



TRY NOT TO MAKE ENEMIES

Several years ago I read a book entitled *The World's Greatest Salesman*. The author sold more automobiles than anyone else in the world. In the book he said something to the effect that one should be careful not to make enemies. He went on to explain that every person has approximately 200 people that he or she can influence. He got that number by getting an average of the number of people who attend one's wedding and funeral and concluded that, if someone thought enough of you to attend your wedding or funeral, he was close enough to be influenced by you.

The author explained that, when you make an enemy, you usually make enemies out of 200 other individuals over whom he has influence. If someone doesn't like you, then every time your name comes up around his friends, he is likely to say something negative about you. And since his friends do not know you, the only impression they have of you is what they get from their friend. So until they learn better, which they very seldom ever do, they keep the negative impression received from their friend.

A person in a small town who makes several enemies may soon discover that very few people in town like him. Of course, the op-

posite is also true. If you leave a positive impression with an individual, then he has 200 friends who are likely to get a positive impression of you, because every time your name comes up among his friends, he will say, “Oh, yes, I know him. He’s a good man.”

I’m not suggesting that you can go through life without making enemies. Moving parts always create friction. And the man who has no enemies is one who says nothing, does nothing and is nothing. But what I am suggesting is that we try our best not to make enemies. Romans 12:18 says, “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.” The Scripture says, “If it be possible.” In other words, sometimes it’s not possible. But be sure you’ve done everything you possibly can to live at peace with all men—in the words of the Scripture, “. . . as much as lieth in you. . . .” If you’re not at peace with an individual, make sure it’s not because you haven’t exhausted every effort and avenue to do so.

The next time you’re tempted to make some sharp remark to an individual, thinking he doesn’t matter anyway, remember that he probably has 200 people whom he can influence. When you leave him, make sure that he’ll go away to tell his friends good things about you and not bad things.