

PERSONALITY OF A SERVANT: GRACE

Jesus is the most gracious person we know. And as His disciples, **we are called to become gracious like Him.**

We love serving in church. We know that it's a privilege given to us by Jesus. But sometimes, it's so hard to deal with people inside the church. We can't help but get into conflicts. **We love each other, but we don't always like each other.**



A difficult person is like a porcupine. We can't help but judge difficult people. Our porcupine is usually being difficult because he/she is most likely going through a difficult time. **Hurt people hurt people. They are the ones who need grace the most.**

How do we overcome church conflicts with the gracious personality of Jesus?

1. MAKE FORGIVENESS A PERMANENT ATTITUDE

*Martin Luther King Jr.
Forgiveness is not just an occasional act: it is a PERMANENT ATTITUDE.*

EPHESIANS 4:32 NIV

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

When you get hurt in church, be **gracious and forgive**. When you were forgotten, neglected, insulted, falsely accused, unappreciated - forgive. We need to practice forgiveness, moment by moment. There are some who are not aware that they're being difficult because they are blinded by their own hurts, ego, self-righteousness.

*GBA
Treat a difficult person like an ICU patient - they need INTENSE CARE.
Like a PWD - Person With a Character Disability.
Extra grace, extra understanding, extra forgiveness.*

GOOD NEWS: ALL PORCUPINES HAVE A TENDER SPOT

They all have a soft belly. LOOK FOR THE TENDER SPOT IN YOUR PORCUPINE. Learn their favorite foods. Give a thoughtful gift. Invite him/her to something he/she enjoys doing.

GROW YOUR GRACE & MAKE IT YOUR ATTITUDE.

Release your hurts to God. Grace can lower quills and do miracles. It transforms difficult hearts.



WE ARE ALL PORCUPINES! We all make mistakes. We're all sinners. We will one day need grace and forgiveness **FROM** others, so let's be generous with our grace and forgiveness **FOR** others. **"As Christ forgave me, so should I forgive."**

2. FIGHT FOR COMMON GROUND AND RECONCILIATION

We are all different. We have to freely accept that we have different personalities, interests, backgrounds, preferences, lifestyles, ways of doing things, habits. Our differences actually bring so much life and color to our world.

We have to respect that we're continuously building our trust in each other. We have to learn to be gracious with church members, especially new attendees, who have yet to be transformed by the grace of God.

ROMANS 14:19 AMP

Let us pursue [with enthusiasm] the things which make for peace and the building up of one another [things which lead to spiritual growth].

When we experience conflicts in church, we have to learn to find common ground and fight for reconciliation. **YOU be the one to take the initiative to reconcile.** Do your part in making the church a place of grace, peace and reconciliation.

If a person makes a mistake and it's affecting the ministry, pray first before talking to him/her. Ask for the right heart, right spirit from God. Make sure the person knows you love him/her. We want the person to feel the love of Jesus. If the person is not ready to talk or to listen, pray and trust for the Holy Spirit to intervene.

We are the body of Christ. We are family. **It is in church where different people come together, and we can get along because we intentionally allow the love of God to prevail in us.**

Romans 12:18 NLT

Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.

3. PRAY FOR YOUR "ENEMIES"

LUKE 6:27-28 NLT

27 Love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you. 28 Bless those who curse you. **PRAY FOR THOSE WHO HURT YOU.**

Love your enemy and love your porcupine. Love the person who offended you. Love the person who's being difficult to you. Because God loves us. We were once His enemies. But because of His grace and His death on the cross, we are no longer His enemies. He has adopted us as His children.

This is what it means to become more like Him - we need to learn to love and pray for the people who hurt us. We can't change people - that's God's expertise. We can only love them and pray for them. **ASK GOD TO TEACH YOU TO LOVE YOUR PORCUPINE.**

John Mark Comer, Practicing the Way

The single most important question is, Are we becoming more loving? More patient and less frustrated? Kinder, gentler, softening with time, and pervaded by goodness? Faithful, especially in hard times, and self-controlled?

Are you growing in love for your enemies? When you are hurt, wounded, and treated unjustly, are you finding yourself increasingly able to emotionally release the bitterness, to absorb the pain and not give it back in kind? To pray for and even “bless those who curse you”? If you are an apprentice of Jesus, your end goal is to grow and mature into the kind of person who can say and do all the things Jesus said and did.

GRACE PRECAUTIONS:

We can go to the extreme where we abuse grace and it is no longer balanced with truth and the righteousness of Jesus. Yes, we need to be gentle as a dove, but we also need to be wise as a serpent. We need the balance of both grace and truth, without compromising the biblical stand of the church.

We have to be in the habit of always thinking of what's best for God's church, what will protect the testimony of the church. Only the Holy Spirit can show this to us, with the help of our pastors and leaders, huddles. Grace is freely given but we must never forget that it cost the Savior His life.

**LET'S KILL PAIN, BITTERNESS, AND CONFLICTS WITH GRACE AND LOVE.
IT'S A PROCESS, WE NEED TO MAKE FRIENDS WITH TIME AND PATIENCE.
LET'S GROW AND DEVELOP A PASSION FOR GRACE.**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Share an experience when somebody hurt you. Was it easy for you to forgive? Why/why not?
2. Share an experience when you were on the receiving end of grace. Was it easy for you to receive grace and forgiveness? Why/why not?
3. How can you grow your grace and love for the porcupines of your life?