

“YOU MAKE ME CRAZY” Keeping the Crazy-Makers from Making You Crazy!
Lessons from Proverbs and Colossians 3:8-15 (Adapted from the Rick Warren Series)
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We’ve been working our way to finding how to deal with the people in our lives that drive us absolutely nuts. I’ve been calling them the Crazy-Makers. Today I’ll be finishing up this series by summarizing what we’ve learned about what God says about healthy relationships. I’m going to take you through some steps that review what to do with the crazy-makers in your life. This message is titled, “Keeping the Crazy Makers from Making You Crazy!” But before I get started on that, let’s review what a crazy-maker is.

I could give you a list of a hundred different kinds of people, but let me give you six of the most common types that we’ve looked at. Don’t look at them or embarrass them, but these are different people that we have to work with and we have to live with and we have in our neighborhoods, our communities, our soccer games and our church and everywhere. How do we deal with these different kinds of people?

The first type of Crazy-maker is DEMANDING. Demanding crazy-makers. These are the little Dictators of life. The little Napoleons, the little Saddams. They’re bossy, they’re pushy, they’re controlling in every area. They’re intimidating, they dominate every conversation, they turn every conversation into a power struggle and they make unrealistic demands on your life, on your time, on your schedule and they just push, push, push! They are demanding and it drives you crazy. They’re the little dictators.

The second kind is what I call DISPROVING. Disapproving crazy-makers are the ones that are the Nitpickers. They are picky, picky, picky – they’re highly critical. Your best is never good enough. They always want more. They tend to be negative. They tend to be judgmental. They’re unpleasable. They’re perfectionists. They love to point out your mistakes. Disapproving crazy-makers, no matter what you do it’s just not good enough and that drives you crazy. They are the nitpickers.

The third kind of crazy-makers is what I call DEAFENING. Deafening crazy-makers are loud. They are the loud mouths. I call these people the Megaphones of life. They are loud and they like to talk and they like to talk often in 120 decibels. If you get a megaphone on the telephone, you’re not going to get off for at least 15 minutes because they just keep talking and talking. And they talk you into surrender! You finally just go, “I give up. OK. I give up. You’ve talked me into the ground!” They absolutely love to argue. These

are the megaphones.

The fourth type of crazy-maker is the DESTRUCTIVE crazy-maker. These are people with uncontrolled anger issues. I call them the Volcanoes. We've all had volcanoes in our lives. It's very easy to see them. You never know when they're going to erupt, but when they erupt you know it. They've got a temper like Mount Vesuvius or like Mount St. Helens. They blow up and they explode and when they do, it leaves scorching hot lava burning everything in the path. If you have a volcano in your life you tend to walk on eggshells part of the time. The family can live in fear of when the next blow up is going to be. There's a lot of tension and the burn casualties are quite high. They are the destructive crazy-makers; the volcanoes.

The fifth crazy-maker is the DISCONTENTED. Discontented crazy-makers get their feelings hurt very, very easily. They're very touchy. They're very thin skinned and they whine a lot. I call them the Cry Babies. We all know cry babies. They have a daily pity party. They invite themselves and they like to moan and mourn, "Poor Me!" They're chronic complainers and they've got a martyr complex and they get their attention by whining. And when they whine they get that nasally sound, whining all the time. And it just grates on you like fingernails on a blackboard. These are the cry babies – they are never happy.

The sixth kind of crazy-maker is what I call DEMEANING. These people are the Smart Mouths, the ones who are always running off at the mouth, and they're rude and they're insulting and they use caustic language. Maybe they cuss. More than just cussing and complaining and caustic language, they're bubble busters. They like to bust your bubble. They like to tear your dream apart. They love to deflate you. They love to tear you down. They get particular joy in telling you how you don't measure up. They can be disrespectful and they can be petty and they can be mean. These are the smart mouths.

And by the way, people who are rude all the time, they're rude because they have enormous insecurities. The more insecure a person is, the more rude they tend to be.

What I want to do today is to take you through a summary of verses of what the Bible says about how you deal with these kinds of people in your life. I'm going to give you six steps. Now, I've discovered that each step tends to get a little bit harder than the one before. The first one is hard, but the second one is even harder. And the third one is even harder. But this is the way you deal with difficult people. This is the way

you counter the crazy-makers in your life according to the Bible.

1. The first thing you need to do with a crazy-maker is this: REFUSE TO BE OFFENDED! I refuse to be offended. What I mean by that is I don't take it personally. No matter what they say, no matter what they do, no matter how outrageous their behavior is, no matter how they insult me, or how they act or react or the way they look with their body language - I refuse to be offended.

When people are rude, they are revealing THEMSELVES, not you. They're telling you what's in them, not what's in you. When people are mean, when people are controlling, they're not saying anything about you. It doesn't say anything about you. It says about who they are. It tells you what **their** problem is. So don't be offended by it. It's not about you. They're just a crazy-maker.

Now there is a lot of stuff you could get offended by. In fact, there's a lot of things in life that you ought to be offended by. Much of the junk going on in our world today is what we should get upset about (sex trafficking, hunger, racism, abortion, exploitation, etc.), but when it comes to personal relationships, God says "get over it!" As much as you can, try not to be offended by other people. Develop a little thicker skin and don't let it get to you. You need to learn that emotional and spiritual maturity is largely determined by how you treat those who mistreat you.

Now, I talked last week about **not returning** an evil for an evil, not getting even, not getting revenge and not responding in the same way that they are treating us. If we do that when they treat us poorly, we are no better than they are and we are on their level of emotional maturity. But as we mature emotionally and spiritually, we treat others **better** than they treat us. We stay on the high ground and refuse to let their behavior or their words offend us. One of the keys is to develop a tender heart with a thick skin. Our hearts are open to see the needs around us, but our skin is thick enough to be able to endure the barbs or jabs that others send our way. We learn not to let the cross-eyed look, or car cutting us off, or the rude person at the check-out counter get to us. We rather learn to pray for that person and ask God to touch their lives so that they might have peace.

We do that by first learning to consider the source: They're crazy-makers and to ignore their stuff is always the best thing to do.

Proverbs 12:16 says, "When a fool is annoyed he quickly lets it be known. Wise people will ignore an

insult.” Key word is WISE here. If you’re wise, you will ignore an insult. If you respond to an insult with an insult, you’re a fool. Foolish people give out what they get. When a foolish person is annoyed, they quickly let it be known, and they respond foolishly in the same manner they’ve been treated. They retaliate, they get revenge, and they respond in a similar manner.

Wise people just ignore the insult, because they look behind the behavior to find the hurt. The crazy-makers in your life are going to be the ones who are hurting, or who are in pain, or the ones who are up-side-down in their life somehow. Because they are hurting or in pain, they are going to treat others to cause them pain or hurt, too. Hurt people hurt people and they’ve got a fear or an insecurity or a painful past and they respond in the same way to those around them. So by looking beyond the words or behavior and try to understand the pain helps you to see that by responding back to them in the way they’ve treated you only makes the matter worse. Maybe they aren’t feeling well, or they have a headache, or they had a fight with their husband or wife this morning, or they’re going bankrupt, or something in their life is causing a major problem. Looking toward their pain to help them through it puts you on the high ground and helps them, too.

When we begin to get to know the story of a person’s life, we begin to see the struggles they are working through and the behavior can be seen through the pain. Instead of responding evil for evil, begin to show love and grace so that they might see the difference and seek you out to get the help they need. But by responding quickly when we get annoyed only shows that we are the fool.

Proverbs 19:11 tells us “A man’s wisdom gives him patience. It is to his glory to overlook an offense.”

So instead of getting upset and responding back at that person, don’t be offended, but patiently find how to respond to show love as you discover their background. Then that current stress that is causing the craziness in their life can be addressed rather than just blasting back at them.

Refusing to be offended by other people is actually an act of mature love. It shows how much you love them when you DON’T retaliate back at them. The more love you have in your heart the harder it is to offend you on a personal basis. The less love, the more insecure you feel, the easier it is to offend you. Once more

Proverbs 10:12 says, “Love overlooks the wrongs that others do.” The more filled I am with love, the less I’m

going to be upset with you when you are demanding or demeaning or disapproving or whatever.

So the first step is to choose to refuse to be offended and I won't take the offence personally.

The second step of keeping crazy-makers from making you crazy is: **2. DON'T WAIT FOR AN**

APOLOGY TO FORGIVE THEM. Now I know that we all have those crazy-makers in our lives who have hurt us or someone we love. In our minds we think, "I know the Christian thing to do is to forgive them, and so I will. I will forgive them as soon as they give me an apology, the right kind of apology. Then I will forgive them." The problem with that is you're still holding on to the hurt. The problem is that, in fact the truth of it is, they may never ask you for forgiveness. They may never say, "I'm sorry." Because they're a crazy-maker they don't get it, and because they may not even realize what they've done, you end up stewing over something or holding resentment over something that they've long ago forgotten. And that will eat you up inside.

Never hold on to a hurt because resentment tears you up. They don't even know about it. It's not hurting them; it's hurting you, and like I've said before, resentment is like you drinking poison hoping it's going to kill them. It doesn't work. It never will work! So you just say, "Even before anything else happens, I'm going to decide right now; I'm not going to wait for anything else to happen. Right here, right now, maybe even today, I'm going to forgive them."

See, you put it into God's hands and let Him deal with it. Forgiving doesn't mean you forget that it ever happened. You're still going to remember, but you need to put it into God's hands and stop holding on to the resentment. And then you treat that person as you did before the offense. Many people try to coerce the other into saying they're sorry by acting in ways that reveal what they've done so that they can then apologize. NO! Treat them with respect and dignity and forgive them so that you don't do something foolish.

Jesus did this even in the most extreme of circumstances. In **Luke 23:34** He's hanging on the cross having been crucified, and Jesus says, "*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they're doing.*" They don't know what they're doing!

Not every crazy-maker in your life who bugs you or hurts you realizes what they're doing. Most often they are responding to their own hidden pain and they don't know that they're hurting all the people around them. It's up to us to remember the tremendous time we treated God poorly and He forgave us, even if we didn't want to accept His forgiveness. His great gift of forgiveness helps us to forgive others.

Colossians 3:13 helps us in this. Paul says, “You must make allowance for each other’s faults and forgive the person who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.” The phrase “make allowance” is the Greek word that means “to bear with, to endure, or to be tolerant.” Basically it means to cut people some slack. You want others to cut you some slack when you mess up, so you cut them some slack. Jesus said, *“Blessed are the merciful for they will receive mercy”* (Matt. 5:7). We receive blessings from God as we are merciful to each other. It keeps us from being torn up by resentment, so don’t wait for the other to apologize; forgive them.

As we move on, it gets harder, remember: **3. REFUSE TO GOSSIP ABOUT THEM**. Now this one is tough when it comes to crazy-makers. Let’s admit it, when a crazy-maker has gone and done the next craziest thing to you AGAIN, it’s almost impossible not to get on the phone and either text or call someone else and say, “You won’t believe what they just did!” Maybe you even texting it to someone as they’re doing it, but it is hard not to tell someone else the stuff you have to endure from this crazy person. We need affirmation from someone right then! It’s so hard to just let it go, so we instinctively share our own misery with another. It may feel good to get the trouble off our chest, but it’s just not loving behavior on our part.

Proverbs 17:9 instructs us, “Disregarding another person’s faults preserves love; but gossiping about them separates close friends.”

What’s gossip? One definition of gossip is sharing information with somebody who is not part of the solution or part of the problem. They might not have had anything to do with it, but you bring them into it so you can feel better about yourself. Let’s just be honest about it: Gossip is a form of retaliation. You’re getting back at them without talking to them. Instead you are talking about them behind their back and this is incredibly destructive. Gossip is incredibly destructive to churches. It is incredibly destructive to families. It is incredibly destructive to businesses. It is incredibly destructive to your life. It tears you up. It separates the closest of friends.

But the worst thing about gossip is when we start gossiping about this crazy-maker, **THEY WIN**. All of a sudden they’re controlling your conversation. They’re controlling your emotions. Your whole day is about gossiping about **THEM** instead of talking about some good thing, some great thing that you could be doing or

that's happening to your life. Don't let them win! Don't let the crazy-maker win by choosing gossip.

[Peter 3:9 says "*Do not do wrong to repay a wrong, and do not insult to repay an insult. But repay with a blessing, because you yourselves were called to do this so that you might receive a blessing.*"] That's the

point, you can gossip and miss out on God's blessing. By choosing NOT to gossip, you get the conversation focused in a right and positive way in your life, AND you receive God's blessing in your life. Saying NO to gossip leaves the hurt or words or behavior where it is, and it preserves the possibility of friendship.

Now, our society encourages us to always come up with replies or retorts to someone else's craziness. And many books have been written about one liner's that can be used to respond to the put-downs or criticisms or the critical remarks. But we're told, "...*do not insult to repay an insult.*" So don't bother reading them, or buying them. Rather refuse to be offended, don't take their words or actions personally, consider the source and repay the crazy-maker with kindness, not revenge. You don't wait for an apology, but rather forgive even before they ask for it, because they might not ask for it. AND you don't gossip about what someone else does or says to you. LEAVE IT THERE! And this leads us to the next step in dealing with crazy-makers.

4. REFUSE TO PLAY THEIR GAME. After we've done these other things, simply refuse to play their game. Crazy-makers love to argue, and they love to debate because they love to get your attention. If you fall for this trap you're going to start thinking, "If I could just clearly, logically explain to them... what they're doing, then the light would come on in their minds and they would realize how self-destructive and how inappropriate their behavior or what they're saying is. If I could just reason with them then they will say, 'Yes! Thank you for helping me see that! Thank you so very, very much.'"

Problem is crazy-makers don't come to their position through reason, so you can't reason them out of it! It doesn't work. You can't talk people out of a behavior they didn't talk themselves into. They got into that behavior because of an emotion, not because of logic. It's motivated reason.

Motivated reasoning means I come up with a reason for doing something because I feel this way so I need a reason to do it. The motivation actually comes from the feeling, not from the reasoning.

I've discovered that people are either going to like you or they're not going to like you. If they don't like you, you can't make them like you. If they want to think a certain way, they're going to think that way.

And all the logic in the world isn't going to change their mind. In fact, if somebody has a motivated reasoning for something, then what's going to happen is when you show them how they're wrong, they just get mad at you. Show them the facts and they'll go, "You've got the facts wrong." Giving them the facts thinking that you are going to change them is futile. It just won't happen because it wasn't the facts that caused them to make that decision anyway. They were making the decision based on emotion. So you refuse to play their game. Don't get drawn into the argument! It only makes the whole thing worse.

Jesus gives us a great example of not falling into the trap of playing the games of the crazy-makers. The Pharisees were the religious authorities of those days and they hated Jesus. And they had motivated reasoning so they were always trying to trap Him. They were always trying to get Him to say the wrong thing, or to get Him to make a mistake. They were always questioning, always probing, always playing mind games with Jesus. But Jesus wouldn't play their games.

Matthew 22:15, 18-19 is a great example. "The Pharisees plotted a way to trap Jesus into saying something damaging...Jesus knew they were up to no good. He said, 'Why are you playing these games with me? Why are you trying to trap me?'" He would not be pulled into their crazy-making games. He wouldn't be drawn into an argument that He knew was going to go nowhere.

Another example is of Jesus before Pilate in the Gospel of John 18-19. Pilate starts asking Him all kinds of tricky questions, like "Are you the king of the Jews...What have you done...What is truth...Where do you come from...?" The Bible says that Jesus didn't argue with Pilate, and in fact He didn't even answer him on some of the questions. Why? Because Jesus was not going to play their games - He did not fall into the trap of the argument.

People are going to believe what they want to about you. If they want to believe bad things, they're going to look for bad things about you. If they want to believe good things, they're going to look for good things about you. Prejudice has its own reasoning, and because you can't reason with prejudice, you can't talk people out of prejudice from a logical sense because it's an emotionally-based decision. So save your breath! Don't play their games! Don't waste your time.

The Apostle Paul also learned not to get drawn into word games from the crazy-makers. He says in

2 Corinthians 4:2, “*We reject all shameful and underhanded methods. We do not try to trick anyone, and we do not distort the word of God. We tell the truth before God, and all who are honest know that.*” He calls it what it is – game playing – and he refuses to get drawn into it. And Jesus backs this up when He says, “*let your yes be yes and your no be no*” (Matthew 5:37).

Now the reason this is important is because crazy-makers use conflict to get your attention. Everyone has a deep need to be loved. We all have a deep need for approval. If you cannot get approval then you’ll get attention, either good or bad. You see this in teenager all the time. If they cannot get the approval of their parents then they’re going to get attention some way, through all kinds of bizarre behavior, bizarre dress or bizarre lifestyles. Somehow, they’re going to get attention either negative or positive just so you know they’re valuable.

When people try to get your attention through conflict, they’re trying to hook you into an argument to get your attention so that they become special, or have meaning for a little while. Proverbs 26:21 says, “*Just as charcoal and wood keep a fire going, a quarrelsome person keeps an argument going.*” The argument gives them meaning, proves their purpose, and gives them value. They find their attention in actually getting you upset.

But how many does it take to argue? Two, right? If one of the people walk away what happens to the argument? The fire goes out. If you don’t join in the argument, the fuel for that fire burns out and nothing is left. The trick is not to engage a quarrelsome person.

So if you are a business owner, large or small, you know how important harmony within the employees is. If there is disharmony among a staff or among employees, productivity is destroyed. Disharmony among the employees will destroy productivity faster than anything else. So if you are an employer, you need to fire quarrelsome people quickly. It’s like getting the bad apple out of the barrel quickly so that the rest of the barrel isn’t corrupted. And that’s because quarrelsome people are contagious. Troublemakers infect others and all of a sudden, one complaining becomes two complaining and then five, and then a mess happens. You need to fire the quarrelsome person quickly!

The Bible says this very clearly in Proverbs 22:10: “*Throw out the mocker, and you’ll be rid of tension,*

fighting and quarrels.” You want peace in your work environment? Get rid of the person who’s a troublemaker, the quarrelsome person, the crazy-maker who likes to argue.

Titus 3:10 helps us to see what to do when the crazy-maker begins to infect the church. It says that if there’s a troublemaker in a church you give them two warnings, then the pastor gets to put them out of the church. We graciously invite you to go visit some other church! You just dismiss them! They’ve had two warnings, but if they’re causing chaos and creating conflict, the Bible says we’re suppose to take them out. Don’t play the games.

5. The fifth step in dealing with crazy-makers is you REFUSE TO CAVE IN. This means that you do not give in to their demands, or do what they want. We refuse to cave in to their craziness! We do this so we do not allow them to manipulate our lives. Love is not allowing people to manipulate you. Manipulation is unloving to you, it’s unloving to God and it’s unloving to them. Love is not giving in to their manipulation.

Many Christians misunderstand this, so let me spend a moment to explain it. Many of us think that the Christian way to respond to irritating or crazy-making people in their life is just to let them have their way. Roll over and play dead; give in to what they want so they’ll leave us alone. There’s not one verse in the Bible that tells us to lie down and become a doormat. Yes, we are to forgive them, but trust is built on performance. You see forgiveness is instant and it is by grace, and all of us need to forgive each other for the sins we commit. But trust is by works and it takes time – it must be earned. Let me give you an example.

If a woman’s husband is an alcoholic and in a drunken rage ends up beating her. She kicks him out of the house, but he comes back that night and says, “Will you forgive me?” She has to forgive him, if she is a Christian. She has been forgiven so much by God and it is commanded that we forgive even as we have been forgiven. But then he says, “Would you let me back in the house?” NO! That’s a different matter. Forgiveness is instant – Trust is earned. Does that make sense?

Forgiveness does not mean when you hurt me I forgive you but I’m going to keep on letting you hurt me. Those are two different issues. We are not to cave into crazy-makers. So let me ask some questions: Let’s say you’re asked to violate your conscience at work, and you know it’s wrong. You feel pressured and manipulated into it. What are you going to do? Or, say you’re asked to work a schedule where you never get

to go to worship anymore? What are you going to do? Or you're talking with some friends and you hear a derogatory remark about another Christian. Do you keep your mouth shut? Do you speak up? Do you defend the fellow Christian? What do you do?

Romans 14:16 answers that: *"Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken evil of."* The Bible tells us to speak up, to confront the issue, and not to cave in. We are not to allow others to get away with murder in our lives.

But aren't we supposed to be meek? Yes we are, but meekness is not the equivalent of weakness. The word "meek" is a Green term that was a term used for training a wild stallion. Once that wild stallion is trained, broken, brought under control so that it can be ridden by the master, that stallion that was once wild is called meek. It is now a meek stallion. Has that stallion lost any of its strength? Absolutely not! That horse is still just as strong as it was when it was wild and unbroken. Meek does not mean weak. It means brought under control, bottled up for the Master's use. We are meek because we are under the Master's control, but that does not mean that we lose any of our strength to stand up to what is wrong. Meek means strength under control for the Master's use.

Paul wrote an entire book about not being pressured, manipulated and controlled by the expectations and the opinions of other people. It's the book of Galatians. He wrote it to challenge the people of the church there to stand up to the religious crazy-makers, the Judaizers, to keep from becoming slaves once more to the Law. The Pharisees were content with Paul's view on grace, but they added on all sorts of new restrictions and laws that loaded the people down with so many do's and don'ts that they were suffering and suffocating from the load of legalism. So Paul wrote to them challenging them to regain their freedom in Christ Jesus' grace alone. They were not to live under anyone else's plan for their lives. They were not to return to legalism again. So Paul tells them (Galatians 5:1), *"We have freedom now, because Christ made us free. So stand strong! Do not change and go back into the slavery of the law."* So, we, too, are to stand strong against the demands of the crazy-makers of our own lives and not cave in to their rules and regulations and restrictions. It's not biblical!

Jesus modeled it when He stood up to the Pharisees, too. When they were trying to restrict Jesus' actions and ministry, and Jesus taught against their practices. They were so upset that Jesus wasn't following

every little law of theirs that they told the disciples about it. And in [Matthew 15:12-14](#) we see the interchange between Jesus and the disciples. [“The disciples came to Jesus and asked, ‘Do you realize You offended the Pharisees by what You just said?’ Jesus replied, ‘Every plant not planted by My Father will be rooted up, so ignore them.’”](#) They were asking Jesus, the Son of God, to tone it down just a little bit so that the leaders of the Temple would not be offended. These were religious people here. But Jesus responds by telling the disciples to “Ignore them.” Did you get that?! Ignore those who try to bring you under religious bondage. Don’t allow them to do it. Stand strong against those who would pervert the Word of God for their own personal interests. Meek, yes! Weak, NO! You stay strong but under control of God, the Master.

Finally we get to our last step of dealing with the crazy-makers. It’s the hardest one. **6. When it comes to crazy-makers, [ALWAYS TAKE THE HIGH GROUND](#).** That means always doing the right thing for the right reasons. If they insult you, treat them with kindness. If they’re unloving to you, you be loving to them. If they are resentful to you, you be forgiving to them. If they’re mean to you, you be nice to them. You always take the high ground no matter what the crazy-makers do. Always, always, always take the high ground!

You cannot control what other people think about you. You cannot control what other people say about you. You cannot control what other people do about you. You have no control over those issues. But you do have one hundred percent control over how you respond. And that’s your choice. You can be better and respond with grace and love and kindness and that pleases God.

You will have people who say terrible things about you, or your work, or your beliefs, or even your church family. That’s their opinion. Let it go, but do not retaliate against them and do the exact same thing against them. You take the high ground. You treat them with respect, with dignity, and say only the good things about them (make sure they’re true, though). Don’t stoop to their level – stay on the high ground.

Let me share three verses from Romans 12 that addresses this issue. [Romans 12:14](#) says this: [“Ask God to bless those who persecute you – yes, ask Him to bless, not to curse.”](#) So to help you make sense of this better, cross out the word “persecute” and write in the words “makes you crazy.” Ask God to bless those who make you crazy, yes ask God to bless them, not curse them – all those who irritate you and make you crazy.

That’s real love, loving the ones that are the hardest to love. It’s not about loving only those who love

you in return. It's about showing love to those who make life miserable for you. Show them love, even when they seem unlovable, even if they are spitting in your face. Don't back down! Don't play their game! Don't fight fire with fire. You respond with love.

Romans 12:17-18 says, *"If someone has done you wrong, do not repay him with a wrong. Try to do what everyone considers to be good. Do everything possible on your part to live in peace with everybody."*

You repay the evil with good. Let them see what genuine love really looks like.

Lastly, Romans 12:21 tells us *"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."* What if there is somebody in your life who's demeaning, destructive, discontented, demanding, disapproving? What if you refuse to be offended and you don't wait for an apology, but just go ahead and forgive them the moment they hurt you? What happens when you make agreement that you're just going to forgive them and not gossip about them, that you not going to talk about them with other people? What happens when you refuse to play their game and you refuse to cave in to them? What happens when you take the high ground and return love, no matter what they throw at you? What happens when you do that? You get the smile of God on your life.

Proverbs 16:7 says, *"When a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord, He makes even his enemies live at peace with him."* That's my hope for you right now, today. Let's pray:

Father, You know the crazy-makers in my life. You know who they are, so I'm asking that even when they mean to hurt me, that You'll use it for good in my life. I want to learn to respond to them the way Jesus does. I want to be mature, both spiritually and emotionally, so help me follow these steps this week. When people do things that offend me, Lord, help me not take it personally. Help me to have a tender heart and a thick skin and just not get offended by what they say, or the way they look, or what they do to me. Help me to look past the offensive behavior to see the fear or the hurt or the pain or the insecurity that's causing it. Give me wisdom in my relationships so that right now, I can forgive that crazy-maker in my life. I forgive them right now, Lord. And I ask You to help me not to retaliate with gossip. Give me the strength to stand strong where I need to stand strong, and to not let other people manipulate me. Father, I'm tired of playing their games, and I'm tired of caving in. Help me, Holy Spirit, to not allow what I know is good to be talked about poorly. Give me the courage to speak up and to stand up for what's right for other believers. And in all my responses Lord, help me to take the high ground, to show love, to return good for evil. Lord, there's no way I can do this on my own. Jesus, I need you in my life. I need your power to do this. I ask You to come into every area of my life and control every part of me this week, for it is in Your precious name that I pray. Amen.