

Melva's Corner

“FINDING PEACE”

September 5, 2005

Bible Text: Matthew 7:12

Central Truth: If we truly want to be at peace with circumstances, we must at least begin with denying ourselves the tendency of judging others by standards we would not want applied to our actions.

I have been emotionally moved by the events of Hurricane Katrina this week! On days like these I often am reminded of the Apostle Paul's comment, "**For I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.**" (Philippians 4:11 NASB)

While I remain amazed that he could say that, I am a little comforted that he admits that he "learned" to have that attitude. Perhaps there is still hope for me. I trust that I will eventually "learn" "to be content in whatever circumstance I am." However, it was not my personal circumstances that I was moved by this week, it was the suffering of others which was caused more by man's inhumanity to man than Hurricane Katrina.

How about you?

Have you been moved by the horrors of the images you've seen this week? And experienced the desire to blame someone for those images. What a world of relief that would be if we could apply Apostle Paul's comment! We live in a world which is filled with stress. We are, at times, contributors to that very stress ourselves!

One really big leap in the direction of peace would be to judge others as we would want to be judged. Have you experienced having a driver change lanes forcing you to swerve or brake? How did you feel? Generally, the honking of the horn expresses clearly our first response. I know it is not a description of you, but some people get so angry that they actually risk an accident in making

their displeasure known. In fact, "road rage" is becoming more and more common.

Now let's be honest with ourselves. Have you ever changed lanes and caused someone else to have that same reaction problem that you did when run off the road? Of course you have if you drive often!

So ... did you make your traffic blunder on purpose? Certainly not! In fact, you would give anything to be able to explain to the offended driver that you did not see him or her.

The whole point is this: If we truly want to be at peace with circumstances, we must at least begin with denying ourselves the tendency of judging others by standards we would not want applied to our actions. Very few people get out of bed in the morning thinking, "What can I do to irritate someone today?"

While I realize Paul's statement about contentment encompasses a much wider field, sometimes it is worthwhile to take one step at a time and this is a good first step. This is especially true when it's a step Jesus advocates as crucial to being one of God's children!

Let's stop pointing the finger and trying to decide who's wrong in life's recent events. Instead let's start deciding what we can do to alleviate the suffering we are witnessing.

[Jesus taught his disciples, saying:] "In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 7:12)

Memory Text:

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily hinders our progress. And let us run with endurance the race that God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from start to finish." (Hebrews 12:1-2a NLT)