

Salt and Light

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Vividly, I remember my grandmother sharing stories about Uncle Henry. She would laugh, as she would tell me how Uncle Henry invited himself for a three-week visit, and he ended up staying for three years. That was just the start of it; Uncle Henry was "one of *those* people." He was an expert at everything, and he was not shy to let you know you were doing things wrong. He was the first to complain when things did not go his way, and the last to help in situations. Looking back, I admire how my dear grandmother was able to not take Uncle Henry or the situation too seriously but rather was able to be kind and loving toward him.

Unfortunately, we have all met "Uncle Henrys", whether it is in our family, church, or work place. Uncle Henrys are difficult to be around, as they usually cannot read social cues and are unaware of how they come across to others. They tend to trample across boundaries, stomp on feelings, and take advantage of others.

Let's be honest, our natural tendency is to point the finger and find someone to sympathize with us, and someone to agree with us on how difficult Uncle Henry is. So how do we deal with difficult people? How does The Lord want us to respond?

When dealing with Uncle Henrys, we need to remember that we were all made in God's image, and we are all God's children. Although, we all have our weaknesses, we are *all* equal in His sight.

We can stand shoulder to shoulder with The Lord Almighty; look at ourselves in the mirror with Him at our side to see what He sees. Asking Him, is there anything I do or have done to contribute to this, am I missing something? What are my weaknesses? Is my behavior toward Uncle Henry above reproach, and am I an Uncle Henry to anyone? What is He trying to teach me through this?

We are called to pray, and seek The Lord's wisdom on how to treat the Uncle Henrys in our lives. Regardless of an Uncle Henry's attitude or behavior, we will be held accountable for how we acted. We are called to respond in love to difficult people, and the only way we can respond in love is through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Additionally, it is beneficial to ask, is there something I can do to help? Sometimes the Uncle Henrys need to be listened to and encouraged because they may not be encouraged by anyone else. Once we get to know the person better, some of the tension may dissolve.

Not to confuse the issue, but sometimes the most loving act we can do is to set limits with an "Uncle Henry" and to lovingly call them on their behavior.

All in all, look to the scriptures for answers because the scriptures are full of wisdom on how to interact with people. God calls us to be “salt of the earth” (Matthew 5:13) and “light of the world” (Matthew 5:14) even to the Uncle Henrys.

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