

High Maintenance Christians

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from a lesson by Mark Copeland)

Introduction

- A. The difficulty in presenting a lesson on this matter
 - 1. Hard working disciples are made to feel guilty because they are at the limit of their ability and cannot do more
 - 2. Sick, aging, or disciples in hardship are made to feel guilty for having to accept help from others.
 - 3. The high maintenance persons who need the lesson in most cases with either ignore it or rationalize their way out of applying it to themselves
 - 4. So should I forgo preaching it because it will hurt the innocent and bore the guilty?
- B. Sharing strength in the Lord's church
 - 1. A great blessing enjoyed by those in Christ is help from brethren in times of spiritual or physical need - Rom. 12:9-12, 14:19
 - a. Those who are strong support the weak - Rom. 15:1
 - b. The spiritual help those overcome by sin - Gal. 6:1-2
 - 2. At the same time, we all have the responsibility to become strong
 - a. Each Christian must bear his own load - Gal. 6:4-5; 1Cor. 3:1-3
 - b. We will be held accountable for our own actions - Rom. 14:12
- C. Some Christians never seem to grow from being supported to supporting themselves or helping to support others
 - 1. Unless constantly nurtured, they fall away or become apathetic
 - 2. Questions:
 - a. What is high maintenance?
 - b. Am I high maintenance?
 - c. When is it okay to be high maintenance?
 - d. How do I overcome a high maintenance manner of life?

I. THE DEFINITION OF HIGH MAINTENANCE

- A. "The need for a lot of attention to maintain in good order; requiring a lot of attention, time, or money; demanding a great deal of effort to maintain current levels" (Wiktionary)
 - 1. Any person or thing that requires a lot of attention
 - a. Cars that require a lot of work to keep running
 - b. Employees that require close supervision to do their jobs
 - c. Significant others that require a lot of gifts, favors, and attention or they lose interest
- B. Christians are high maintenance if they require constant, special attention to remain faithful, a lot of pleading to be active, must be visited frequently, and are easily offended
 - 1. They require a lot of pampering to be active
 - 2. They must be visited frequently or they stop attending or go elsewhere
 - 3. We feel compelled to verbally walk on eggshells around them lest they become offended

C. Christians who are high maintenance:

1. Babes in Christ just starting their new spiritual life need a great deal of attention; it is expected and accepted
2. Christians who are ill (short term or prolonged), grieving, aged, thrust by circumstances into poverty need help on a long term basis.
 - a. This is the will of God for those who are blessed or strong
3. Slothful Christians who attend and work only when constantly prodded
 - a. It is well past time that you grow up in Christ
4. Christians who have come to be emotionally dependent on attention from others

D. Churches can be high maintenance

1. The church in Corinth was - 2Cor. 12:20-21
2. The church in Philippi was not - Phil. 1:3-6

II. THE DIFFICULTY OF HIGH MAINTENANCE

A. Where it can help

1. High maintenance is crucial for the newborn Christian, just as it is for a newborn baby
 - a. While they are growing faith and in knowledge, they are vulnerable to temptation and discouragement
 - b. Without the proper attention, they may be overwhelmed
2. High maintenance is essential for the hurting Christian
 - a. Pain, sorrow, burdens, want, have the potential to overcome even the strongest among us - 1Thes. 5:14
3. It can help strong Christians focus talents and share abundance
4. It can help those receiving care to develop the goal of becoming a helper of others

B. Where it can hurt

1. When it hinders the growth of the church in evangelism, edification, and benevolence, when undue effort is spent on a few
2. When it holds back the efforts of busy workers
 - a. Paul wished to preach where Christ was not named - Rom. 15:20
 - b. Some Christians at Corinth held him back - 2Cor. 2:12-13
3. When more serious needs go unmet
 - a. Babes in Christ not being helped because others expect coddling
 - b. The sick, sorrowful, weak, and erring neglected, because others expect special attention

III. THE DEFEAT OF HIGH MAINTENANCE

A. By individual growth

1. We need high maintenance when we are babes in Christ, but we should grow to the point where we do not need it, where we can become the providers, not just the recipients - Heb. 5:12

B. Through individual strength

1. Strength from brethren is helpful when we need it, but we should reach the point where our strength comes from God and from within

2. We become producers, not just consumers - Phil. 4:11-13; 2Cor. 1:3-6

Conclusion:

- A. My purpose has not been to discourage help when it is needed
 - 1. We are to bear one another's burdens - Gal. 6:2
 - 2. The strong are to bear with the infirmities of the weak - Rom. 15:1
- B. My intent has been to challenge you into thinking about your service to God
 - 1. To reflect about your work in the kingdom - Gal. 6:4
 - 2. To grow to bear your own load - Gal. 6:5
- C. When a burden becomes unbearable, that is when we need help from our brethren. When failure to bear our own load becomes a thoughtless habit, we become high maintenance and hinder the cause of Christ.
 - 1. "He who is slothful in his work is a brother to him who is a great destroyer" (Prov. 18:9).