

## Daily Devotional, January 20, 2021 Be a Peacemaker

***“If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. Matthew 18:15 (NIV)***

It is evident that current events have led to hate speech getting much more prevalent and intense over time. On the surface, the most recent debates over the outcome of the election have stirred the emotions of many, reflecting a power pull between our two dominant political groups, the Democrat and Republican parties, not to mention warring factions within the parties themselves, most especially the old established crowd and the newer, more recent arrivals.

As much as I flinch when I hear stereotypes about political parties, it tears me up inside when I hear such trash tossed around about Christians. No, not all Republicans are fascists and not all Democrats are socialists. Neither are all Christians burning the Quran and shooting doctors who perform abortions. A broad-brush approach is wrong no matter who you are talking about.

How much better would it be to set aside these attitudes that divide and instead build relationships with people, even those people that you might not agree with? As a Christian, I am to be a “Little Christ.” Therefore, if I follow Christ, I will go to the house of the agnostic. I will take pity on the homeless. I will gather little children and offer them protection from those who would try to exploit them. Even Jesus’ anger towards the money changers in the temple was prompted by His compassion for the people who were being taken advantage of.

So, what should we do when people, even those we love the most, act or speak with prejudice or callousness? Although it has been mocked and denigrated, the phrase, “W.W.J.D. (What Would Jesus Do?)” comes to mind here. As Jesus taught, we should go to the offender and speak to them privately. Try to reason with them lovingly and carefully. No public floggings, no social media broadcasts and certainly no shaming.

The key to this approach is developing a relationship with the one who has misspoken in order that you earn the right for them to listen to you. My actions of kindness, diplomacy and humility speak the loudest; not my words, no matter how eloquent and reasonable they might be.

We face many temptations in life and one common temptation is to speak harshly and unkindly when our feelings are hurt or when we are angry. If our words cause someone to sin, what does Jesus say our punishment should be? Just as Jesus forgives us, He commands us to forgive others. Is there a limit to Jesus’ forgiveness? Is there a limit to yours? Is there someone you need to repair a relationship with? Perhaps someone to whom your words caused harm? Before regretting your actions, ask yourself, “*What Would Jesus do?*”

***Prayer: Lord, help me to be patient and bless me with great understanding at times when an individual who isn’t and is quick-tempered, displays foolishness. I pray that here on earth, I reflect You in all ways and that Your understanding will govern my behavior. Let patience have its way within my heart so that I can reflect a God-like patience to those around me. Let Your understanding shape me as a person so that I can reach and understand those who need You. In Christ, Amen.***