: the froward, the nosey, the jealous, the lazy, selfish, unkind, and those that are overly pushy.
- II. What does loving others look like? How important is it?
 - A. Matthew 22:35-40. What will a situation look like if they love/obey God more? And how they can love the other person more.
 - B. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7
- III. You are on display!
 - A. As a pastor's wife, you are on display. Everyone knows who you are and probably wants a share of your time and attention. You might or might not know everyone's names.
 - B. However, the congregation knows **your** name and all of your children's names, likely how old they are and where they go to school. They remember a lot of details about you and your family (especially the kids!).
- IV. Thankfully, many members in your congregation are easy to love.
 - A. They are kind & helpful, offering to babysit, tutor your child, or help with food.
 - B. They are reliable to come alongside you and be a good friend.
 - C. Several ladies will come to your mind if you need something. You can call on them as they are easy to love. **And then:**
- V. Those that are difficult to love:
 - A. **The Froward:** Froward is an old-timey word that means a person is difficult to deal with: wayward, factious, willful, obstinate, and difficult. KJV uses this word.
 1. During the great depression back in the 1920's, my mother's father lost his job and their family had to go live with her father's parents in Tennessee. His father was a circuit-rider pastor and her grandmother was (to everyone's account) a froward person, very difficult to be around.
 2. I never knew that great grandmother, but I am confident that she stood out and was the one difficult to love.
 - B. **The Nosey.** Gossips love a juicy tidbit of inside information whether it is true or not. And they love to pass it on to whoever will listen. As a pastor's wife you will likely hear bad reports on some people in your church. Others might hear it too and may come to you for clarity. Be careful to not pass on information and remember that you may not have heard the complete story. For example, if they repented or not or if what you heard was even accurate and true. Proverbs 11:13. Let your words be

edifying. Ephesians 4:29. If you don't know what to say, then say this, "I need to think about what I want to say and I will get back with you." Then pray for wisdom. Or sometimes, it may be appropriate to give a reproof and tell someone that they need to stop gossiping.

- C. **The Jealous.** On occasion you might realize that one of your church members wants to monopolize your time. In fact, they may be jealous if you are spending time with other friends or even family.
1. Several years ago, there were two ladies in my church that wanted my *undivided* attention. Both began complaining about wanting more of my time. Ultimately, it became a problem as both began to put more and more pressure on me. There was just not enough of me to go around.
 2. Based on Galatians 6:1-2, I talked to each one of them privately. Their jealousy was a sin, a lack of love as "love is not jealous." (1 Corinthians 13:4). As nicely and gently as I could, I said something like, "I *do* want to be your friend but you cannot be my only friend. If you keep putting pressure on me to exclusively be your friend, you are going to ruin a perfectly good friendship. Instead of being jealous, I want you to be *glad* for me and the other people I fellowship with. One of them pulled away from me and one has become one of my very best friends.
- D. **The Unkind.** People that are unkind say mean, cutting things sometimes to your face, sometimes about your family, or your husband's sermons. They are, at the least, unpleasant to be around, and you are often on guard with how to respond to them. You find yourself avoiding the person or being put in the position of trying to not be bitter and thus find yourself playing what the person said to you or about you over in your mind.
1. Neither of you are showing love. Remember that "**Love is kind ... and love does not take into account a wrong suffered.**" (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)
 2. Don't make the mistake of assuming you know what the other person is thinking. Only God can know what they are thinking. We are forbidden to judge motives or hidden things. The Lord Jesus will do that when He comes back. 1 Corinthians 4:5
- E. **The Pushy.** The ladies that are after you seemingly all the time for you to help or head up certain ministries and you don't know what to say or what not to do. You can easily end up overwhelmed or giving in when you know you shouldn't.
1. When John Crotts was hired to be our pastor he was straight out of seminary. When he and his wife, Lynn, visited our church, (which was very small back then, almost 30 years ago) Lynn had one question for me: "What does the church expect me to do?" [Alas, she did not know how to play the piano!] My reply was "We expect you to take care of your husband and any children that the Lord may give you. We also expect you to serve the church family using your spiritual gifts." She replied, "You mean I don't have to be the head of the women's ministry and teach the ladies' Bible Study?" I replied, "Nope, I teach the ladies' Bible Study and we aren't big enough yet to have an organized women's ministry. We are feeling our way." I think she was immensely relieved!.

2. Be gracious when you turn people down but don't be selfish. However, be organized. When you have time, prepare one or two casseroles and freeze them to have them available if someone has surgery or if your husband decides to invite unexpected company for dinner.
3. Don't be lazy. Pray for wisdom and ask the Lord what you should be doing. Ask your husband what he thinks you are gifted by God to do.
4. Remember that you have freedom in the Lord to turn opportunities down and be wise about your time. Volunteer when you can and be gracious when you serve. You are doing what you do for the Lord.

VI. Summary of what to do when you encounter a difficult to love lady in your church family

- A. First of all do two things (whether you feel like it or not): (1) *seriously pray* for wisdom and (2) *sincerely thank God* for the opportunity. Believe God when He says to do these two things: James 1:5-6, Col. 3:17, 1 Thessalonians 5:18.
- B. Act like a Christian by forgiving others in your heart and telling them you forgive them if they ask you. Colossians 3:12-13. Think about all you have been forgiven and on that basis be especially generous to forgive those who sin against you. God forbid that you would be like my great grandmother who was offended by someone in church and would never go back (and her husband was the pastor!).
- C. Soften what you say back as proud people won't respond to reproof like a humble person would.
 1. "You *might* want to consider..."
 2. "I thought of something that might be helpful to you..."
 3. If a reproof is needed, prepare her by first explaining Proverbs 27:6. That means if someone is your friend and you are doing something wrong, they will tell you. An enemy will only tell you what you want to hear. If the person is still defensive and trying to bully you into giving into their wishes, then explain to them Proverbs 26:4-5. A fool won't listen, they only want to have their own way. A fool may try to manipulate you so that you will give in to what they want you to do. They might use anger or false accusations to try to get their way.

VII. Conclusion

- A. Love all the ladies in your church family even those that are difficult to be patient with and love them. Our Lord said that the second greatest commandment is to love others. Matthew 22:39.
- B. Consider the other person as more important than yourself. That means if necessary you try to help the other person. Phil.2:3.
- C. Helping others includes (with love and wisdom) giving a biblical reproof on occasion. We want to help others become as much like the Lord as possible. Romans 8:28-29.
- D. As a pastor's wife, you do not have to play the piano, but you certainly may if there is a need and you know how (don't keep it a secret), but you do need as a Christian to biblically love *all* the ladies in your church family.