

Grumpy Ron

Scripture Reading — 1 Peter 3:8-9

All of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil. . . . — 1 Peter 3:8-9

My friend Ron faithfully attended our small church, but he didn't like our worship services much. Maybe it was that we met in a rented building. It didn't feel like, you know, a *church*. Maybe it was our style—just acoustic guitar and a sermon. And maybe my sermons weren't so great. If that was the case, he was too kind to say.

All I know is that sometimes Ron came to our gatherings looking a bit ruffled, passive, and a little grumpy. And he didn't always agree with our programming, like when we hosted a 5K fund-raising run for an AIDS clinic. Also, Ron didn't like fellow member Dick the navy guy very much. He didn't hate him, but there was a bit of a personality clash.

My point is that church can sometimes be challenging. This is another sign of sanctification: giving up control. "Value others above yourselves" (Philippians 2:3). "Bear with each other and forgive one another" (Colos-sians 3:13). These are big themes in the Bible.

Every pastor I know can tell stories about church members who are controlling, bitter, bent on misery—and who make everyone else miserable too. Please don't be such a person.

It says a lot about Ron's faith that he stayed with us. He served and put up with us, even if at times he was a bit grumpy. The Spirit was at work in him. Is the Spirit working in you?

Prayer

Lord, sometimes I feel grumpy. I need your help today to put a smile on my face and warmth in my heart. In Jesus, Amen.

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