

2. Everyone who holds an opinion has a reason for doing so. If, as they explain their position, you become convinced that it is reasonable – even potentially helpful – you might decide to become of that same opinion. As long as no one elevates this to a matter of necessary doctrine, such opinions can, and sometimes do, serve a useful purpose.

3. Even if you are not persuaded of the other person’s opinion, you can agree to ‘dwell together peaceably’ if both you and he can agree that this properly belongs in the area of personal conviction. If no one is guilty of ‘despising his brother’ (Rom. 14:3) then both parties can continue to share the positive benefits of fellowship.

- by Greg Gwin

“A worthy resolution to make and try always to keep, is this: To rise above the little things.”



JANUARY 9, 2011

**SELFISHNESS IS NOT ALWAYS BAD**  
*Jim Stauffer*

Sometimes our selfishness shows up in our conversations. We need to know the things we say and do are very enlightening to those who observe us. Our friends usually have us pegged just about right.

One of the things that allows friendship to develop is an understanding of each other and the willingness to endure the foibles of one another because of the value we receive from the relationship. It is best we understand this so we always try to be of value to others. They will not endure our shortcomings unless there is a benefit to the relationship from their perspective.

Obviously this is true of all relationships such as marriage, neighbors, employers, etc.

Just where am I going with this? I have noticed in others first and then as a result of curious introspection in myself, the tendency to direct conversations toward our own interests.

For instance, if someone starts a conversation about any subject there is usually an aspect of it that has an interest to me. My thoughts and expressions will embrace that part of the subject. Let’s use NASCAR as an example. I am a sports fan but not a huge racing fan. Some folks might start a conversation and be discussing the specifics of the engines and chassis of the cars. Not being particularly interested or knowledgeable about those things I might very well without realizing it turn the conversation to the individual personalities of the drivers and question what part this plays in their success. This is something that interests me greatly.

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Send a Copy to a Friend

**Evangelist:**  
 Jim Stauffer

**MEETING TIMES**  
 Sunday - Bible Classes: 9:30AM  
 Worship Services 10:20AM & 6:00PM  
 Wednesday - Bible Classes 7:00PM

**Lenexa church of Christ**

Now I have taken you a long way to get to the point, so please bear with me as we try to make application.

What do you think motivated Christ to continually have discussions with the Pharisees and Sadducees who constantly tried to trip Him up with questions? Why did He present Himself as the Son of God, sent to bring light to the lives of men by informing them of the true role of the Messiah? It certainly was not because He had a persecution complex and enjoyed having the leaders of the Jews ridicule Him. It was because He recognized the importance of His mission and loved His Father and the creation so much He truly enjoyed delivering the message of God. Have you ever realized Jesus loved His mission and message while here on earth? The evidence He did lies in the fact He could not be dissuaded or deterred.

Ask similar questions about the Apostle Paul. Why did he forsake a successful future as a Rabbi to become a tentmaker and preacher of the gospel when he knew he would always be poor and heavily persecuted and mistreated? What enabled him to consistently go into the synagogues of the cities and combat the prejudice against Christ? I'll tell you what it was. It was that he loved and embraced the message he had been delegated to deliver.

I know people as do you who will always talk about the same things in your presence until someone is able to change the subject. Whether it is sports, weather, health or whatever, you know what to expect from them. We recognize this is what they love.

Now the question for all Christians is this. What are you just dying to talk about when you meet someone new? Or, for that matter, when you encounter old friends? We both know it should be the Lord, the Bible or the church. It should be the message of the gospel.

We bemoan the fact we are not baptizing people like has been done in past generations. I submit to you we will when we begin to direct our conversations toward spiritual matters. In order to do this consistently we must love the message God and Christ have delegated us to deliver. The only way to learn to truly love that message is to read and meditate on it daily. Are you a lover of the gospel? If you are, that love will be evident in the things you prefer to discuss in your daily conversations.

### **Subject: Friend**

People become "friends" on Facebook for all sorts of reasons. I do it so I can share the gospel with people all over the world, so I extend friend requests to all sorts of people — old high school acquaintances, preachers in far-off lands, minor celebrities, you name it. And if they agree to "friend" me, I don't read too much into it; they have lots

of reasons to accumulate "friends," too — making business contacts, politeness, or even just accumulating numbers for the sake of numbers. I don't expect an invitation to Thanksgiving dinner, and I don't get offended if I don't get one.

I use the word "friend" very differently in other contexts — like when I need an attentive ear, or some advice, or \$20. A true friend is not just someone who will acknowledge my existence; a true friend is one who will be there for me when I need him most, and vice versa.

Sometimes I wonder exactly what kind of "friend" some Christians want God to be. We read how Abraham was called "the friend of God" (James 2:23), and how "the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend" (Exodus 33:11). We want God to be our friend as well. But then we keep Him at arm's length, almost afraid of getting too close. That's not the action of a friend. Friends are givers, not just takers.

A Bible friend "loves at all times" (Proverbs 17:17). He "sticks closer than a brother" (Proverbs 18:24). He will "lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

That's the kind of friend God is for us. What kind of friend do we want to be for Him?

**Hal Hammons**

### **'That's Just Your Opinion'**

Often, when in discussions about religious subjects, someone will respond to an argument by saying: "That's just your opinion." This typically indicates that the respondent does not have a good answer for the case that has just been presented, and they are trying to dismiss the force of the reasoning by simply labeling it as 'opinion.'

Those who make this dismissive statement need to understand that it is their burden to prove that the matter under consideration is mere opinion. If there is no factual or real basis for the argument that has been made, then let them show this. But, if they cannot, then the facts in evidence must be accepted and acted upon. Unfortunately, this seldom happens.

On the other hand if a thing can be proven to be only human opinion there remain several options:

1. If you detect that someone is trying to bind their opinions on others, or trying to equate their personal opinions with the actual truth of God's Word, then this must be immediately and forcefully opposed. When some were trying to force their view on circumcision, Paul said "we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you" (Galatians 2:5). We should do the same.

*(Continued on page 1)*