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Encouragement for Today

“Are You a Pepper or a Mulligan?”

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Key Verse:

Luke 10:41-42, “Martha, Martha’, the Lord answered, ‘You are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.’” (NIV)

Devotion:

I’ve had the same best friend for 17 years; we anticipate each other’s thoughts, feelings and reactions to almost everything, and can even finish one another’s sentences. Just last week we were discussing the latest things the Lord was revealing to each of us, and we realized one more thing we share: the tendency to be officious. We both laughed and blushed at the same time when we realized that being officious is not one of our best character traits.

Webster’s dictionary defines officious as, “intrusive in a meddling or offensive manner; an interfering busybody.”

My friends’ two dogs illustrate officious behavior so well. Their first dog was a 20 pound Schnauzer named Pepper. From the first day he entered their home Pepper tried to establish himself as the “top dog” in their household. He spent his days bustling about, making an officious nuisance of himself as he barked out orders to the other pets – barking when anyone or anything entered the yard or their home. Pepper spent his days on constant patrol, just waiting for an opportunity to impart his unwanted help or advice; in short Pepper was an interfering busybody.

On the other hand there was Mulligan, a 90 pound Labrador Retriever. Mulligan was quite a dog; by her large appearance you would have assumed she was the “top dog” in this family, but Mulligan wasn’t interested in being “top dog.” It never entered her mind to be meddling or a busybody. Mulligan was focused on one thing: being close to her master. Mulligan kept her eyes on my friend and sat at her feet. It seemed easy for Mulligan to ignore Pepper’s intrusive orders, tuning out his barking and his never ending advice-patrol. How amusing to watch Mulligan spend her time quietly at the feet of her master, while Pepper wore himself out looking for someone or something to impart his unwanted wisdom.

In looking at the contrast between these two dogs, I had to conclude that all too often I act just like Pepper, bustling about making an officious nuisance myself. The contrast in these beloved pets was a reminder to me to be a Mulligan and not a Pepper. As my focus remains on staying close to my Master, taking time to sit quietly at His feet, the temptation to engage in officious behavior is not so attractive. Ponder the chorus to a favorite hymn and see how it clearly reveals this point: “Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in his wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of his glory and grace.” Sing this chorus throughout the day today and experience the glory and grace of our Master and Lord.

My Prayer for Today:

Dear Lord, thank You for Your patience and grace as I strive to sit quietly at Your feet on a more regular basis. Help me to focus on You and not the distractions life brings. Create a renewed passion for Your glory and grace within my heart. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.

Application Steps:

- 1) Review your daily schedule and identify time where you can sit quietly in God’s presence.
- 2) Ask the Lord to reveal your meddling tendencies and write them down.
- 3) Commit to changing your behavior through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- 4) Memorize one verse as an encouragement against officious (meddling) behavior.

Reflection Points:

Have you confessed your officious attitude and behavior before the Lord?

How can you stop focusing on yourself and thinking everyone is entitled to your opinion?

Will you commit to beginning today with a new attitude of humility and grace?

Power Verses:

Psalm 133:1, "How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity." (NIV)

Romans 12:3, "For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you." (NIV)

I Timothy 5:13. "Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also gossips and busybodies saying things they ought not to." (NIV)

Additional Resources:

Secrets of the Vine, by Bruce Wilkinson

http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_secretsVine.htm

Traveling Together, by Karla Worley

http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_travelingTogether.htm

A Woman's Secret to a Balanced Life, by Lysa TerKeurst and Sharon Jaynes

http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_secretBalanced.htm