



Notebook of Complaints

Recently, I heard about a young lady who always carried her notebook to church. This was not your typical church notebook. She did not use it to take meticulous notes of the sermon or write down pertinent spiritual questions so she might share God's Word with others.

Instead, it was a notebook of complaints. Every time a phrase was not as tactfully said as she would like or a fellow member gave her a funny glance or a song was started off-key she would write these things down. Her purpose in doing this was to make a case to her husband that they should leave their current church to go back to the church she was a member of before she was married and where her parents attended.

Now, there are occasions when Christians and churches should be criticized. Apollos, an eloquent preacher, was taken aside by Priscilla and Aquila and they corrected his teaching (Acts 18:25-26). Peter and Barnabas were corrected by Paul (Galatians 2:11-14). The entire first letter to Corinth is filled with Paul's rebuke. This is in accordance with the divine pattern Jesus set forth in Matthew 18:15-17.

Yet, sometimes our criticisms can be petty, trifling and divisive. Is your criticism of a member or church for selfish reasons or is it out of a sincere interest in upholding the truth? If it is just to keep our own vested interests, we are not acting in love. The "love chapter" of 1 Corinthians 13 says, "Love is kind and patient, never jealous, boastful, proud, or rude. Love isn't selfish or quick tempered. It doesn't keep a record of wrongs that others do. Love rejoices in the truth, but not in evil. Love is always supportive, loyal, hopeful, and trusting" (CEV).

Have you been "keeping a record of wrongs?" It may not be in our church notebook, it may be in a diary, or in our mental notebook of grudges. Consider spending more time in gratitude and less time on grudges.

Think about it.

by Joshua R. Welch