

Lesson Thirteen: What Does the Bible Teach About Courtesy?

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from multiple sources)

Introduction:

A. Luke 17:11-19

1. "Nothing is ever lost by courtesy. It is the cheapest of the pleasures; it costs nothing and conveys much. It pleases him who gives and him who receives, and thus, like mercy, it is twice blessed" (Erastus Wiman)

B. Why is courtesy important?

1. Success in this world is based on how well we relate to everything around us.
2. Seeing ourselves as separate from the whole leads us to judge, condemn, criticize, and compete. Most of the population is living in their own self-created bubble. Living in the bubble, they act with complete disregard of the people around them.
3. When we are calm, our interactions with others are more meaningful, because we are actively listening and giving honest responses.

I. PEOPLE SEEM TO BE INCREASING IN RUDENESS

A. It seems that common courtesy has become increasingly uncommon.

1. Rudeness is glorified in the news and entertainment media; Some think the only way to get attention or a laugh is to be crude.
2. Disrespect characterizes much of the behavior in social media. There is no way to filter or correct it.
3. Our current culture has abandoned courtesy in favor of violent protests speech and behavior, foolishly believing it is the only way to be heard.
4. While the means by which courtesy is expressed changes over time, it seems that many pursue impoliteness simply because they can.

II. DISRESPECT IS NOT JUST A CONTEMPORARY PROBLEM

A. During the fall of Israel, Jeremiah lamented that the people are disrespectful to the elderly - Lam. 5:12; Rom. 1:30; 2Tim. 3:3-4

B. Christians need to be seen in contrast to the world

1. Phil. 2:15; John 15:19; Eph. 5:8-11

III. A CHRISTIAN OWES RESPECT AND HONOR

A. Rom. 13:7 - Meanings:

1. Tribute - personal or property taxes for living within a country
2. Custom - tolls and fees
3. Fear - to hold in awe, to give respect

- 4. Honor - to esteem or hold in honor, to prize
- B. We have a duty to not only pay our taxes, but to give the proper respect and honor to all humankind - 1Peter 2:17
- C. Respect for employers - Eph. 6:5; 1Peter 2:18
- D. Respect for parents - Eph. 6:2
- E. There are three levels of obedience
 - 1. Disobedient - Not doing what one is told
 - 2. Obedient without honor - Doing, but grudgingly because one has to
 - 3. Obedient with honor - Doing it willingly and without grumbling
- F. Respect for the elderly - Lev. 19:32

IV. TACTFUL IS THE OPPOSITE OF INSULTING

- A. Col. 4:6 - Speech well-seasoned, with grace
- B. Eph. 4:29 - No corrupt talk, but what will improve others
- C. Ecc. 10:12 - The words of the wise are gracious
- D. Prov. 16:21-24 - Consider the sweetness of your words.
- E. At times hard things must be said, but they must be said well with the intent to be accepted. Say it as you would want to hear it.

V. SHOW RESPECT IN DRESS

- A. Matt. 22:11; John 21:7 - What he had was fine for his work with other fishermen, but it was inappropriate to speak to the Lord in that state.
- B. Modesty shows respect toward others - 1Tim. 2:9-10

VI. SHOW RESPECT IN GREETINGS

- A. Disciples taught to give greetings when entering a home - Luke 10:5
- B. Hosts are shown to give greetings when a guest arrives - Luke 10:38
- C. Our relationships are affirmed by affectionate welcomes.
 - 1. Rom. 16:16; Phil. 4:21; 1Peter 5:14
- D. Simon the Pharisee's lack of courtesies told much about his character.
 - 1. Luke 7:36-47

VII. SHOW RESPECT WHEN LISTENING

- A. Jesus listened to the teachers of the law - Luke 2:46
- B. There are lots of distractions in the world that keeps a person from truly listening to other people - Luke 10:39-42
 - 1. Music, text messages, social networks, games – all competing for attention. Many can't set them aside to converse with the person in front of them.
 - 2. Swift to hear - James 1:19

VIII. SHOW RESPECT IN TREATMENT OF OTHERS

- A. Luke 6:31; Phil. 2:3-4
- B. This is why we give up our seat for the elderly or those with children or burdens. Why a husband gives his wife his jacket when she is cold. Giving a hand to help someone with a load
 - 1. Not putting ourselves first - Luke 14:8-11

IX. SHOW RESPECT WITH HOSPITALITY

- A. Luke 14:12-14 - Hospitality is a love of strangers; love shown for people you do not yet know.
- B. True hospitality doesn't find reasons to complain - 1Peter 4:9

X. SHOW RESPECT BY CONTENTMENT

- A. Eat what is presented without complaint - Luke 10:7-8; 1Cor. 10:27
- B. Be content in every situation - Phil. 4:11-12
- C. Complaining is a discourtesy - 1Cor. 10:10
- D. Complaining dims our light - Phil. 2:14-16

XI. SHOW RESPECT WITH GRATITUDE

- A. Luke 17:15-16
- B. A sign of the decaying days is unthankful people - 2Tim. 3:2
 - 1. It is simple courtesy to thank those who have done you favors
 - 2. The world may be rude, but be shining lights and mind your manners.
 - 3. "He who sows courtesy reaps friendship, and he who plants kindness gathers love." (Basil)
 - 4. "There is a courtesy of the heart; it is allied to love. From it springs the purest courtesy in the outward behavior." (Goethe)