

Into Thy Word Ministries Bible Study www.intothyword.org

General Idea: When God tells us that love is not rude, He means that we must treat others with the respect and dignity that we would like in return. We are not to lack concentration to courtesy for people and property. We are to strive to have good manners and model distinction toward and admiration for others. We are to treat our friends, and especially our spouse, with the utmost dignity and respect. Because God loves us, He sent His Son to cover and protect us from His wrath. Therefore, when we make everyday mistakes—or even the big mistakes—lightning bolts do not zap us. Because Christ loves us, we are not consumed by God’s wrath, as we deserve. So, in return, we should not go around with pride or commencing judgment, zapping others with evil looks, spitefulness, or condescending comments, thinking that we are “high and mighty” and better than everyone else. Never think of yourself as the capstone or the most important piece of the puzzle, because you are not. We should be grateful that God chooses to use us. Our goal is to worship Christ with passion and distinction. In so doing, we are to work together and not be little dictators, especially in our relationships. Love cannot be in the same room with pride or apathy.

Authentic Love is polite and does not force itself!

Contexts and Background:

This passage challenges its original hearers (and us) who questioned the people who hosted these home church fellowships and were also culturally rude to them. The arguments centered on whether food offered to pagan gods could be consumed. This was taking center point and causing arguments and strife, when the Gospel is meant to bring people to Christ and create healthy relationships. Thus, if one is rude, that means the evidence of faith and fruit is absent and that person is not following the principles of the Gospel. Why is this so important? Because, as Christians, how we treat people reflects on our Lord. We are His ambassadors and we represent Christ. He was never rude, except to point out hypocrisy in leaders (Matt. 23; 2 Cor. 5:20).

Commentary—Word and Phrase Meanings:

- *Love is/Charity.* Real love comes from a life that has been transformed. It comes from above, by Christ’s undeserving love working in us so that we repackage and re-gift it to others. And also because we have been renewed and regenerated by what Christ has done for us! We can’t love others in or for the faith by demanding or manipulating our self coincided ideas of love or faith, or seeking some spiritual magic or some kind of special word of knowledge. Rather, real love comes in knowing Christ as our LORD and obeying Him with our trust, infusing our faith. When it is real, we will realize Who Jesus is and what He has done for us. We will see that we have taken a hold of His love, indicated by how we sincerely respond in gratitude, trust, and obedience back to Him so it affects our temperament and plans. This is the love that is never rude or badly behaved (Mark 12:28-31; John 3:16, Matt. 22:34-40; John 3:16; 13:1, 34-35; 14:1; 15:9; Rom. 1:31; 5:10; 12:10; 1 Cor. 13; Eph. 2:4-7; Phil. 2:2; Col. 1:1-6; 3:12-14; 1 Thess. 1:3; 2:8; 3:6; 12; 4:9-10; 5:8; 13; 2 Tim. 3:3; Heb. 10:24; 1 John 4:7-12).
- *Not rude/not act unbecomingly doesn’t force itself on others/unmannerly/behave itself unseemly/behave rudely/not act unseemly/improperly/does not do things that are not nice/dishonor others.* Means to behave unseemly or being dishonorable as contradicting one’s word and character, and as Christians, our faith and call according to the precepts of Scripture. This means we treat someone with cruelty, spitefulness, meanness, or holding grudges, when Christ treated us with grace that we did not deserve. This can include seeking to harm someone, being malicious, spiteful, and of course, rude. Or, this can be just ignoring people we do not like.

God created us for relationships, we to Him and we to others, and when we ignore this vital application of love, we fail in the most important aspect in life besides our relationship in Christ. Being rude is thoughtless and selfish, and demonstrates a lack of consideration as well as impoliteness. This is shown when we promote our will, schedules, and desires over others to the point of causing us to be offensive, callused, and unconcerned. We will fail to see people as important—as our Lord has called. We will also fail to put love into action, because real love has good manners (1 Cor. 7:36; 11:2-22; 14:26-33; Phil. 2:1-5)!

- Kindness is the opposite to being rude. We are called to treat others with honor and respect, which means being polite and courteous to people, to authorities, to church leaders, to family, and even to people we do not like whom God has placed in our lives. If you are a person who likes to be impolite and/or having a “me first” attitude, you are devaluing God’s call and work in you, and you are dishonoring your friends, family, neighbors, acquaintances, coworkers, church members, and your spouse, because we are supposed to be kind. This means we are to bring out the best in others with good character and respect. (Ex. 20:12; Deut. 6:4-5; 1 Sam. 2:30; Psalm 119:9; 148:12-13; Prov. 1:8-9; 4:1-11; Mark 12:29-30; Rom. 13:1-10; 1 Cor. 12:21-26; Gal. 6:10; Eph. 6:1-3; Phil. 2: 3-4; 14; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; 1 Tim. 6:1-2; 1 Pet. 2:17).
- Being a rude and offensive person will leave others hurt and confused. We are called as Christians to encourage others, so we can lift up, support, and help them through difficult circumstances. To do this, it helps to see others from God's perspective, and we do this by knowing His Word. Being in Christ means treating others well; we do this when we live our lives for Him with excitement and gratitude. This positive influence is what encourages others to know who Christ is and what He has done (Psalm 119:28; 143:3; Matt. 3:17; John 14:1; Col. 4:7-8; 1 Thess. 5:11-14; Heb. 10:25).
- How do you know if you are being rude? Besides what has been said, are you withdrawn and disheartened so you treat others by how you feel? Or, do you like to bring down and dampen the spirits of other people? Do you like to make puns at the expense of others? Do you like to criticize or cut people down instead of encouraging them? What about in your family or in your church? Do you spend any time tearing someone else down? It is our human nature to be lazy and rude; we like to stay away from others' feelings and concerns, seeking only our own. Christ calls us to inspire and build one another up. In so doing, we are not to be critical, condescending, or argumentative to others, for this is a misrepresentation of Christianity. We cannot stimulate, invigorate, or influence people by our rudeness or arrogance (Phil. 1:26-30; Col. 3:13-17; 1 Pet. 3:7-12)!
- Another contrast to being rude is being polite. This helps us take the load and focus off ourselves, so we can see the needs around us. This is a form of love because it is being kind as we seek to uplift and do good whenever possible. Politeness and thoughtfulness will stimulate and generate love, as we refuse to allow schedules and/or personal priorities to take precedence over people.
- When we worship Christ with passion and distinction, our worship and honor to Him is increased. This helps us to have good manners so we can strive to model value and admiration for others.

Devotional Thoughts and Applications:

The evidence of faith is demonstrated by how you lead your life--how you treat people. Christianity and our churches are demonstrated by our actions, which come from our thinking and faith development. The Church either is hindered or grows by how we treat one another. Christ is glorified by how we incorporate His principles into our lives. If you really are a follower of Christ, it will be proven by the way you lead your life. If you are a person who is rude, then proof exists that in you, there is no impact of faith as there might be; you can be saved and be a rotten person, but the proof

comes from your attitude and actions. The outer example, the clothing of your faith is not on as in “the emperor has no clothes.” This comes from our willingness and ability to know Christ and let His love and fruit flow in and out of us.

Rudeness contradicts encouragement; kindness is prime evidence of the importance of the Gospel’s influence. This is what makes our families, churches, and even businesses an attractive option, with good character that models Christ. Rudeness is forgotten when we are being excited about our Lord; rudeness is not seen when we are being joyful. We must be aware of our weaknesses and what “pushes our buttons” so we can complement and encourage one another instead of doing harm. The magnetism that will draw people to a church or a repeat customer to a business is the ability of the members to be kind. This is what helps tip the scales so a person wants to become a Christian. Our part in evangelism is the overflowing love of our Lord displayed in us. Kindness displays Christ and makes people feel welcome so they will come back to our church. If you want real church growth, then be kind to the people you already have as well as other people who come to worship. This will also help you mobilize and energize.

God hates it when we are rude! Why? Because it hurts Him and His children and it will hurt you back! He calls us to encourage people! So be the person who tells others what you like about them, or when they are doing something well. This builds unity and strength that otherwise cannot exist with self-centered and bad-mannered Christians. To live a life that does not touch others positively is a very sad life indeed. To be rude as a church is a good way to close your church and keep Christ away from your community!

The Essential Inductive Questions (for more Inductive questions see Inductive Bible Study):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

Read these two passages again in different translations (1 Corinthians 13:1-8; 1 John 4: 7-12)

1. Discuss your thoughts on this aspect of love.
2. Give a positive example.
3. Give a negative example.
4. How is this type of love working in you?
5. Why is this love not working in you?
6. What blocks this love from being exhibited in you?
7. What would it take to get this love working in you?
8. What are you willing to do about it?

Additional Questions:

1. How would you define being rude? How do you feel and respond when someone is rude toward you?
2. Why does real love not force itself? Do you think younger people do not strive to have good manners as previous generations did? Why or why not?
3. What happens when you treat others with the respect and dignity that you would like in return? What happens when you treat someone rudely? What about if they deserved it?
4. What does it mean to you to be polite? What about when you are stressed?
5. How and why does the way we treat people as Christians reflect on our Lord? Do you think that if someone is rude, it may mean that the evidences of faith and fruit are absent?
6. What do you think can be done to convince such a person that they are not following the principles of the Gospel? Why is this so important?
7. How does it make you feel that when Jesus deals with you, He treats you with respect and dignity even though you do not deserve it? How does this keep you from being rude to Him and to others around you?
8. What are some things that cause us to ignore and be **rude** to others? Is it because we are so hurried and stressed in the moments of life?
9. What can you do to be more lined up with God's call of love?
10. How do you treat your friends and especially your spouse when you are stressed or hurt? How can you do a better job at honoring those close to you with more dignity and respect? How would this improve your relationships? What are you going to do about it?