

The Bulwark

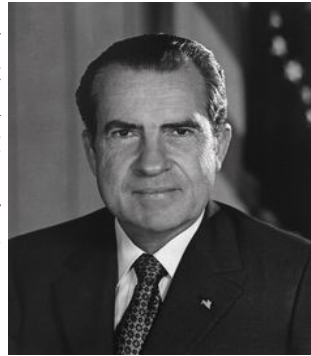
7054 Winnetka Avenue, Winnetka, CA 91306 (818) 795-5566 www.winnetkachurchof christ.com

Bruce Evans, Minister (818) 795-5566 e-mail: wbe@wolfenet.com

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NEVER BE PETTY

It is probably a fairly reasonable assumption that most people do not ascribe profundity to Richard Nixon. However, as he bade farewell to his White House staff on August 8, 1974, he uttered a most profound statement. “Never be petty. Always remember; others may hate you. Those who hate you don’t win unless you hate them. And then you destroy yourself.” Lay this along side of what the apostle Paul wrote to the brethren in Rome as seen in chapter twelve verses eighteen. *“If possible, so far as depends on you, be at peace with all men.”*



Think what you will about Mr. Nixon, but one would be hard pressed to argue about the depth of what he said that fateful day, as noted in the aforementioned quote. Life is far and away too short and eternity is too long for any one to be consumed by rank pettiness and hatred. The emptiness of such a mind set is revealed time and time again in the pages of God’s word.

Paul as he wrote to Titus, reminded him, *“For we also once were foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.”* (3:3) In the letter to the church in Galatia, Paul attributes such thinking as *“deeds of the flesh”* and those who are possession of such, *“shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”* (5:14-21)

There is no need to be naïve, there will be people who cross our path during the span of life that quite simply will not like us. Imagine that! As to the cause, it may be something that we have done but are unaware; or perhaps even nothing at all. Regardless of the cause, the bottom line resides with the individual not to allow such feelings to devour our inner being. *“Do not give the devil an opportunity.”* (Ephesians 4:27)

“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” (Romans 12:21)

While writing to the church in Colossae, Paul addresses the need for the individual to put on the *“new self”*. In so doing there will be total change of mind and overall perspective with respect to life. Gone will be the mind set that is willing to embrace contrary things like anger, wrath, malice and such like. In it’s place will, ideally, will come a desire that seeks to understand others and extend to them a measure of grace and mercy.

“But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh.” For as one puts on Christ, there is a renewal that takes place. Wherein a heart of compassions, kindness, gentleness and patience moves to the forefront. With it also comes the mind set to bear with one another and to openly grant forgiveness to one another. There must be the awareness to the fact that each one of us has shortcomings, and oft times we do or say things that are way off the mark.

Solomon was quite perspective when he penned the following, as found in Ecclesiastes 7:20-22. *“Indeed there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins. Also, do not take seriously all words spoken, lest you hear your servant cursing you. For you also have realized that you likewise have many times cursed others.”* That most assuredly puts so much in perspective.

There really is no need to go down a pathway of pettiness and hatred because of the attitude of others toward us. We cannot allow our adversary, the devil, gain the victory over us, getting us to stooping to a basal level. (wbe)