

# 6 Principles Jesus Used to Deal with Difficult People

Has there been a person you couldn't avoid and didn't like? Jesus had them too. Let's see what He did.

When He chose His 12 disciples out of the thousands who followed him, He prayed all night (Luke 6:12). The list given to us includes Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Him. Why did He choose such a person?

**Principle 1: Obey God.** Between Judas' exit and Jesus' arrest, Jesus explained it. "The ruler of this world is coming. He has no hold over Me. But I do as the Father has commanded Me so that the world may know that I love the Father" (John 14:30-31b).

When you have a displeasing person in your life, this is the attitude: "I love the Father; and therefore this person and what they represent have no power over me."

**Principle 2: You can express your feelings.** Are you ever exasperated, vexed, sorrowful or hurt by the choices of those around you? Jesus too: "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and bear with You?" (Luke 9:41b).

That's a direct rebuke. He also expressed His exasperation in sarcasm: "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!" (Mark 7:9b).

It wasn't without exasperation and sorrow that Jesus kept Judas in His company of 12. After the feeding of the 5,000, Jesus says, "Have I not chosen you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?" (John 6:70).

**Principle 3: Be generous with the benefit of the doubt.** During their three years together, Jesus was gracious to Judas and

gave him every opportunity. When the 12 were sent out two by two, and then the 70 after that, Judas was among the group that returned to report, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name" (Luke 10:17b). Judas helped collect the baskets of crumbs, enjoyed the Lord's parties with sinners and saw the hypocrisy of religious leaders exposed. When all the thousands left Jesus in John 6:66, Judas stayed. Even the night of the betrayal, Jesus washed Judas' feet.

**Principle 4: Don't pretend.** Having this unpleasant person in His life did not force Jesus to oblivious pretenses that everything would be okay. Jesus knew what John recorded during the Bethany anointing: "He [Judas] said this, not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief. And having the money box, he used to steal what was put in it" (John 12:6).

Jesus knew what Judas represented. Before washing their feet, Jesus said, "'You are clean, but not all of you.' For He knew who would betray Him" (John 13:10b, 11a).

**Principle 1 Again: Jesus' primary attitude was to obey His Father.** He stated this many times. How did Judas in His life demonstrate this? He kept Judas in, without any pretense. He didn't distance Judas because of His unlikability. He didn't single out or embarrass Judas publicly until the last night.

**Principle 5: Rely on guidance in Scripture.** Jesus' obedience to God in this matter was very specific from the Scripture. He told them before Judas' exit, "this is to fulfill this passage of Scripture: 'He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me'" (John 13:18b). "Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, 'Very truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray me'" (John 13:21).

When Jesus prayed in John 17:4 that He had finished the work the Father gave Him, Jesus specifically referred to His selection of Judas. "None is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled" (John 17:12).

**Principle 6:** Trust the Father. Judas played a big role in Jesus' life, the transition from the acclaim of Palm Sunday to crucifixion a week later. Jesus had specific guidance from God and His Word to permit this. "Judas, do you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" (Luke 22:48b).

You may have specific guidance from God about the difficult person in your life. You may have general guidance, such as not abandoning your family members, or working as unto God and not unto men. Whatever guidance He has given you, obey it and trust Him. That's what Jesus did. Whatever threat the person represents, God will make it good somehow.

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