



**SERIES: MY LIFE WITH GOD**

## **Dealing with Difficult People**

**Life Reference: Matthew 5:38-48; Romans 12:17-21**

### **Focus Verse:**

**“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men”  
(Romans 12:18).**

Impossible people! Who hasn't dealt with someone who makes our life miserable? Whether overbearing, rude, demanding—fill in the blank—they are taxing to be around. It may be a boss, a coworker, a fellow church member, or even someone within our family. They drain our emotions and leave us exhausted when dealing with them.



When such people come into our lives, we must choose how to react. Our response can either escalate the problem or lead to a more peaceful relationship. Dealing in a calm manner without lashing back is not easy, but it is biblical. It is also part of our Christian witness.

### **Life Reflection:**

Think about a time when you had to deal with a difficult person. How did you respond?

Do you feel your response to the situation was biblical?

What, if anything, would you have done differently?

The Lord outlines basic life principles within what we call the Sermon on the Mount. Careful reading of Matthew 5-7 reveals keys to building better relationships. His words may seem difficult to practice. After all, He advocates turning the other cheek, going the second mile, loving our enemies, blessing those who curse us, and praying for those who spitefully use us and persecute us. Our natural inclination is to do the opposite in each of these situations, but He has called us to a higher standard.

### **Steps to Better Relationships**

What steps should we take when dealing with a frustrating, vexing, or demanding person?

1. **Show humility.** We cannot respond as if we are superior or a better person. Philippians 2:3 instructs, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."
2. **Show respect.** We may feel they do not deserve it, but humility and respect work hand in hand. Matthew 7:12 tell us that we must treat others as we would like to be treated. Focus on their good points—and yes, each person has some.
3. **Keep quiet.** This means no complaining to others, dropping sarcastic comments about the person, or "telling all" on social media. Matthew 18:15 tells us to "go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone."
4. **Keep calm.** Some people seem full of anger, and it spills over on those around them. It is easy to respond in a similar manner, but that only fuels the situation. Remember, "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger" (Proverbs 15:1).
5. **Don't retaliate.** Don't try to "get even." We are taking God's role if we do. (Read Romans 12:17, 19.) Allow God to handle it in His time and in His way.
6. **Don't gloat.** If misfortune overtakes that person, even if perhaps it is the result of their bad choices, don't delight in their trouble. Proverbs 24:17 tells us, "Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles" (New King James Version).
7. **Walk away.** Sometimes the wisest course of action in a situation is to remove ourselves from



it. When it is not possible to physically walk away, we can say as little as possible rather than provoke the situation. Even the Lord used this tactic (Mark 3:6-7).

8. **Live biblically.** When our relationship with God is healthy, our relationships with others will also be better. "When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Proverbs 16:7).

## Life Reflection:

What should my attitude be when dealing with a difficult person?

Why do I find it difficult to respond as God's Word tells me I should?

## Life Response:

Is it possible—just barely possible—that occasionally *we* are that difficult person to *someone else*? If we do a little soul-searching, we may just have to answer *yes*!

- "And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?" (Matthew 7:3, NKJV).

When we are dealing with a difficult situation, it is important that we first examine our own actions, attitudes and motives.



## Life Reflection:

Ask yourself these questions:

1. Have I done anything to contribute to this problem?
2. Has this person done something morally wrong, or does he just irritate me?
3. Have I ever made a similar type mistake?

Roman 12:18, the focus verse of this study, says, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." Difficult? Yes. Possible? Absolutely! The best way to deal with troublesome people in our lives is to make them our friends.

*"Am I not destroying my enemies  
when I make friends of them?"*  
—Abraham Lincoln

## My Prayer:

Oh, Lord, when I am dealing with difficult people, help me to check my attitude to be sure I'm not contributing to the problem. Remind me to respond with love and respect, not criticism or anger. You promised that if our ways please You, even our enemies will be at peace with us. I want to please You, and I want to live in such a way that my life is a witness to others.



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**More Life with God References:**

Matthew 5:44-45  
Matthew 7:1-2  
Mark 11:25  
Romans 14:10-13  
I Thessalonians 5:15

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