

HOW TO CORRECT VALUED FRIENDS

Written by admin

Wednesday, 30 April 2014 08:36 - Last Updated Friday, 18 July 2014 07:18

By Wangari Murathe



“Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I ask. ” Philemon 1:21

We often agonize about pointing out the wrong things our friends are doing for fear of losing them. Many people do not take criticism well and many become defensive and even aggressive.

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The Apostle Paul was faced with the same dilemma in regard to Philemon, his dear friend and fellow worker, who unfortunately was keeping slaves. (Read Philemon 1). He decided to write him a private letter restating how his friendship and love continued to be a source of great joy and encouragement, what great things he had accomplished in his service to the Lord, and how he always prayed for him so that his faith may be effective in deepening his understanding of every good thing for the sake of Christ . He avoided being combative and assuming a “holier than thou” attitude”.

Paul could have gone all out and told him in strong tones that it was wrong for a believer like him to be keeping slaves. Keeping slaves was legal at the time so Philemon could not be faulted on the basis of legalities. However, he could be faulted based on the righteousness of God whose grace imparts that we live a life led by the Spirit and measure all our actions against God’s law of love. “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another”. John 13:34 ESV

Love implies protection of other people’s rights in the spirit of kindness, patience, unselfishness, and humility. You cannot take someone’s liberty and claim to follow the Lord. Paul therefore wanted Philemon and his slave Onesimus reconciled. He wanted Onesimus set free to become “a dear brother”. But Paul wanted Philemon to do it willingly by tenderly activating his conscience, even calling it as a favor to himself - to refresh his heart in Christ.

Just one more lesson on how the Bible shows us how to handle relationships!

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"In what light soever we regard the Bible, whether with reference to revelation, to history, or to morality, it is an invaluable and inexhaustible mine of knowledge and virtue." ~ John Quincy Adams
