

18. Living with other fallible people

Principle: Hurt and conflict are part of living in a fallen world but as Christians we are to be working towards loving reconciliation, especially where fellow Christians are involved because they too are expected to be working in the same direction.

Key Scripture:

Isaiah 26:7-11 So David and Abishai went to the army by night, and there was Saul, lying asleep inside the camp with his spear stuck in the ground near his head. Abner and the soldiers were lying around him. Abishai said to David, "Today God has delivered your enemy into your hands. Now let me pin him to the ground with one thrust of my spear; I won't strike him twice." But David said to Abishai, "Don't destroy him! Who can lay a hand on the LORD's anointed and be guiltless? As surely as the LORD lives," he said, "the LORD himself will strike him; either his time will come and he will die, or he will go into battle and perish. But the LORD forbid that I should lay a hand on the LORD's anointed. Now get the spear and water jug that are near his head, and let's go."

Colossians 3:13-14 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Hebrews 4:1-4 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace..

Romans 15:1-2 We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.

Acts 5:1-11 Tells the story of Ananias and Sapphira who both dropped dead at Peter's feet after trying to deceive everyone about the fact that they sold their property and kept some of the money for themselves – while pretending to give it all to the apostles.

Romans 12:19-21 Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Comment on Scripture

We live in a fallen world and are all affected by our sinful nature. The desire for revenge is part of that sinful nature. However, Scripture provides plenty of examples where obedient people have overcome the flesh and left revenge to God. David knew that King Saul wanted to kill him, but when God gave David the chance to kill Saul, David did not do so (that was God's call), he did however show Saul that he had spared his life. We are to have an attitude of forgiveness and love towards those that hurt us. The ultimate outcome will be unity where all parties are in tune with the Holy Spirit. We are to overcome evil with good and leave revenge to God – as illustrated in the story of David and King Saul, and starkly in the case of Ananias and Sapphira!

Application in daily life??

- ♦ Hurt and conflict are part of the "normal Christian life" – not the exception! Sometimes we will cause it, sometimes we will receive it.
- ♦ When we are hurt we are not to retaliate (as much as the flesh wants to), but rather to love, forgive, and actually show acts of kindness towards those who, in our view, don't deserve it.
- ♦ If we are all in tune with the Holy Spirit there will be no division amongst us. If there is a conflict in the Body and both sides claim to be being obedient, at least one of us is wrong!

- ♦ It has often been said that the Army of Christ is the only one to shoot its own wounded! (ie Don't expect that other Christians will be as forgiving of your shortcomings as they are of their own)
- ♦ With so many instructions for peaceful living and unity in Scripture, there is little excuse for hurt and division in the Body of Christ not being dealt with quickly.

Our example??. Do we respond with an attitude of forgiveness and reconciliation when others wrong us. When we see others hurt, do we encourage them towards reconciliation or do we compound the problem by fanning the discontent?