



# HOW TO DEAL WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE --- IN THE CHURCH AND LIFE

*Bishop Elijah H. Hankerson, III*



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EVERY TIME I TURN AROUND...



## DO NOT LIVE ON “FANTASY ISLAND.”

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Many people (live on Fantasy Island and) think that if everyone is saved, you will never have conflict or difficulty. That simply is not true. We have individual wills, experiences, etc. We all may see things differently. Notice how Paul implores two ladies to get along with each other. But then he and Barnabas have a disagreement and have to part ways.

*Philippians 4:2-3 Living Bible. 2 And now I want to plead with those two dear women, Euodias and Syntyche. Please, please, with the Lord’s help, quarrel no more—be friends again. 3 And I ask you, my true teammate, to help these women, for they worked side by side with me in telling the Good News to others; and they worked with Clement, too, and the rest of my fellow workers whose names are written in the Book of Life.*

*Acts 15:36-41 Living Bible. 36 Several days later Paul suggested to Barnabas that they return again to Turkey and visit each city where they had preached before, to see how the new converts were getting along. 37 Barnabas agreed and wanted to take along John Mark. 38 But Paul didn’t like that idea at all, since John Mark had deserted them in Pamphylia. 39 Their disagreement over this was so sharp that they separated. Barnabas took John Mark with him and sailed for Cyprus, 40-41 while Paul chose Silas and, with the blessing of the believers, left for Syria and Cilicia to encourage the churches there.*

## REALIZE THAT “DIFFICULT” IS REALLY ALL IN HOW YOU SEE IT.



Difficult means, “Characterized by or causing hardships or problems.” A lot of times a person may seem hard to get along with, because we really do not have the time to try to understand where they are coming from. Most times we have so much drama going on in our own lives; we do not have the capacity to worry about anyone else’s thinking. But the Christian community is a family. If we are to have the oneness that Jesus calls for, we are implored to seek to understand other people.

***Philippians 2:4 Living Bible.** Don’t just think about your own affairs, but be interested in others, too, and in what they are doing.*

***Philippians 2:4 The Message.** <sup>1-4</sup> If you’ve gotten anything at all out of following Christ, if his love has made any difference in your life, if being in a community of the Spirit means anything to you, if you have a heart, if you care—then do me a favor: Agree with each other, love each other, be deep-spirited friends. Don’t push your way to the front; don’t sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead. Don’t be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand.*

# BE SECURE IN WHO YOU ARE.

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✓ Whether people admit it or not, a lot of people are addicted to “affirmation.” We are a people that covets: likes, views, shares and comments. We must be secure enough that people can (respectfully) see different from us and disagree with us, without us seeing them as: enemies, difficult, etc. At the end of the day, we must give each other slack; because, ironically, there may be some people that see US as difficult.

## ✓ Colossians 3:13-15 TLB

*13 Be gentle and ready to forgive; never hold grudges. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. 14 Most of all, let love guide your life, for then the whole church will stay together in perfect harmony. 15 Let the peace of heart that comes from Christ be always present in your hearts and lives, for this is your responsibility and privilege as members of his body. And always be thankful.*

## ✓ Ephesians 4:2 TLB

*Be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love.*

## ✓ 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 MSG

*Love never gives up. Love cares more for others than for self. Love doesn't want what it doesn't have. Love doesn't strut, Doesn't have a swelled head, Doesn't force itself on others, Isn't always "me first," Doesn't fly off the handle, Doesn't keep score of the sins of others, Doesn't revel (i.e., enjoy) when others grovel (i.e., crawl on the ground with the face downward), Takes pleasure in the flowering of truth, Puts up with anything, Trusts God always, Always looks for the best, Never looks back, But keeps going to the end.*

## REALIZE THAT “YOU” WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO CHANGE INDIVIDUALS OR RAISE GROWN PEOPLE.

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These are stressful times and people value their own opinions. But it is not the end of the world, if someone does not think, act or perform as we think they should. Handle the things that you can and do not stress over what you cannot control. It is not a Scripture, but the Serenity Prayer, really makes a lot of sense.

### The Serenity Prayer

*God grant me the serenity To accept the things I cannot change; Courage to change the things I can; And wisdom to know the difference.*

*Living one day at a time; Enjoying one moment at a time; Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace; Taking, as He did, this sinful world As it is, not as I would have it; Trusting that He will make all things right If I surrender to His Will; So that I may be reasonably happy in this life And supremely happy with Him Forever and ever in the next. Amen.*

(prayer attributed to Reinhold Neibuhr, 1892-1971)

## WHAT IF A DIFFICULT PERSON IS TRYING TO SABATOGUE ME?

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Realize that you will NEVER get 100% support. Jesus did not. You must be spiritual enough to know those who are around you. Instead of wasting precious energy to get 100% conformity, work with what you have. Consider who IS in your corner and work from there. Notice how Jesus did not try to prove Himself to His “haters,” after He arose. He poured His energy into His supporters.

### John 6:70-71 MSG

*70-71 Jesus responded, “Haven’t I handpicked you, the Twelve? Still, one of you is a devil!” He was referring to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. This man—one from the Twelve!—was even then getting ready to betray him.*

### Acts 10:40-43 MSG

*39-43 “And we saw it, saw it all, everything he did in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem where they killed him, hung him from a cross. But in three days God had him up, alive, and out where he could be seen. Not everyone saw him—he wasn’t put on public display. Witnesses had been carefully handpicked by God beforehand—us! We were the ones, there to eat and drink with him after he came back from the dead. He commissioned us to announce this in public, to bear solemn witness that he is in fact the One whom God destined as Judge of the living and dead. But we’re not alone in this. Our witness that he is the means to forgiveness of sins is backed up by the witness of all the prophets.”*

## **NO MATTER HOW PEOPLE TREAT YOU, YOU MAKE SURE THAT YOU DO THE RIGHT THING AND TREAT THEM RIGHT ANYWAY.**

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This does not mean that you must be “in the face” of difficult people all the time. But we must make sure we do right. And, we do not want to focus on what we “could do” to a person; because that could cause us to “slip” and do it. At the end of the day, God will hold you accountable for your actions, not the actions of others.

*Romans 12:18 Living Bible. Don't quarrel with anyone. Be at peace with everyone, just as much as possible.*

*Proverbs 15:1 Living Bible. A gentle answer turns away wrath, but harsh words cause quarrels.*

*1 Timothy 5:1-2 Living Bible. 1 Never speak sharply to an older man, but plead with him respectfully just as though he were your own father. Talk to the younger men as you would to much-loved brothers. 2 Treat the older women as mothers, and the girls as your sisters, thinking only pure thoughts about them.*

# THANK YOU!

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