

THE TACTFUL CHRISTIAN (I)

(God, our model for discretion)

INTRODUCTION:

A. The lesson from this series

1. The tactful Christian, God our model for discretion
2. The principle before the application
3. Examples of how to teach
4. Abigail's discretion

B. Notice the following text

1. (Colossians 4:5-6) NASV – “Conduct yourselves with **wisdom** toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. **6** Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person”
2. The Bible exhorts the Christian to practice discretion and or to be tactful
 - a. “Conduct yourselves with wisdom”
 - b. “Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned...with salt”

C. The purpose of this lesson:

1. Defining the terms, “discretion” and “tact”
2. The example of God on how to be tactful and discreet

I. WHAT IS TACT OR TO BE TACTFUL

A. There is two words that can be interchangeable that will be use in this study. Their definitions:

1. “Tact” - “A quick or intuitive appreciation of what is fit, proper, or right especially, skill in avoiding what would offend or disturb. 2 The sense of touch; feeling (Synonym, ADDRESS, CONSIDERATE) Std. College Dict.
2. “Discretion, discreet” – “Tactful and judicious, especially in dealing with others; careful not to say or do the wrong thing; prudent” Std. College Dict.
3. (Proverbs 25:11) NASV – “**Like apples of gold in settings of silver Is a word spoken in right circumstances**”

B. The motives behind being tactful

1. Love – Love searches, seeks for what is best on the other person, looks and does for the best interest of the other person.
2. Wisdom – The application of love in the most efficient way.

C. Some applications:

1. Being tactful is for the wellbeing of my soul, (Proverbs 19:11) NASV – “**A man's discretion makes him slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook a transgression.**”
 - a. There is a problem when we only condemn. Many times this will only move others to anger and it does not accomplish anything (Proverbs 15:1b) – “**But a harsh word stirs up anger**”
 - b. We need to take another step and look for the correction of the other person FOR HIS SALVATION. (Proverbs 15:1a) – “**A gentle answer turns away wrath**”
2. Discretion, tact also will include precaution (Proverbs 15:28) NASV – “**The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, But the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things**”

3. Being tactful should not be confused with compromising oneself or with the tolerance or with weakness. Using tact, being discreet, tactful does not we do not point out the sin of other (2 Timothy 2:24-26; Jude 22-23) **READ**.
 - a. We need to “teach” and “correct” so that they can escape the “snare of the devil” (2 Timothy 2:24-26)
 - b. Some we have to “snatch them out of the fire” (Jude 22-23)
 - c. But we do all this with tact, tactfully: not being “quarrelsome”, “patient” and “kind to all” (2 Tim. 2:24-26)

II. GOD, THE MODEL OF DISCRETION

A. Man can and should learn how to be tactful like God by the natural world

1. (Isaiah 28:23-29) **READ**. The context: warning and promise made to Jerusalem/ Zion, a parable which teaches God’s judgments are better and or that corresponds to the situation and always have a purpose.
2. The parable:
 - a. Verse 24 – The preparation of the ground is according to the type of seed and according to its purpose
 - b. Verse 25 – Sowing is done with wisdom according to the characteristics of the seed, to their appointed areas, in orderly fashion
 - c. Verse 27 – Wisdom and common sense are used when threshing the harvest, crop
 - 1) Notice the five kind of grains mentioned in verse 25
 - 2) Two of these are distinguished in verse 27 in regards to its different way of threshing its crop:
 - (a) “Dill”, Anise (dill) was used as medicine and for cooking. It grows in Palestine today both cultivated and wild (**Lev. 27:30; Matthew 23:23; Luke 11:42**)
 - (b) “Cumin” - Cumin (*Cuminum cyminum*) (sometimes spelled cummin) is a flowering plant in the family Apiaceae, native from the east Mediterranean to East India. It is an herbaceous annual plant, with a slender branched stem 20-30 cm tall. The leaves are 5-10 cm long, pinnate or bipinnate, thread-like leaflets. The flowers are small, white or pink, and borne in umbels. The fruit is a laterall fusiform or ovoid achene 4-5 mm long, containing a single seed. Cumin seeds are similar to fennel seeds in appearance, but are smaller and darker in color.
 - 3) **The point of the parable**: The farmer does not thresh the delicate seeds like the dill and the cumin like he will thresh the wheat and other seeds.
 - d. Verse 28 – The threshing of the grain for bread is done with wisdom, not threshing it longer or it will be damaged.
 - e. Verses 26 & 29 – This wisdom comes from God and it should be applied to the spiritual as well.

B. Examples of tact from God with the treatment of man

1. The sin of Adam and Eve (**Genesis 3:9-19**) **READ**.
 - a. A **question**, “Where are you?” (3:9). The question was not made to obtain information on their location.
 - 1) The question was design with a purpose to draw him out of their hidden place rather than drive, expelled him out or to force them out.
 - 2) This question obligates Adam to confess. “I heard the sound of Thee in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself”

- 3) Another question by God, “Who told you that you were naked?” The implication of the question was that only the tree of knowledge of good and evil could only give him this information. God already knew this, but wanted Adam to confess his own transgression.
 - 4) God did not destroy them rather had compassion for them.
2. The sin of Cain (**Genesis 4:6-15**) **READ**.
- a. A series of four questions in verses **6, 7, 9, and 10** demonstrate God’s preoccupation for the sinner and His method of directing to the reasoning of man.
 - b. Verses **6, 7** – With tactic God obligates Cain to realize that it was a matter about doing well or not.
 - c. Verses **10, 11** – God did not overlook the sin of Cain, He pointed out Cain’s sin
 - d. Verses **13, 15** – God’s mercy
3. The discouragement of Elijah (**1 Kings 19**)
- a. After a spiritual victory in Mount Carmel (**1 Kings 18**), Elijah flees, and it seems that he loses confidence in God, and begins to justify himself.
 - b. Verses **5** thru **8** – God’s first response to Elijah was not with words, God feeds him and was with Elijah in his journey! Why not punish him? God wanted to give some time to Elijah to think and to meditate.
 - c. Verse **9** – A question, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” Elijah responded. Notice God’s reaction; He did not criticize Elijah by saying, “What kind of excuse is that!”
 - d. Verses **11, 12** – The Lord did not come to Elijah by a powerful wind, earthquake and the fire, but in a sound of a gentle blowing (verse **12**, see **Proverbs 15:1 NASV** – “A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger”) Elijah was ready to receive new instructions from God
 - e. Verses **15** thru **18** – God had a **purpose** in all these: To restore Elijah to do God’s will, to servitude
 - f. Notice that in face of all those things, God did mention Elijah’s excuses, and God never argues with Elijah about the matter at hand.
4. Jonah (**4:6-11**)
- a. Verses **6** thru **8** – God used the plant to teach a principle aside and before making an application.
 - b. Verses **9** thru **10** – When God makes a question to Jonah, God makes Jonah to admit a principle
 - c. Verse **11** – Because God was tactful with Jonah, now God can make the application.

C. A review or summary of the example of God

1. To make an appropriate question, rather than just say the obvious
2. To guide the sinner to confess his/her own error
3. To refuse any absurd discussion
4. To teach the principle before making the application
5. To point out the new direction which he/she needs to follow

CONCLUSION:

- A. Being tactful is more than just to give information to someone; it will teach and usually produces a change on the other person.
- B. The apostle Paul exhorts every Christian to apply this notion, to be tactful with those who need salvation (**Colossians 4:5-6**) **READ**

- C. For us, let us recognize God as the ultimate source of wisdom, knowledge and discretion and let us pray to God for guidance (James 1:5) NASV – **“But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”**

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