

# Dealing with difficult people

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BIG SANDY, Texas—Last Wednesday night, I gave the second part of a Bible-study series titled "Recognize Negative, Dwell on Positive." This particular study focused on dealing with difficult people.

I approached the subject with three specific points.

■ First, let's clearly acknowledge that it is prudent to see the negative aspects in other people. (Of course, we should ask ourself: Do I react in a righteous manner?)

One of the aspects of maturity is discerning the difference between good and evil (Hebrews 5:14).

There are many scriptures that teach people not to judge (condemn) others. Some are James 4:10-12, Matthew 7:1-5 and Romans 14:10-12.

Paul taught the saints at Ephesus that it was appropriate to be angry without sin (Ephesians 4:26).

Therefore, it is appropriate to recognize the negative in other people as long this action does not lead us to sin.

Jesus taught people to recognize false prophets in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15).

Paul taught people to recognize false apostles and deceitful workers (2 Corinthians 11:13).

Peter taught people to recognize false teachers who discuss bad doctrine (2 Peter 2:1-3).

John mentioned how people should recognize the bad behavior of Diotrephes (3 John 9-10).

Christ mentioned how people should recognize liars who called themselves apostles (Revelation 2:2).

Christ also mentioned how people should recognize liars who were part of the

synagogue of Satan (Revelation 3:9).

Paul also warned the brethren in Corinth about the following five items (2 Corinthians 11:20).

(1) Do you recognize when someone is trying to take you into bondage?

(2) Do you recognize when someone is trying to devour you?

(3) Do you recognize when someone is trying to take (steal) from you?

(4) Do you recognize when someone is trying to exalt himself above you?

(5) Do you recognize when someone is trying to smite (hurt) you?

■ Second, let's remember that there are times when it is appropriate to get out of a bad situation—(while dwelling on putting matters in God's hands).

Here are some examples of people recognizing a bad situation and getting away from it.

David recognized that Saul was trying to kill him and decided to stay away from him (1 Samuel 26:21-24).

Christ recognized that the people were trying to harm him and decided to hide (John 8:59; 10:39-40).

Paul instructed to recognize people cause division and offense (Romans 16:17; 1 Timothy 6:3-5).

■ Third, let's remember that there are times when a person may choose to endure a bad situation—for God.

How does a person endure a bad relationship (marriage, job, group, etc.)?

In these situations, a believer will obviously recognize the negative aspects about the other person. He is alert and discerning.

However, he is able to endure the relationship because he dwells on the positive.

It is good to dwell on the positive aspects of the other person.

Plus, it is even better to dwell on the promises of God, on our responsibilities before Him and on the help He gives to us.