

# Maintaining High Maintenance Christians

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

## Introduction:

- A. Difficult people, the ones who fray your nerves and drain your energy, can be found everywhere.
  1. Rather than focusing on trying to change other people, change your attitude and behavior toward them.
  2. Love them and prove your love by interacting with them in such a way that will make it harder for them to remain high maintenance
  3. Realize that all people are valuable and loveable in God's eyes, even with all their faults, and that He wants you to live at peace with everyone as much as possible.
  4. Consider the grace God has extended toward you, and try to extend grace to others you encounter.
- B. Common Traits of High Maintenance Christians (Adapted from an article by Cheryl Conner in Forbes)
  1. They are convinced that their needs are the most urgent, and perhaps may have even made them so. To high maintenance Christians, they believe every concern they have is urgent and has the potential to have far reaching and permanent impact.
    - a. They cannot be allow to dictate priorities; they must learn to be patient and wait for their turn
  2. They have a sense of entitlement. Everyone deserves to be treated with equal respect, but the high maintenance Christian will expect more. When this happens, there's generally an unhealthy level of ego at play.
    - a. Have them pause and put their expectations in perspective to the bigger picture; ask them to describe their place in God's plans
  3. They appear unable to be self-sufficient, but have grown accustomed to playing the helpless or incapable card.
    - a. Remind them that God does not ask of them anything they are incapable of accomplishing.
  4. They firmly grasp and frequently repeat stories of personal wrongs done to them in the past; they have a difficult time moving past real or imagined wrongs, and use them as excuses for failure in the present.
    - a. Tell them that you are sorry that happened to them, but you're here now, we appreciate you, and we all have work to do.
  5. They talk a lot or not at all; both to get attention. The high maintenance Christian thrives on attention; however they have little desire or motivation to actually hear and take the advice they receive. Mostly, they want a listening ear.
    - a. Ask them for a productive reason or goal for their complaint.
  6. They are seldom satisfied and see the flaws in every situation. Even when they've been given extra attention, they will find something wrong with the service they've received. It seems that they walk around just a

few degrees away from boiling over, and others feel they must walk on eggshells when around them.

- a. Ask them to provide the same service for others at the same level they demand from others.
7. They are high-strung and live in a state of perpetual drama. Every small inconvenience or mistake becomes a crisis.
  - a. Remain calm and be unaffected by their high state of emotion; do not try to resolve every perceived crisis; instead, show patience by example
8. They handle money poorly, regardless of the economy or their income, their needs are invariably more. They spend a lot of energy dealing with past due accounts and juggling to use this month's income to cover last month's bills, often needing others to help them out.
  - a. Teach them personal responsibility and how to live frugally; help only when they are without Biblically basic needs: food, clothing, and shelter. It does not help them to finance their prodigal nature
9. They place a high importance on material things. Ironically, the focus on possessions and status is a sign of insecurity and low self-esteem
  - a. Show only limited interest in their material goods and converse with them regularly about their spiritual development
10. They are obsessed with details, theirs and yours. They are highly focused on getting too-much-information from and about you and exhibit a none-of-your-business attitude about your interest in the particulars of their lives
  - a. Change the subject as many times as needed until the idea of a higher level of thinking and talking develops.
11. They seem unsettled, ill at ease, constantly making changes in their work, living conditions, and place of worship. The details that are non-issues to others are insurmountable burdens to them. Happiness perpetually evades them.
  - a. Happiness is their choice and responsibility, not yours. You cannot provide an environment of happiness for someone determined to be unhappy.
12. They resent authority and are often critical of it. They use passive aggressive behavior and spread ill will; often barely covering up an attitude of superiority over others.
  - a. Remind them that heaven's gates are closed to someone with that spirit, and that leaders and members in the local church do not deserve to be treated that way.

## **I. LESSONS FOR HIGH MAINTENANCE CHRISTIANS**

- A. If a number of the above criteria describe you, then you are high maintenance and need to listen.
  1. If you do not find yourself in the above description, then listen and teach these things to the high maintenance Christians in your life.
- B. What does the word of God say?

1. God created you in His Image - Gen. 1:26-27
  - a. He made you and endowed you with abilities and resources to be an asset, not a liability to your family, local church, and community. You have God's genes, not the Devil's DNA
2. God created you to glorify Him, not embarrass His Son. Jesus showed us how to glorify God - John 14:8-9, 1:18; Heb. 1:3; Phil. 2:4-8
  - a. Jesus taught us that the high, noble level we must seek in order to fulfill our purpose to glorify God is in service to others, not in being served by others
3. God created you to be useful and trustworthy- Matt. 20:28, 25:26
  - b. We live a futile, pointless life until we become dependable helpful servants in the kingdom
4. God created you to grow and rise above your earthly nature
  - a. 1Peter 2:2; 2Peter 3:18; Heb. 5:12-14, 6:1
  - b. Failure to thrive is a self-inflicted condition
5. God created you to offer to others what He has given to you
  - a. Col. 3:13; Eph. 4:2, 32
  - b. Being self-righteous and unforgiving means that you are unrighteous and unforgiven
6. God created you to worship Him - John 4:24; Heb. 10:25
  - a. This is a very common trait of high maintenance Christians; they must be constantly reminded to attend.
  - b. You must worship Him, not simply try to from time to time if it is convenient, or feel like it, or have the time - Matt. 7:21
7. God created you to be part of a large family and a great fellowship to which you are a contributing member - Phil. 1:3-7
  - a. Psalms 37:25-26 - What a contrast between this picture of the righteous ones of God and those who are constantly needy due to their own choices.
  - b. Some may never take the time or have the inclination themselves to visit others in distress, but they expect the church to eagerly and aggressively support them in their trials.
  - c. When one rejects the precepts and instructions given in the word of God to be of mutual aid, he should expect the consequences of his choice. 2Thes. 3:10; Prov. 26:11

## **II. CHANGE FOR HIGH MAINTENANCE CHRISTIANS**

- A. No group was ever higher maintenance or less faithful than Judah - Ez. 2:3-7
- B. Today, the church is the chosen of God - 1Peter 2:9-10
  1. If you constantly need to be propped up and encouraged just to come to the assemblies of the church, then you are high maintenance.
  2. If you are difficult to get along with, demanding of others, always in some crisis, or through irresponsibility unable to contribute, then you are high maintenance.
  3. If you are any of these things, and not a newborn Christian, then you need to repent and grow up - Rom. 12:2; 2Peter 3:18