

Love is Not Rude

1 Corinthians 13:5

It is not rude,

The word “rude” in original Greek is “aschemoneo.” It means to behave indecently, disgracefully, improperly. ” Positively speaking, “not being rude” means “being polite.” Politeness is defined in the dictionary as "having good manners, being considerate of others, being courteous." The idea of “love is not rude” is to be tactful or to have a proper attitude in our relationship with others.

“Rude” is a culture-sensitive term. What it means to be “rude” may differ according to cultures. However, at the heart of rudeness, regardless of culture, is a thoughtless disregard for the feelings and sensibilities of others or a disrespect of other people’s dignity and rights.

We become rude when we are inconsiderate of other people’s feelings. We become rude when we just plunge right ahead with whatever we want to do without respecting other people’s feelings and private rights. We become rude when we are critical of other people’s mistakes or sins. We become rude when we humiliate or embarrass others with our insensitive words or harsh words. We become rude when we are ungrateful to other people’s kindness and favor. We become rude when we offend others and don’t properly apologize for our offenses.

So not to be rude, we must be thoughtful of other people’s feelings, be respectful of other people’s way of life, be graceful and gentle to other people’s mistakes and faults, be thankful for other people’s kindness, be apologetic for our offenses.

Be Apologetic and Thankful

To not be rude we must be apologetic. Other people feel and think that you are rude if you do not properly and sincerely apologize to them for your offenses. To not be rude, you must always be ready to apologize to

others for your offenses against them. Because we are all imperfect and sinful, we cannot avoid offending each other from time to time. If you sincerely acknowledge your sins before God and repent of your sins, and receive his merciful forgiveness, you can humbly and honestly apologize to the people against whom you have sinned and offended. Don't put off saying to the people around you, "I have sinned against you, I have offended you, I apologize for what I have done." Then you can reconnect and maintain a loving relationship with them.

To not be rude, we must be thankful to others for their kindness or favor. When we don't express our appreciation or thankfulness to other people's kindness, love and favor, they feel that we are rude.

There was a man who stopped to hold the door open for the woman coming behind him. But instead of expressing appreciation, she was irate. She said, "You don't have to hold the door open for me just because I'm a woman." He answered, "I didn't hold the door open because you're a woman. I held the door open because I'm a gentleman."

Always express a word of appreciation and thankfulness when you receive help, favors and kindness from others even if it is small. Never take anything- help, a favor or kindness of other people- for granted. Be appreciative always.

Be Thoughtful

"Love is not rude" is love that is thoughtful and considerate in words and deeds out of concern for others. Other people feel your love when you treat them thoughtfully and considerately.

It is thoughtful not to disgrace, mistreat, or embarrass others, even though it may be necessary to deal with some hard issues. It chooses words thoughtfully and carefully- what to say, how to say it, when to say it. It chooses treatment carefully-what to do, how to do it, when to do it.

If you are considerate and thoughtful of another person, you don't expose the person's weaknesses or sins. Jesus set a good example in this matter. During his earthly ministry, he never humiliated anyone by exposing his or her weaknesses or hidden sins. Instead he gently and patiently waited for sinners to be convicted by the Holy Spirit. For example, He gently and mercifully offered a way of forgiveness and a way of starting a new life to the woman whom people accused of adultery publically (John 8:3-11).

Although Peter made serious mistakes and sinned against him, Jesus forgave him and restored him from failures. Peter, who truly experienced such a love through Jesus' thoughtfulness, loved others the same way and encouraged all believers to be thoughtful and considerate toward each other: *Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins* (1 Peter 4:8).

There are times when we must deal with other peoples' sins. When we deal with other peoples' sins, we must exercise thoughtful love. Galatians 6:1 says, "*Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently....*" If we treat people gently, they will listen to us even if we confront them with their sins.

When we are thoughtful of others we will consider the time and situation with which they may feel convenient and comfortable.

Even if we approach others with good intention, if we do not consider the right time and the right situation of others, they may feel that we are rude. Proverbs 27:14 says, "*If a man loudly blesses his neighbor early in the morning, it will be taken as a curse.*"

We should be thoughtful to avoid what would offend or disturb someone. We need to be tactful in treating others. Tactfulness is the lubrication of relationships. It reduces friction between people. Tact is the ability to

know what to say, how to say it, when to say it. Proverbs reminds us, “*A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver*” (Proverbs 25:11).

Tact is the ability to discern what to do, how to do it and when to do it.

In a church when a new minister came, a lady wanted to show her love to the minister’s family. She baked a pie and brought it to the minister’s home. But the fact was she was not a good cook. The pie was just inedible and so, reluctantly, the pastor’s wife tossed it into the trash. The preacher was then faced with the dilemma of thanking the baker—while at the same time remaining truthful. Finally, after much thought, he sent a note with this tactful response: “Thank you for being so kind and thoughtful. I can assure you that a pie like yours never lasts long around our house!”

Thoughtful love takes the time to consider other people's feelings, needs and rights and to choose words and deeds properly and carefully. If you want to make a loving relationship with others and to gain their hearts, be considerate of their feelings, needs, rights, and dignity, and choose proper words and deeds to let them feel your love.

Be Respectful

To not be rude we must be respectful of other people’s way of life. People’s lifestyle varies according to their personalities or according to the cultures they have grown up with and gotten used to.

An acceptable attitude or behavior among people in one culture may be regarded as a rude ~~attitude or behavior~~ in another culture. An attitude or behavior, which you get used to and do not have any problem with, may seriously offend people of another culture.

There is a culture of a native Indian tribe where two people sit together and don’t talk for many hours to show close friendship. If you talk while

you are sitting with a friend from that Indian tribe, you would not be showing respect their culture, and they will think that you are rude.

There is a culture where an invited guest should not go to the home of the host on time but should show up at least 30 minutes later than the appointed time. In that culture if you punctually arrive at the home of the host, you are rude. But there is another culture where invited guest should be punctual. In that culture if you arrive late you are rude.

Here in America there are common rules to show respect to others. When I came to America and worked in a factory, one day I heard a young man about 20 years of age calling an old man by his first name, "John." I was very uncomfortable with hearing that and I felt that the young man was very rude. But after I have lived in America for many years, I understand that such an attitude is not rude. In American culture people call each other by their first names regardless of age difference.

In America, to respect others, you have to talk to them. Not talking may be considered rude to others. You should come on time when you have an appointment with somebody. You should not interfere with other people's private matters- their marriage life, financial situation, their weight etc.

These days we are living in the generation of smartphones, internet and social networking. There are many wonderful things we can share through these tools such as text, email, Facebook, Twitter, Linkdin, Skype, Kakao Talk etc. However we may be really rude to others by using these tools without proper respect.

I try to imagine what Jesus would do with all these modern electronic communication tools.

Jesus would use all these tools to reach out to people with the love of God, to humbly and gently serve all people, to spread good news, to heal

the sick, to encourage the discouraged, to teach the words of God, to build up the church, to offer forgiveness and reconciliation.

Do not use these tools to promote yourself, to enforce your point of view, to attack your enemies, to spread gossip, to invade people's privacy, to expose other people's mistakes or sins, to bother people by sending unwelcomed text messages, or to send sarcastic or negative messages. Always remember that written words are usually stronger and weigh heavier than face to face talk, especially when their contents are negative.

When you send a text message or an email to somebody, use kind words. Be as short and brief as possible. People have only a limited amount of time to read your text and email among so many other texts and emails.

Do not expect that the recipient of your text, email or other social network outlet will reply to you according to your convenience. Although the matter is important to you, it may not be important to the recipient. So the recipient may delay sending a reply, or forget sending a reply, or ignore the matter altogether.

If you receive a message, a text, an email from people you know, think about whether it is necessary for you to reply to it. If you must reply to it, reply as soon as possible.

To treat other people with respect, we must make an effort to know and understand their expectations. Often we must sacrifice our convenience and comfort.

What is the key to Jesus' love which touches the hearts of billions of people? It is the love revealed through his sacrifice. He humbled himself to become one like sinful men although he was sinless. For him as the sinless person it is a painful thing to live among sinners, but he intentionally lived that way so that all sinners can feel and take hold of his love. Paul encourages us to imitate the attitude of Jesus in our

relationship with others (Philippians 2:1-11). Paul himself applied Jesus' attitude to his own life to win the hearts of many people and lead them to Christ's salvation. In 1 Corinthians 9:19-22, he says: *¹⁹Though I am free and belong to no man,.... I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. ²⁰To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. ²¹To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. ²²To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.*

Humble yourself and sacrifice your comfort and rights to respect others. And you will gain the hearts of many people.