

Quick Hits #5 / 5 June 2022

Personal Conduct in Ministry and Relationships

A companion to this teaching is the *Quick Hits #1/Order of Service* delivered on 24 October 2021. It's on the Firestorm NW website in note form.

There are many admonitions regarding Christian liberty in the New Testament. The Apostle Paul was a champion of liberty and many of his teachings went against those who wanted to bring a religious formalism into churches (e.g., the Judaizers), but Paul also gave many admonitions against unbridled freedom. The essence of those admonitions was to not tear down the work of God, especially for the sake of seemingly small or non-essential things (Ro 14:20).

The goal of this *Quick Hit* is to remind us to watch the little things regarding our speech and conduct and to mind how we treat each other so as to limit any possible negative outcomes. We don't want this message to produce a paranoia within the context of personal relationships and ministry, but we do need to be careful how we present and conduct ourselves. If your heart is to do good, you'll understand and do your due diligence to be careful. If you have a weakness or tendency to want to push the lines of personal conduct and make people uncomfortable, you'll need to take a step back and see what's behind that...even if your intentions are seemingly good.

Scriptural Basis (There are many others that can be referenced here.)

Love does no wrong to a neighbor; love therefore is the fulfillment of the law. Romans 13:10 (NASB)

All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify. Let no one seek his own good, but that of his neighbor. 1st Cor 10:23-24 (NASB)

Therefore, be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, Ephesians 5:15 (NASB)

But sexual immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be mentioned among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be no filthiness or foolish talk, or vulgar joking, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. Ephesians 5:3-4 (NASB)

Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God on the day of visitation. 1 Peter 2:12 (NASB)

Points to Ponder

Seven points for your consideration. Keep in mind that these are general principles or maxims.

#1 - Seek to do no harm. (Like the Hippocratic oath.) If your speech, movements, or touch create anxiety and discomfort or worse, pain and possible injury, then simply stop it. Reassess and change your ministry strategy and tactics. This goes for both men and women.

#2 - If you don't like something, you don't have to do it. You do not have to agree or do anything that you are not comfortable with or that goes against your conscience. If you are not comfortable with an

activity, you have the right to move away or to say something about it. You can do so without being rude and/or huffy as well.

#3 - Our speech and our conduct matters. *How* we say things matter (even more than *what* we say). *How* we touch and affirm others...or not...matters. Keep conversations on an honest and respectable course. Be cognizant of the context and timing regarding words, hugs, and placement of hands during ministry.

- Try to be led of the Spirit...even in casual encounters. The Lord works amazingly with interactions.
- Be respectful. Don't seek to expose or embarrass someone publicly regarding sin or sensitive issues.
- Be conservative as to touching. Enlist help if and when needed during ministry.
- Being conservative with touch applies to everyone while ministering to the same sex or the opposite sex.
- Be realistic as to how human beings can be "triggered."
- Use your senses and know when a person has had enough of something.

#4 - Check your motives. If your ministry or conduct is being fueled by ambitions or other motives, then you need to pull back and reassess.

- Ambitious people will find themselves either deliberately or accidentally stepping on others.
- Self-assessment requires self-awareness and honesty.
- You may have to discover what is the real motivation or driving force for doing what you're doing.
- Ambition can often put on masks and hide behind seemingly good intentions.
- Self-deception is easy (*The heart is more deceitful than all else... Jeremiah 17:9 NASB*).

#5 - Remember that every person has "face." (An oriental concept.) All members of the body need respect. Courtesy and modesty should be practiced always. This principle applies to everyone you pray for or minister to, whether male or female. **Firestorm NW does not have a policy that forbids prayer and/or ministry for persons of the opposite sex. As of this point, we believe there has not been a need to curtail this freedom.**

- Ask **permission** to touch or lay hands on the person. Watch your hand placements.
- Watch the volume of your voice and who you are near.
- Avoid using phrases or descriptors that could be interpreted as disrespectful.
- Watch your breath. If no mints or gum, then point away.
- Be clean. Have your hands clean.
- Avoid rough handling as a general rule.
- Avoid pushing or man-handling someone to "properly position" them or to get them to receive.
- Avoid "bulldogging" your prayers for someone or demanding that they stand there until they receive their healing or spiritual work. (There are limits.)
- Men - watch where your eyes go. Same goes for women.
- Avoid a lot of skin contact (e.g., a women's backless dress or exposed arm).
- If there is pain, an injury, or if a spiritual work is to be performed in a sensitive area of the body, the minister can ask if another person of the same sex can lay hands or touch that area where the person has agreed to.
- You don't have to place your hand on the injured area to have the Holy Spirit do His work.

#6 - If people don't want ministry, don't push it. (As a general rule.) Don't try to "power through" with something that they didn't want or ask for. This goes for prayers for healing and so forth. There's no need to put people in uncomfortable situations because you want to "bulldog" your prayers and petitions. You want to be sensitive to where people are at.

- When praying for healing or the Holy Spirit, know when to stop and close the encounter.
- Observe the rules and customs of the house. (See Hebrews 13:17 regarding obeying leaders and 1st Corinthians 10:33 - e.g., "seeking...the good of many.")

#7 - Know "when to say when" with people. (During ministry and socialization.) This goes for all personality types. Some are gifted with reaching out, connecting, and/or networking with others. Some have a high energy to do this activity. Some are more touch oriented as well. While this characteristic is truly a gift and talent, there are limits. You may have to "dose" or quantify the amount of contact and time with someone. Make good "reads" on people to determine their limits.

- Touch is a way to affirm others and express love. Touch can also be a way to exert authority too.
- Be aware that some people don't like a lot of touching and may "telegraph" that too.
 - Don't take offense to that. Just stop it.
- Keep in mind that some touch has a "transfer" with it which is by design. There is Godly and what is good vs what is earthly and demonic (James 3:14-16).
 - Don't lay hands suddenly on any man. (1st Tim 5:22.)
- Use your intuitive senses. Realize when it's time to break the contact. Know when it's time to make contact and extend yourself or to minister to someone.
- Keep in mind that exuberance does not always translate with HS moving. Stay sensitive to Him.
- On the other side of the coin, introverts need to remember to perhaps extend themselves a bit.

Last Comments

The bottom line here is this: **Have your spiritual and your intuitive senses working properly when you are ministering and fellowshiping with each other.** Make adjustments when and where it's necessary to do so. Observing our own personal conduct isn't hard, nor is it "quenching the spirit." In fact, watching the details of our own speech and conduct allows the **Holy Spirit to be more prominent in His display** rather than have us become a distractor to His working power and impact.

The Apostle Paul had a unique perspective of his ministry. He knew that He had to make personal adjustments with some to ensure that everyone had the opportunity of being saved with the least amount of "friction" or resistance. (See 1st Cor 9:21-23.) In short, Paul knew that winning the lost and keeping them stable in the Lord was the primary thing and he didn't want to be a cause of stumbling anyone. We need to have that same attitude.

As ministers of the gospel, we occasionally need a refresher that ministry is about people and displaying love and good manners. **We need to remember that the small discourtesies, the little unkind things, and the little forms of disrespect make large withdrawals in the emotional bank accounts of people.** In ministry and in relationships, the little details matter.

Questions? Give me a call or walk up to discuss.
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