

# Do You Disagree?

By Greg Gwin

It is inevitable that in the course of dealing with other people certain disagreements will arise. It happens in business, among friends, in the home, at school, and it certainly happens in the church. So, the question is not: Will we disagree with other Christians from time to time? Of course, we will. The real question is: How will we handle these disagreements? Here are some suggestions.

First, analyze the problem. Do you disagree with some decision the elders have made? Is it something that the preacher taught that has you concerned? Have you had some problem with a particular Bible class teacher? Is there some brother or sister in the congregation with whom you have a difference? No matter who it may be, take care to be sure that you are being fully objective in the matter. Too often we allow our own prejudices and preconceived ideas to interfere with our evaluation of a given matter.

Next, ask yourself if the difference is a matter that relates to scriptural soundness. If so, yield not an inch. When false teachers were involved, Paul "gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour" (Gal. 2:5). We should imitate his example. But, be honest enough to admit it if your problem is not a scriptural one, but rather simply a matter of judgment. Perhaps you would not have made the same judgment, but no sin has occurred. If this is the case, then we urge you to "be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:32). Far too many church problems have gotten completely out of hand because brethren were willing to fight when they should have been longsuffering with one another. In matters of judgment, "let each esteem other better than themselves" (Phil. 2:3).

If you determine that this disagreement must be pursued, then be sure that you follow the proper procedure as outlined in God's word (Matt. 18:15-17). Do not compound the problem by backbiting, rumor spreading, or gossip. Go directly to the parties involved and work tirelessly for a resolution of the disagreement. If you are unwilling to do this, you are violating God's law and you have no right to even open your mouth. In other words, do what's right or keep quiet!

Finally, pray that God will give you wisdom to do the right thing (James 1:5). If all Christians will follow these Biblical principles, there is no problem that cannot be resolved according to God's will. Let's have enough faith to follow His plan.

## Blaming

When people blame their parents, siblings, people they work with or for, neighbors, or the general social conditions that surround them, they are blaming their environment. Although we are undoubtedly influenced substantially by environmental conditioning, ultimately we cannot blame anything external to ourselves for what we think, say and do. That is, we are who we choose to be.

It is doubtful that any person will ever be completely satisfied with what he has done with his life. We may even despise what we have become. But we must not use our past failures or current habits as excuses not to improve. The most important part of moral courage and developing godliness is accepting responsibility for who we are today, so that we can choose a responsible course for the future. (Oscar C. Miles)

## Brief Lessons

"It is a good thing that we are not God; we do not have to understand God's ways, or the suffering and brokenness and pain that sooner or later come to us all. But we do have to know in the very depths of our being that the ultimate end of the story, no matter how many eons it takes, is going to be all right" (Madeleine L'Engle).

With the appearance of the two-bathroom home, Americans forgot how to cooperate. With the appearance of the two-car family, we forgot how to associate. With the coming of the two-television home, we forgot how to communicate. With the appearance of the cell phone, we forgot how to be a family.

"Some people might contend that religion has no place in the office. But a recent study proves otherwise. It might be to your advantage, the study concludes, if you profess your religious beliefs rather than keep silent about them. Professionals who actively expressed their religious beliefs were perceived to be more intelligent, more trustworthy, more moral and better adjusted than those who did not" (Roger Bailey & Philip Doriot via Pulpit Helps).

"I have lived, sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth... that God governs the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid?" (Benjamin Franklin)

### **A Teen-Ager's Prayer**

"Dear Father in heaven, I am young and don't understand what it is like to be a parent, but it must be very hard. I pray you will help Mom and Dad to be good parents, strong in the ways you want them to be. I want to look up to them with admiration and feel confident that their instruction is right.

"Help me, dear Lord, to understand my parents. Remind me that, when I don't get my way, it is because they love me and not because they want to be mean or deprive me of a good time.

"When I become stubborn and refuse to listen, help me, God, to accept the fact that they have wisdom and experience since they were once teen-agers themselves; whereas I have never been a parent.

"Put in my heart the respect and consideration they deserve for their years of hard work and sacrifice. They raised me as best they could. Let me not repay them with grief or shame. Rather, help me to give them obedience, respect, forgiveness and love.

"Most of all, God, while I still have my parents here on earth, help me to appreciate them and let them know I do."

### **A Moments Wisdom**

--No one finds life worth living; he must make it worth living.

--Christ established His church to save sinners, not to serve dinners.

--Nothing sets a person so much out of the devil's reach as humility.

--Let your conscience be your guide. Let God be your conscience's guide.

--An optimist laughs to forget; a pessimist forgets to laugh.

--There is no pain medication more effective than a mother's kiss.

--A friend thinks of you when others are thinking of themselves. A true friend will not visit you in prosperity unless he is invited; but, when you are in adversity, he will call on you without an invitation.

--A pleasant possession is nearly useless without a friend with which to share it.

--The highest form of giving comes from the bottom of one's heart.

--Never pick a quarrel -- even if it's ripe.

--Biting remarks are often the result of snap judgments.

--God's help is only a prayer away.

--If you can see some good in everyone, everyone will come to see some good in you.

--It is better to forgive and forget than to remember and resent.

--Little strokes fell great oaks.

--"The grace of God transcends all our feeble efforts to describe it. It cannot be poured into any of our mental receptacles without running over." (Vance Havner)

--"In the church we have a Christless churchianity and a churchless Christianity, a form of godliness without power, form without force, ritual without righteousness." (Vance Havner)