

Are You "High Maintenance"? Hebrews 12:12-13

Support from brethren in times of spiritual crisis is a wonderful blessing

Romans 15:1 *We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves.*

Galatians 6:1 *Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.*

Galatians 6:2 *Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*

At the same time, we have a responsibility to become strong...

Galatians 6:4-5 *But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. For each will have to bear his own load.*

Romans 14:12 *So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.*

Hebrews 12:12-13 *Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed.*

Some never seem to progress from being supported to supporting self...

They remain very dependent upon their brethren

Unless constantly nurtured by brethren, fall away or become apathetic

Such brethren are what might be described as "high maintenance"

What Is High Maintenance?

It refers to the need for a lot of attention to maintain something in good order. Requiring a lot of time, energy, or money

Any person or thing that requires a lot of attention – Cars that require a lot of work, Employees that require close supervision, Sweethearts that require a lot of gifts or dates

Christians are "high maintenance," if they require a lot of attention in order to remain faithful, or a lot of coddling or pampering to be active

Christians that are "high maintenance"

Babes in Christ just staring their new spiritual life

Slothful Christians who attend and work only when constantly prodded

Even churches can be "high maintenance" (or not)

1Corinthians 3:1-4 *But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not being merely human?*

2Corinthians 12:20-21 *For I fear that perhaps when I come I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish--that perhaps there may be quarreling, jealousy, anger, hostility, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder. I fear that when I come again my God may humble me before you, and I may have to mourn over many of those who sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality that they have practiced.*

Philippians 1:3-7 *I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel.*

Some "high maintenance" is good and necessary in the work of the local church. But if it exists where it should not, there are some problems

Difficulty of High Maintenance

"High maintenance" is crucial for the newborn Christian

Just as it is for a physical baby

Weak in faith, weak in knowledge, they are very susceptible

Without the proper attention, they may soon be overcome

"High maintenance" is essential for the hurting Christian

Just as it is for someone who is sick or injured

Overtaken in a fault, suffering physical illness or persecution, weak

Without their proper attention, they may soon be overwhelmed

In such cases, "high maintenance" is certainly called for

1Thessalonians 5:14 *And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.*

It can hinder the growth of the church

Which grows through evangelism, edification, benevolence

Which may not if undue effort is spent on a select few

It can hold back the efforts of workers

Paul desired to preach where Christ was not named

Romans 15:20 *and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation,*

Yet churches like the one at Corinth held him back

It can cause more serious needs to go unmet

Babes in Christ not being helped, because others expect coddling

The sick and dying being neglected, because others require attention

Defeating High Maintenance

Individual Growth

We need "high maintenance" when we are babes in Christ

But we should reach a point where we do not need it

Where we can become the providers, not just the recipients

Hebrews 5:12-14 *For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.*

Individual Strength

Strength from brethren is certainly helpful when we need it

But we should also reach a point where our strength comes from God

Where we can become the producers, not just the consumers

Philippians 4:11-13 *Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.*

2Corinthians 1:3-6 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer.*

Are You Unnecessarily High Maintenance?

There is some need for High Maintenance

Galatians 6:2 *Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*

Romans 15:1 *We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves.*

Galatians 6:4-5 *But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. For each will have to bear his own load.*

When a burden becomes unbearable, that is when we need "high maintenance" from our brethren.

When failure to bear our own load requires "high maintenance", that is when we hinder the cause of Christ...!

*"Whoever is slack in his work is a brother to him who destroys." **Proverbs 18:9***