

Scriptural Principles in Dealing with Sour Grapes

Philippians 4:8 (NKJV)

⁸ Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

I. Introduction

Do you really want to get along with all the difficult people in your life --- these sour grapes?

Then, it is time to be willing to look at their needs and be willing to do selfless, caring deeds for others without any expectation in return. It is time to develop an eternal perspective.

Romans 8:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Our preoccupation with the difficult people in our life can demand so much of our focus that we lose perspective. We need a broader perspective. We need to look beyond the situation. Look at eternity --- and time. Put it in perspective of why we are here on planet earth.

Oh, Lord, I don't know what to do.
I don't like anyone, it's very true.
Isn't there someone who thinks like me?
Please, dear Father, hear my plea.
I just can't seem to get along.
Or is it me who's always wrong?

Listen, my child, and you will see
That I have come to set you free
From your own narrow view of life
Your frenzied world, your grief and strife
No one's perfect, no not one.

All is vanity under the sun.

**Popular people want your ear,
Powerful ones will make it clear,
Perfectionists always do it right,
And peaceful ones just will not fight.
I've made them different, not the same,
Unique players in life's game.**

**So get your focus off of you
And look at others' points of view.
Know they too have a narrow range
And some of them may never change
Be at peace with others along life's way
And you'll get along better today and always.
(Florence & Marita Littauer
Getting along with Almost Anybody)**

When someone hurts us, where is our focus? At those times, I usually tend to focus on myself and my pain.

But, God's Word tells us that we exist to Glorify God –

1 Corinthians 10:31 (NKJV)

³¹ Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

In order to glorify God and experience His joy even when dealing with a difficult individual, our focus (my focus) needs to be on God. Taking my eyes off myself and focusing on God.

Oftentimes, however, when we are hurt by the sour grapes in our life, we find ourselves swept off our feet, sitting on the ground, bruised and hurting. Our wounded heart wants the pain to end.

It's not right – It's not fair --- we say.

But God didn't promise us that life would be fair or that our so-called rights would not be trampled upon? In fact, Jesus, as

our example laid down His rights as God and allowed Himself to be crucified as a substitute for us as He dealt with those who unfairly nailed Him to the cross.

His conflict resulted in Glory!

In the same way, our conflicts and differences with others can be an opportunity to glorify God – to serve others --- and to grow to be like Christ.

Our hurts can grow us to spiritual maturity so that we can be used of God to help others going through similar pains in their lives. No experience is useless.

As we learn to deal with difficult people, we also must remember that it is not our job to control other people. In fact, we cannot control other people . We can only control our responses to them.

We can respond in anger and retribution, by running away, or even by trying to please everyone.

In that area, the question could be asked, are we “carrying the donkey”?

--- An elderly man and a young boy were leading a donkey. When mocked by the first passerby for not using the beast in a more practical fashion, the old man hoisted the boy atop the donkey. The second person to pass them on their journey, however, scolded the boy for riding while the old man walked, so the two switched places. The next passerby scorned the adult for making a child walk, so the boy climbed atop the donkey to join his grandfather. When criticized by those they passed next for making the poor beast carry such a heavy burden, the two climbed off. The final traveler to pass the pair greeted them not with harsh words but with laughter, for the old man and the young boy were now carrying the donkey.

Are we trying to please everyone, trying to conform to the expectations of everyone, wanting others to think well of us? Who are we to please? Are we carrying the donkey to please

others or seeking God's face in all we do, not concerned about what others think or say?

Could part of my problem be my need to please people? Do I live for God's glory or the approval of man? Is my self-worth tied up in what others think of me, what I do, or in what Christ thinks of me?

Romans 8:35-39 (NKJV)

³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written: *"For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."*³⁷ Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

II. Difficult People in the Church (Friends)

Romans 12:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. (Be at peace with all men)

In John 17, Jesus prayed that there would be unity among believers. He did not pray that we would always be happy, never suffer or that our rights would be defended.

How can we learn to love if no one else is around? How can we learn humility by ourselves? What about kindness, gentleness or goodness? Doesn't this take being around all kinds of people?

Desire to love others as God designed them

See others through Jesus's eyes

Help others to minister to the best of their abilities

Enhance and encourage strengths

Work around weaknesses

We want our friends to accept us at our worse, listen to us always, keep what is good, and throw away the rest. Shouldn't we be the same kind of friend?

III. Difficult People at Work

John 16:33 (NKJV)

³³ **These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."**

2 Timothy 3:12 (NKJV)

¹² **Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.**

"If you believe that God is sovereign and that he will never let anything into your life unless it can be used for good, you will see conflicts not as accidents but as assignments" – Ken Sande (The Peacemaker)

Respect the positions of those in authority over us --- even when they are wrong.

Speak well of them and pray for them. (Replacement Thinking – Replace bad for good)

Since we are forgiven, shouldn't we forgive?

Take loving actions toward them.

God's ways are not the world's ways.

Continue doing what is right.

“if I become a beast in order to overcome a beast, all that reigns is beastliness” – Marshall Shelley (Well Intentioned Dragons)

**Wise as serpents
Innocent as Doves**

God can redeem even the worst situation for His glory!

IV. Difficult People at Home (Spouses, In-laws, Children)

Prov. 31:10-12 – She is far more precious than jewels. The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life.

**Gentle Response
Prayer
Phil 4:8 principle (Replacement)**

You cannot force others to do what is right. Remember, God is at work even if your husband doesn't change.

Marriage isn't about finding the right person but about becoming the right person. It is not about my needs being met in another person.

And if we act right, it does not mean that we will have a more satisfying marital relationship, but it might. What it does mean, is that we can stretch our faith and trust in God as we struggle to yield our will to His will --- and thus deepen our relationship with Jesus.

Proverbs 27:15 (NIV)

¹⁵ A quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping on a rainy day;

We have the unique ability to set the tone in our home. (When momma ain't happy, no one is happy)

Use your words to encourage and build up your spouse.

Thanking, Praising

Generally supportive and encouraging

Commit yourself to maintaining a loving and merciful attitude towards your husband no matter what he says or does

Pray regularly for your husband

Deliberate acts of kindness that may soften his heart

Carefully planned and loving confrontation at opportune moments

(Queen Esther – planned and wise)

Replace negative thoughts with positive thoughts

Speak graciously about your husband around others

Express appreciation for things he has done and focus on his good qualities

Real happiness is found when we pursue God and His righteousness, a right relationship with God. It all comes back to spending time with God in prayer and in His Word. And asking Him for wisdom and then following His will even when the world says that it does not make sense.

Conclusion:

I know a place, a wonderful place, where accused and condemned find mercy and grace. Where the wrongs we have done and the wrongs done to us, were nailed there with Him, there on the cross. At the cross, at the cross – He died for our sin, at the cross at the cross, he gave us life again – Praise Song by Randy and Terry Butler

Do you desire peace from the burdens of your heart? You must go to Jesus – He is always there with open arms waiting for you.

Matt 11:28 – Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

So, how do we come to Jesus?

Romans 3:23 –for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

We are separated from a Holy God by our sin. (Separation)

Romans 5:8 – But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Hebrews 2:9 – But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

John 1:12 – But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.

Lord Jesus, I need you. Thank you for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive you as my Savior and Lord. Thank you for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of my life. Make me the kind of person you want me to be. Amen

Just as with Jesus, sorrow and suffering can be the pathway to peace and joy--- despite circumstances and people.

Revelation 21:4 (NIV)

⁴He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

Perspective --- eternal --- relationship with God --- needs met with Jesus – pray and stay in God’s Word.

Closing Prayer