



Devotional Study Guide Journal

May 8th

Stepping on Toes¹

Throughout my life over my nearly 72 years, I have learned valuable lessons from others that have become part of the core of my existence; so much so, that I have passed on these truths to our children. This is one of those lessons. I hope it is a blessing to you.

A friend of mine was eager to buy a house. They had been looking for quite some time but hadn't been able to find one. I discovered that another friend of mine was going to sell her house and that she was thinking about selling it to my other friend.

I was so excited for my friend to find a home that I shared my other friend's information with her. She, of course, contacted my friend who was selling a house to see if it might be true. Trust me, I now know the error of my ways, but then it seemed quite innocent to me. I was excited for both of my friends and thought I was encouraging them both serving as a sort of broker between the two.

Then I got a call from the friend who was selling. She was furious, not just upset or bothered, but raging furious that I had shared this good news with my friend. She wasn't approaching as a friend who was upset with a friend about what she *did*. She began to accuse me of awful character flaws and calling me nasty names. She was out for blood.

Her attitude in the matter was very shocking. I let her know that I was only trying to help and didn't mean to hurt anyone. But she wanted her pound of flesh. It felt as if she wanted me to admit that I was the evil person she was accusing me to be, and I wasn't about to admit to things about myself that were not true. To my credit, at least I refrained from returning the insults. We were on the phone for too long and my head began to ache and throb. I finally told her I had an awful headache and needed to go. She finished the call with more accusation.

With my head ready to pop, I sat and cried not knowing what to do. I loved my friend and was devastated because she had such a low opinion of me. I honestly hadn't meant to hurt her, but she had approached me with

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such vitriol, I felt I needed to defend myself. There seemed no way out and my head was screaming with pain.

Then it came to me to call a brother in the church who believed in divine healing and ask him to pray for me. He was happy to do this, but asked me why I was so upset, and I shared with him while still sobbing with tears. What he said changed the course of my life.

“When you step on someone’s toes,
even accidentally,
you still hurt their toes.
Just say you are sorry.”

I wanted to go on defending myself. I wanted him to acknowledge that she had hurt me with her words, but he focused on the only thing I could do. Apologize. He was right. I saw it instantly. I didn’t mean to hurt or defend, but I had stepped on her toes. The next step would be to tell her I was sorry. I was sorry. I never meant to hurt anyone. My headache instantly disappeared. He prayed for me, and after we hung up, I called my friend with aching toes.

I already knew in my heart this was not a time to address how mean she had been to me. It wasn’t time to express the depth of the pain she had just caused me. It was only about what I had done. Even though I did it without all the ulterior motives she presumed, I had done it. I stepped on her toes.

I called her back and sincerely apologized for sharing her good news with my friend. She instantly calmed down, and I made sure the phone call ended as soon as it seemed appropriate.

Proverbs 15:1

*A soft answer turns away wrath,
But a harsh word stirs up anger.*

So many times since then, I have stepped on toes unintentionally and the whole drama ended before it began when I simply apologized. In addition to that, my toes have also been stepped on. So, from that experience with my offended friend, I also learned to be more gracious to those who offend me. So, when my toes get crunched, I am not shy to say, “Ouch. You stepped on my toes. That hurt,” but I refrain from accusations and extend grace and forgiveness. I give them the benefit of the doubt that it wasn’t intentional, even though it might have been, and even if they don’t apologize for what they did.

You can't make people sorry for what they do, but you can chose to forgive them and extend grace.

Proverbs 26:20

Where there is no wood, the fire goes out;

And where there is no talebearer, strife ceases.