

**10 August 2014**

**7 Habits for Christians - 6**

### **“Habit 4: Think Win/Win”**

OK, now we're ready to move on to public victories. The private victories are all about self-discipline. The public victories are about being effective with other people. And the first of them, Habit #4, is Think Win/Win. Win/Win is a mindset that sees a truly good life as cooperative rather than competitive. Win/Win is a matter of the heart, and the emotional bank account is of the essence.

But first, let's think about some times when win/win is not appropriate. Baseball games. If you're playing a baseball game, the object is to win, and that means the other team loses. I'm a competitive guy. I like winning. At the end of an Orioles fantasy camp day, if we had lost, I was sore and tired. And if we had won, I wasn't so tired or sore. The great thing about those kinds of competition is that they don't matter; they're just games. If you play one professionally, you've got to get your competitive juices flowing. But I have noticed that professional ballplayers mostly let it go at the end of the day.

There are some other times when W/in/Win is either not appropriate, not worth it, or not attainable. If you value the relationship, and the issue really isn't all that important to you, you might go for Lose/Win: I lose, you win; that's OK because this issue is much more important to you than it is to me. If you're dealing with your child, Win/Win is much more effective parenting in the long run. But there are times—say when your child is in danger—when I win, you lose is the right way to go.

There are times when getting to Win/Win is pretty difficult because the person you're dealing with just doesn't get what life is about and hasn't attained emotional maturity. They might be Lose/Lose people, people who, if they don't get what they want will work very hard to make sure you don't either. Sad. Many people have a Win/I don't care (I don't care about you as long as I get what I want) or a Win/Lose attitude. You've probably been somewhat scripted in a Win/I don't care or a win/Lose mentality. Most people have, because most of us have been scripted into a scarcity mentality. People with a scarcity mentality have a hard time sharing, credit, recognition, or power. It's difficult for them to be genuinely happy for the success of others. It's almost as if something is being taken from them when someone else receives special recognition. Their sense of worth comes from being compared with others. They see life as a competition.

It takes a great deal of inner strength to deal with those people. That's why you can't parachute into this territory but have to be pretty solid in the first three habits to make this one work.

Here's where your theology comes in and here's what makes this a truly Christian habit. Win/Win is not all about being nice or generous, though it is partly about that. But Win/Win is about so much more. Win/Win comes from an abundance mentality. And therefore it is a stewardship matter. In addition to being scripted in Win/Lose or Win/I don't care, most of us have been scripted into a scarcity mentality. In the scarcity mentality the more somebody else

gets, the less there is for me. If there are five pieces of peach pie left and there are six of us, well, you get the idea. I scripted my children in the scarcity mentality when it comes to ice cream. I called it the three day rule. After three days it was fair game, so get while the getting is good.

The opposite of the scarcity mentality is the abundance mentality. I scripted my children in that, too. They know full well that love shown to one does not leave less for the others. It's just the opposite. Love shown to one leads to more love being available for the others.

The New Testament knows tries to script us into an abundance mentality, proclaiming that with God there is always enough. Even though many Christians were poor, the New Testament knows only abundance. "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?. Why, he's even numbered the hairs of your head!" (Must have been speaking to a young crowd.)

A deep, abiding faith in God's goodness leads to an abundance mentality and to the fruit of the Spirit known as generosity. And that is the basis for a Win/Win mentality. And that should be our mindset when it comes to any relationship that is important to us whether it be family, friend, church, or business.

If I were to ask you "Who's wining in your marriage?" you would immediately recognize that as a foolish and totally wrongheaded question. If one of you is winning over the other, both of you are losing. Who's wining in this business relationship? Who's wining in this church fight are equally wrong-headed questions. If one of you is winning over the other, both are going to lose eventually.

Win/Win is not a personality technique. It comes from integrity; it comes from character and maturity; and it comes from faith in God. Who's wining in your relationship with God? You both are.