

12. Learning to Be Peacemakers

In our last topic, we saw that we are to show our children how to reach out to the people of the world who do not know Christ. This is something that every Christian is to be shown how to do so that every Christian can learn to be obedient to the commands of Christ. As we show our physical and spiritual children how to build relationships with people who are not yet Christians, we help them learn to follow the example that Christ gave us when He was here on this earth. In our topic today, we are going to see that the Lord also gives us instructions so that we can show our children how to become peacemakers.

In 1 Corinthians 6:1-4, we see that the church in Corinth was having a problem with lawsuits. Those verses say, “Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge?” Here, we see that some Christians were suing other Christians in the Corinthian courts in an effort to try and get what they felt belonged to them. They were going to courts where the people who made the decisions were not even Christians instead of asking a few godly Christians to help them solve their conflicts. This meant that the whole city was hearing about the conflicts between the Christians.

Paul reminded the Christians in Corinth that God has said the saints will judge the world in the future. John later wrote in Revelation 2:26-27, ““And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations — “He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels” — as I also have received from My Father.”” Here, we see that saints will have power over the nations. Certainly, if Christians are going to rule the nations in the future, a few of them should be able to settle small conflicts between Christians. In our day, one of the things we want to show our children is how to help other Christians settle their conflicts without going to court and having lawsuits.

Paul also reminded the Corinthians that Christians will rule over angels in the future. If Christians will be given the responsibility to rule over angels in the future, Paul makes it clear that there should be at least a few Christians who are able to help Christians make wise decisions about the things that relate to the things that happen in this life. Other passages do not clearly say that we will judge angels. However, Hebrews 1:13-14 says, “But to which of the angels has He ever said: ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool’? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?” The words “ministering and minister” mean “*servicing and serve*.” As a result, we see that the angels will serve those who will inherit salvation. Since we have become the children of God, we have become heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ and have inherited salvation. This passage would show us that the angels will definitely serve Christians in the future although it does not directly state that we will judge them. As a result, we should be able to settle conflicts between Christians.

For that reason, Paul makes it clear that Christians should be able to resolve the conflicts of other Christians. Judges who are not Christians will not use Biblical principles to solve conflicts between Christians because they do not even know those Biblical principles. In contrast, even the weakest Christian has learned a little from the Word of God. Even the weakest Christian also has the Holy Spirit living within him. As a result, even the weakest Christian should be able to help Christians in conflict learn to apply Biblical principles to their conflict. As a result, Paul went on to say in 1 Corinthians 6:5-6, “I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren? But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers!” Paul said that among the Christians there must certainly be at least one wise person that could solve a conflict between two Christians. Paul said that the Christians were going to law against each other before unbelievers.

Here we see that one of the ministries for which we want to equip our physical and spiritual children is to learn to develop the wisdom to be a peacemaker and help other Christians learn how to solve their conflicts. James 3:13 says, “Who *is* wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct *that* his works *are done* in the meekness of wisdom.” Here, we see how we help our children to become people of wisdom that are able to help others. The word that is translated “understanding” is used only in this verse in the New Testament. It means a person that is able to skillfully apply the Word of God to practical situations. The word that is translated “meekness” means *gentleness of spirit*. We help our children develop understanding by helping them develop a gentle spirit.

James goes on to point out why people who are not Christians cannot demonstrate this kind of understanding and apply it with godly wisdom. James 3:14-16 says, “But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking *exist*, confusion and every evil thing *are* there.” Here, we see that earthly wisdom is based on self-seeking or what will be most beneficial for the person that is trying to show worldly wisdom. As a result, no person that is without Christ can skillfully apply the Word of God to practical situations and certainly not with a gentle spirit.

In contrast, James 3:17-18 says, “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.” As we show our children by our example how to share the peace that is from above and develop a gentle attitude, we see that they will become equipped to make peace between other Christians. The Lord will help them learn to skillfully apply the Word of God to the situations that people face in their lives. As they do this with a gentle spirit, the Lord will use their attitude to work in the hearts of those who are in conflict.

However, we go on to see the attitude that the Lord wants all Christians to develop. We read in 1 Corinthians 6:7-8, “Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather *let yourselves* be cheated? No, you yourselves do wrong and cheat, and *you do* these things *to your* brethren!” Paul

said that there was a problem that the Christians were even going to law against one another. Paul said that the Corinthians were still showing the self-seeking attitude that is a part of worldly wisdom. That was why they needed to grow and mature in their spiritual lives.

Here, we see why it is so important to help our physical and spiritual children grow to spiritual maturity. That is the only way that their thinking will be transformed so that they begin to think Biblically instead of continuing to think like the world. Romans 12:2 says, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” As our children are being transformed by the renewing of their minds, they will be able to share with others the will of God.

Christ said in Matthew 5:38-40, ““You have heard that it was said, “An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.” But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have *your* cloak also.”” In these verses, Christ made it clear that as Christians we are not to try and get even with others. Instead, we are to be willing to accept wrong. We are to be willing to let ourselves be cheated. As we model these attitudes for our children and explain that our goal is to please Christ, we give them an example to follow in their own lives. This is a clear example of the fact that the Corinthians had not matured in their spiritual lives so that they were willing to apply the instructions of Christ in their daily lives.

Instead, the Corinthian Christians were doing wrong to each other and cheating each other. As a result, the people who lived in the city of Corinth could not see any difference between their own actions and the actions of the Corinthian Christians. The same will be true if we do not help our children grow to spiritual maturity so that they learn to think Biblically. In contrast, if we show our children how to think and act Biblically, their lives will demonstrate Matthew 5:16. That verse says, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” We want to help our children learn that their lives will make a real difference and cause people to glorify God because their lives are filled with good works that glorify God.

Today, many Christians are like the Corinthian Christians and have not grown to spiritual maturity. Such Christians are still controlled by worldly thinking and have many conflicts with others including other Christians. That is why we want to show our physical and spiritual children how to apply Biblical principles in their own lives so that their lives will be an example to others and the Lord will give them many opportunities to be peacemakers. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to have an effective ministry for the Lord as peacemakers.