



GETTING ALONG/FAIR TREATMENT

SCRIPTURE VERSES (NIV)

1 John 4:19-21

¹⁹ We love because he first loved us. ²⁰ Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. ²¹ And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

Matthew 6:12-15

¹² And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.

¹⁴ For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

1 Peter 3:8-12

⁸ Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. ⁹ Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. ¹⁰ For,

“Whoever would love life
and see good days
must keep their tongue from evil
and their lips from deceitful speech.

¹¹ They must turn from evil and do good;
they must seek peace and pursue it.

¹² For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous
and his ears are attentive to their prayer,
but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

Romans 12:18

¹⁸ If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

Hebrews 12:14

¹⁴ Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.

Ephesians 4:29-32

²⁹ Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³² Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

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HURT PEOPLE hurt people (EGRs)

Rick Warren — April, 22, 2017

We all have people in our lives that drive us nuts. I call them EGRs, which stands for Extra Grace Required. But have you ever thought that God puts them in your life to be heavenly sandpaper. They may irritate us, but God uses them to take off our rough edges and shape our character.

Some EGRs are minor irritations. They may cut in line. Some of them may be more challenging. They sit in the backseat and tell you how to drive.

Other EGRs may be just plain mean. They never say “thank you.” They can be rude and negative, demanding, demeaning, and disapproving. You just cannot make them happy, no matter how hard you try. Whatever you do, it’s not good enough.

So what do you do with people like that? How can you show them mercy when you’d rather show them the door? Over the next six devotionals, I’ll share six steps to demonstrating mercy to the EGRs in your life.

First, look behind their behavior. When you’re dealing with people who are offensive and irritating, you need to look past their behavior to their pain. When people are hurting others, it’s because they’re hurting on the inside. Hurt people hurt people. They’re full of fear and insecurity. They may have a painful past, or be dealing with some pressure that you don’t know about.

You need to ask yourself why they are acting the way they are. Why are they being short with you? Did they have a fight with their husband or wife today? Is everything okay with their kids? Are they in financial trouble? Is something going on with their health? What’s the thorn in their foot that’s causing them to be mean to everybody else around them?

You look past the behavior and look at the pain and try to understand.

The Bible says, “When a fool is annoyed, he quickly lets it be known. Smart people will ignore an insult” (Proverbs 12:16 GNT). Why do wise people ignore an insult? Because they look behind the behavior to the pain. When you understand a person’s pain, it helps you respond with patience.

Talk It Over

- ◆ How do you respond to the Extra Grace Required people in your life?
- ◆ What have you discovered when you looked behind someone’s behavior?
- ◆ How does your own pain influence your behavior?

TENDER HEART AND TOUGH HIDE

Rick Warren — April 23, 2017

“A person’s wisdom yields patience; it is to one’s glory to overlook an offense” (Proverbs 19:11 NIV).

In yesterday’s devotional, I wrote that we need to **look at the pain behind the behavior** of people who need extra grace. We learned that hurt people hurt people.

We can’t stop there, though. **We must also refuse to be offended.** Your emotional and spiritual maturity is largely measured by how you treat people who mistreat you. Do you try to get even when somebody does you wrong? If they hit you, do you hit back? If they insult you, do you insult back? If you do, then you are no better than they are.

The Bible says, *“Watch your words and hold your tongue; you’ll save yourself a lot of grief”* (Proverbs 21:23 MSG). When it comes to personal relationships, God says, “Don’t be so easily offended. Learn to get over it.”

You need to pray, “God, give me a tender heart and a tough hide.” Most of us are just the opposite. We’re thin-skinned and tough-hearted. When somebody looks cross-eyed at you, somebody cuts you off, or somebody is rude to you, don’t let it bother you. Don’t get upset about it. You know that person is just having a tough day. You need to get thicker skin.

The Bible says, *“A person’s wisdom yields patience; it is to one’s glory to overlook an offense”* (Proverbs 19:11 NIV). When you understand people’s background and their current condition, it’s easier to show mercy.

Your wisdom gives you patience to overlook their offense.

Talk It Over

- ◆ How does understanding a person’s back-story help you not take offense as easily?
- ◆ What does the Bible mean when it says, *“A person’s wisdom yields patience; it is to one’s glory to overlook an offense”* (Proverbs 19:11 NIV).

CUT PEOPLE SOME SLACK

Rick Warren — April 24, 2017

“Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love” (Ephesians 4:2b TLB).

Everybody has bad days. Kay knows that I have two touchy times every week. I’m touchy on Saturday afternoon because I’m focused on the message I am about to preach. And the other time I’m touchy is Monday morning, because I’m drained from preaching all weekend and talking to people between services. So Kay makes allowances for that. She cuts me some slack.

That’s a key part of how you deal with EGRs (people with Extra Grace Required). In the last few devotionals, I’ve mentioned that in dealing with EGRs we need to **look behind the behavior** and **refuse to be offended**. But we also must deal with them like Kay deals with me when I’m in a touchy mood: We have to **cut them some slack**.

The Bible says, *“Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love”* (Ephesians 4:2b TLB).

Not everyone who bugs you or hurts you realizes what they’re doing. Oftentimes they’re responding to their own hidden pain, and they don’t even know that they’re hurting all these people around them.

So what do you do? When I have a hard time overlooking an offense, I remember the great gift of God’s forgiveness. I remember a verse like **Colossians 3:13: “Make allowance for each other’s faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others”** (NLT, second edition).

Talk It Over

- ◆ Can you think of a time when you’ve annoyed or frustrated someone but you were completely unaware of it at the time? What’s one lesson you learned from that experience?
- ◆ Why do we struggle with cutting one another slack for relatively minor annoyances?
- ◆ Who needs some extra slack from you this week?

HOLD YOUR TONGUE (GOSSIP)

Rick Warren — April 25, 2017

If you don't have trouble with my first three suggestions for how to deal with those frustrating Extra Grace Required people (EGRs) in your life (**look behind their behavior, refuse to be offended, and cut them some slack**), the fourth will likely be the toughest.

You must refuse to gossip about them.

When somebody angers you or does something that frustrates you, it's really tempting to tell someone else, "You won't believe what they just did!" It may feel good to do that. But it's unloving.

The Bible says we must love people who offend us. Gossiping about them is anything but loving. **Proverbs 17:9 says, "You will keep your friends if you forgive them, but you will lose your friends if you keep talking about what they did wrong" (CEV).** If you gossip about that other person, you're just adding fuel to the fire of any frustrations you feel.

What is gossip? One definition of gossip is "sharing information with somebody who is not part of the problem or part of the solution." The person might not have had anything to do with it, but you bring them into it so you can feel better about yourself.

Let's just be honest about it. Gossip, in its essence, is a form of retaliation. You're trying to get back at the person who offended you by talking about them behind their back.

God hates it.

In Romans 1:29, God puts gossip in the same category as murder. Gossip is incredibly destructive. It's destructive to groups, churches, families. It's destructive to work places. And gossip just perpetuates the pain.

That's why God says we should **"encourage one another and build each other up", looking for "whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable" in others (1 Thessalonians 5:11 Philippians 4:8 NIV).**

Talk It Over

- ◆ Why is it sometimes tempting to gossip?
- ◆ When you realize that God puts gossip in the same category as murder, how does that change your thoughts about it?
- ◆ How does this verse contrast with gossip: *"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing (1 Thessalonians 5:11 NIV).*

STAY OUT OF THE MUD

Rick Warren — April 26, 2017

“Just as charcoal and wood keep a fire going, a quarrelsome person keeps an argument going” (Proverbs 26:21 NCV).

Retaliation never works with EGRs (Extra Grace Required people). It tends to escalate whatever problem you're encountering. Over the last few devotionals I've shared with you the first four steps in dealing with people who frustrate, annoy, and hassle you:

1. Look at their behavior.
2. Refuse to be offended.
3. Cut them some slack.
4. Refuse to gossip about them.
5. **You also need to refuse to play their game.**

EGRs love to argue and debate. They use conflict to get your attention. When people try to get your attention through conflict, they're just trying to hook you. They don't really care what you think. They're just trying to pull you into their game.

You see this all the time on the internet. Somebody makes an off-the-wall statement, and you go, "I'm going to set him straight!" And at that moment, the other person is going, "Got 'em! I just hooked a big one!" Every bone in your body wants to fire off a reply to that blog, that email, or that Facebook post.

Don't do it! It's a trap.

Somebody once said, "If you wrestle in the mud with a pig, both of you will get dirty, but only one of you will enjoy it." Stay out of the mud. Don't get sucked into the argument. Just walk on by. EGRs love to keep the argument going. They find their meaning, their purpose, and their value by getting you upset. Don't play their game. Don't get drawn into it. They're not looking for answers. They're just looking for an argument.

How many people does it take to argue? It takes two, right? If one of them walks away, what happens to the argument? It ends. The fire goes out. Sometimes the most merciful thing you can do is walk away from the argument.

Talk It Over

- ◆ Can you think of a time you were drawn into an argument with an EGR? How did that turn out?
- ◆ How does refusing to argue with an EGR diffuse the conflict?
- ◆ Why is it hard to walk away from an argument? What can you keep in mind that will help you to walk away?

WHO IRRITATES YOU

Rick Warren — May 29, 2016

I want you to think of somebody who irritates you — maybe somebody you've got a strained relationship with or who just rubs you the wrong way. I have two questions for you:

#1, Do you pray for that person? Or do you just complain and grumble and nag and nitpick? If you prayed more, you'd have a lot less to grumble, complain, nag, and nitpick about. It's your decision.
#2, Does nagging work? No. Does prayer work? Yes. So why do you do more of the thing that doesn't work than the one that does?

Paul says in Philippians 1:4, "*Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy*" (NLT, second edition). Paul didn't just pray for people in his life. He prayed with joy! Positive praying is more effective than positive thinking. All the positive thinking in the world isn't going to change your husband or your wife or your child or your friend or your situation. Positive thinking can change you, but it won't change somebody else. But positive prayer can make a difference in someone else.

Do you want to know the quickest way to change a bad relationship to a good one? Start praying for the other person! It will change you, and it can change the other person.

Paul even told us how to pray for others: "***And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ — to the glory and praise of God***" (Philippians 1:9-11 NIV).

From these verses, we can learn to pray for the people in our lives in four ways:

I Pray that _____ will grow in brotherly servant (AGAPE) love: "This is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight."

I Pray that _____ will make wise choices: "... so that you may be able to discern what is best ..."

I Pray that _____ will live with integrity: "... and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ ..."

I Pray that יידיד _____ will become like Jesus: "... filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ — to the glory and praise of God."

Pray these for yourself and anyone else in your life, and watch how God turns around the relationship you thought was hopeless. Nothing is impossible with God!

Talk It Over

- ◆ Who are the people in your life with whom you have a strained relationship and for whom you need to pray these four things?

COURAGEOUS PEOPLE RESOLVE CONFLICT

Rick Warren — October 27, 2016

Why does God want us to live at peace with everyone? Because unresolved conflict has three devastating effects in your life.

1. Unresolved conflict blocks your fellowship with God. When you're out of whack with others, you can't be in harmony with God. When you're distracted, when you're in conflict with other people, you cannot have a clear connection with God. The Bible says, *"If someone says, 'I love God,' but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar"* (1 John 4:20a NLT, second edition).
2. Unresolved conflict hinders your prayers. Over and over again the Bible says that where there is conflict and sin and disharmony in your life, your prayers are blocked.
3. Unsolved conflict hinders your happiness. You cannot be happy and in conflict at the same time. When conflict comes in the front door, happiness goes out the back.

So, don't you want to get rid of the conflict in your life? The starting point of resolving any conflict is to take the initiative. Don't wait for the other person to come to you; go to that person. You be the peacemaker. Don't ignore the conflict. Don't deny the conflict.

Have you heard the expression, "Time heals everything"? That's a bunch of bologna. Time heals nothing! Actually, time makes things worse. When you've got an open wound and you don't deal with it, it festers. Anger turns to resentment, and resentment turns to bitterness. The conflict is not going to resolve itself. You've got to intentionally deal with it. Only courageous people resolve conflict. Maybe the most courageous thing you can do is face an issue that you've been ignoring for a long time in your marriage, with your kids, with your roommate, or whoever.

Where do you find the courage to face it? You get it from God.

The Bible says in **2 Timothy 1:7**, ***"God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline."*** That means if you let God's Spirit fill your life, you're going to be filled with power, love, and self-discipline. And God's love overcomes fear.

Talk It Over

- ◆ Is there a problem in one or more of your relationships that you are pretending does not exist?
- ◆ What does it mean to let God's Spirit fill your life?