

# Cultivating a Gracious Mindset Toward Others

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Date: 27 March 2022

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[ 0 : 00 ] the verse, but it begins, for this is what the high and lofty one says. So let's say it together. It's Isaiah 57, 15a. Isaiah 57, 15a.

For this is what the high and lofty one says, he who lives forever, whose name is holy, I live in a high and holy place.

So here the Lord is telling us who he is and where he lives. Who is he? He's the high and lofty one. He's the one who lives forever. That means he's alive today. He's exalted and lifted up today and living today. He's holy. You remember if we went back to the beginning of Isaiah chapter 6, we remember that that's the vision that Isaiah was given at his calling.

He saw the vision of the Lord high and lifted up and his train filling the temple. And do you remember what the six wing seraphs cried out to each other in the presence of the Lord?

[ 1 : 15 ] Holy, holy, holy, holy. So this is the same God that called Isaiah to the prophetic ministry.

And now Isaiah is recording this God's words. This is what the high and lofty one says. He who lives forever, whose name is holy.

Who is he? He's high and holy. And where does he live? In a high and holy place. Doesn't that make sense? That someone who is high and holy ought to live in a place that is a high and holy place.

The psalmist says the Lord has established his throne in heaven and his kingdom rules over all. It's high. It's over all. He's the most high. And it's a holy place.

None can get into that place except through the blood of Jesus. The blood and righteousness of Jesus. His holiness put to our account. And so this is the glory of the Christian that we can come into that high and holy place and talk to this high and holy God through the blood of Jesus Christ.

[ 2 : 27 ] He's opened up this new and living way for us. And in prayer we draw nigh. In worship we come near to this God. So next week the last half of the verse tells you another place the Lord lives.

And be prepared for surprise. Well, let's pray. Our high and lofty one, eternal God, living God, the one who is holy, holy, holy, and gives life to all creatures.

Thank you for giving life to Edmund and Edward and to, you know his name, and to Lincoln. And for the kindnesses that those babies represent in your heart.

And may that kindness bind the parents' hearts all the more to you. Thank you for the life that we have that enables us to be here.

You sustained us another week. We didn't keep ourselves alive. You did. You gave us life and breath and everything else. And when we were spiritually dead, you gave us new life in Christ.

[ 3 : 47 ] You gave us a Savior who by his own blood has fully paid for all my sins. And so we are thankful and we come to worship him.

We come to worship you, Father, who gave him up for us. We come to you, Holy Spirit, who opened our eyes to him and drew us to him. And give us help then in understanding your word and in being doers of it.

We thank you for every Sunday school teacher and the students who are gathered to study your word this morning. Meet each one and put your truth on their inward parts.

And stir up true worship and love and trust in you. We ask all these mercies and ask for your grace all around the world.

You know your suffering saints. Draw near to them. As many are not able to gather together this morning because of wars and all sorts of persecution.

[ 4 : 48 ] Draw near and strengthen your people. Strengthen us now, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Well, we come to the last two lessons on graciousness. Tempering truth with love by Pastor John Kratz. Two weeks ago, our brother Mark Akins taught the chapter, Cultivating Graciousness Through Your Actions.

This week, I'm covering what really comes before that and leads to actions. It's cultivating a gracious mindset towards others. The mindset refers to an activity of the heart.

Not the actions, but the inward part of us. And it's out of the heart that all the actions then flow. Out of the heart. The mouth speaks. The actions come.

So there'll never be genuine graciousness in our outward actions and dealings with each other unless it flows from a gracious mindset toward each other.

[ 5 : 58 ] And this is why the ongoing, lifelong process of mind renewal is so critical in the Christian life. And in this whole area of gracious behavior.

Because as a man thinks in his heart, as he thinks, so is he. And so this chapter is all about what we need to be thinking about each other if we are going to be gracious to each other.

How to cultivate graciousness by a proper mental perspective of other people. Am I thinking of others as God thinks of them or as the world thinks of them?

And by the way, we once were a part of this evil world, weren't we? And so we once thought of each other as the world thinks of each other.

And we still have some worldliness left in us. That's why we need to be transformed. Remember Romans 12.2.

[ 7 : 02 ] Turn to it in your Bibles. Romans 12.2. As the apostle comes to the therefore. This glorious salvation.

Since God has been so merciful to us. How are we to respond? Well, we're to present our bodies as a living sacrifice to him. And then we're to not be conformed any longer.

Verse 2. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world. But be transformed. And there it's a continuous action. Be being transformed.

And that means that we still have some worldliness in our thinking that needs to be transformed. Be transformed.

How? By the renewing of your mind. Again, it's a present tense. It's an ongoing continuous action. We're constantly needing to have our minds renewed.

[ 8 : 01 ] That our actions and our heart might be transformed. So, this complete renovation of our thinking. From thinking like the world.

To thinking like God. As he's revealed in his word. That's what we're about. And that's why we gather together. To study the word of God. That's how our minds are renewed. And then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is.

His good, pleasing, and perfect will. Like what to say. And how to say it. In a gracious manner. So, graciousness begins with a God-like mindset towards others.

Now, Kratz has several points here. The very first one. If we would have this biblical mindset toward others. What is it? And the first point is.

Is that we'll properly appraise people's value. Properly appraise people's value. Think of the work of the appraiser. What is his job? It's to assign a value.

[ 9 : 05 ] Whether it's to your car that was wrecked. Or the house that suffered hail damage.

Whatever. There is an assignment of value to something. And the value we assign to things often determines how we treat them.

If you found a \$5 painting at a garage sale. You might not treat it very special. In a very special way. But if it was appraised at \$50,000.

You might treat it differently. Why? Because you valued it in a different way. It was your valuation of that object that caused you to treat it differently. Have you ever heard the phrase, he's like a bull in a china shop?

Well, that's what we're talking about. Let me read how John Kratz opens the chapter. A bull does not belong in the aisle of a china shop. The object's beauty and value are inconsequential to the beast.

So the bull will simply do what bulls do. While some bulls may not buck and thrash about rodeo style. No bull will be as delicate and careful as the situation requires. A few of the precious objects may elude the long pointy horns of the awkward bull.

[10:21] But his lumbering body will smash china. Shattering it into pieces. While bulls lack the poise to walk through china shops. Most people are capable of looking without destroying.

Hence the continued existence of china shops. But even so, stores with expensive china on the shelves do require customers to maintain a heightened awareness of their surroundings.

No one wants to be compared to a china shop bull. He's like a bull in a china shop. Now, in all fairness to bulls, they weren't given a mind to value china, were they?

But you and I were given minds to value other people. And how we value them depends whether we treat them as a valuable vase or whether we just rumble over them like a bull does.

Now, that's the illustration of what this first point is trying to show. If you look down on people as beneath you, will you be gracious to them?

[11:30] Turn to Luke 18. Jesus is talking to some people that look down on others. And I want you to see how it affected their treatment of the people they look down on.

Luke 18 and verse 9. It's Luke's introduction telling us why Jesus gave this parable. To some who were confident of their own righteousness and look down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable. Notice Luke's emphasis upon the mindset. The thoughts of themselves and their thoughts of others. And in the parable, these who were doing this were the Pharisees. So Jesus tells a story about two men, the Pharisee and the tax collector.

And he's going for the Pharisees. They were the ones that had their high view of their own righteousness and a low view of everyone else. Their heads were just tipped up a bit.

[12:40] And so they were looking down on everyone else. So how did that valuation of everyone else as beneath them cause them to treat them? Well, verse 11b.

The Pharisee. How does he speak about the tax collector? Oh God, I thank you that I'm not like other men. Robbers. Evildoers. Adulterers.

Or even like this tax collector. Can't you just hear his denigrating, despising voice? This tax collector.

Looking down. Speaking of him in derogatory fashion. Again, void of graciousness toward him.

Though he was there, after all, to seek mercy from God, wasn't he? The tax collector. But that's not how he valued him. And so he speaks crudely of him.

[13:44] You know, it's a wonder that the tax collector stuck around at church that day, isn't it? I mean, if that's the way you were treated as a visitor as you came into church and people looked down at you and spoke at you in a denigrating way.

Well, it's a story, but the low valuation in the mind created the absence of grace in his speech. A low mindset of the man fed a harsh and judgmental tone toward him.

So graciousness is cultivated by the right mindset towards other people. Now, there's just two kinds of people in the world. So when we're thinking about a right mindset toward people, we've got to think of both classes.

What are the two classes of people? Children of the devil, children of God. Now, to whom are we to show graciousness?

Which group? Both. Both. And that means we need a proper mindset toward both. Toward our fellow Christians and toward those who are lost.

[14:50] So let's think of the loss first. What enables us to highly value a lost person? Like this tax collector that Jesus was speaking of.

Can you give me some reason why we should highly value a lost person? They're created in the image of God. And that's a Sunday school lesson on its own, what all that means.

But it surely means that they were made for God and have this capacity to know God. They reflect God in some way. And even in their fallenness. Turn to James chapter 3.

We see this most clearly when James is talking about the way we speak to unbelievers.

Hebrews James chapter 3. And the whole chapter is about the tongue, isn't it? The way we speak. And this is our study. Graciousness.

[15:56] Speaking the truth with love. And so in verse 9. James 3. With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father.

And with it we curse men who have been made in God's likeness. God's image. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing.

My brothers, this ought not to be. So again, we're seeing that how we view people, if we view all people as made in the image of God, that will affect the way we speak to them.

Do we curse them when someone cuts you off in driving? Is that your immediate response? You curse them. Or when someone, an unbeliever, is just being an unbeliever and is sinning against you.

What is your response? We must remember they've been made in the image of God. And that should affect the way we treat them. And speak to them or of them.

[17:07] Any other reasons we ought to highly value an unbeliever? So we were once an unbeliever.

And that ought to affect how we treat them. And the fact that you are no longer an unbeliever should remind us that they too may one day become a believer.

Right? So they may become children of God. And that's their unknown prospect. We don't know that about them. But they may be. So look at 1 Peter 3.

When we talk with unbelievers, when we have dealings with them, when we want to share the gospel with them, 1 Peter 3, 14 and 15.

Talking about Christians being harmed. Verse 13. Who's going to harm you if you're eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear.

[18:17] Do not be frightened. Now verse 15. But in your heart, set apart Christ as Lord. Lord, always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.

Does it matter how you do it? But do it with gentleness and respect. Well, who are you witnessing to? Who are you giving a reason for the hope that you have in Christ?

It's the unbelieving world. And yet, you are wanting to see them become a child of God. Therefore, you treat them with gentleness and respect. So they're made in the image of God.

They may become children of God. And that's what Paul says. I make myself a slave to everyone. To win as many as possible. To the Jews, I became like a Jew.

To win the Jews. And to those without the law. The Gentiles. I became like one not having the law. In order that I might win them. To the weak, I became weak.

[19:19] To win them. To win people over is an interesting word. It's winsomeness we speak of, right?

And so we're to speak to them with winsomeness. With gentleness and respect. So, it's called soul winning, isn't it?

Soul drawing. Not soul repelling. It's being careful in the way we speak to them. With graciousness. C.S. Lewis said, The most vile sinner that you meet could be saved.

And become something so glorious that if you saw what they will one day be, you'd be tempted to fall down and worship them. So, remember the capacity. This person could become a child of God and one day be as perfect as Jesus Christ.

And that valuation of them will rise and so will our speech to them and about them. We think of our Lord's valuation and gracious treatment of vile sinners.

[20:31] What will it profit a man if he gained the whole world and lose his own soul? In other words, a soul is worth the whole world. That's a high value. Better to see a soul saved than to have the whole world as a possession.

And so, he's placing a high value upon a lost soul. It will exist forever in heaven or hell. And that's far greater than the whole world combined.

So, whether the soul is clothed in the self-righteous robes of the Pharisee or in the clothes of the tax collector or the prostitute, the Lord Jesus properly valued them, didn't he?

Not by the appraisal and standards of this world, but by the true appraisal and worth of a person made to bear the image of God. And I ask you, isn't that what caught the attention and drew the immoral Samaritan woman in when the Lord Jesus spoke to her?

It was the respect, the honor he placed. What did she receive from everyone else? The nose up and looking down and treating her scornfully.

[21:45] They despised her. The Jews despised her and wouldn't give her the time of day. She's shocked that Jesus is speaking to her.

And speaking in kind words and even humbling himself beneath her to ask of her a drink of water. That's a humble act, isn't it? When you stoop and put yourself under and ask someone for a drink. Well, again, it's respectful treatment. Of tax collectors and sinners like Zacchaeus and like Matthew. That put him on the wrong side of the Pharisees.

Who valued people according to their outward appearance. Such that they called him the friend of sinners in a derogatory way. And Jesus took their criticism and wore it as a compliment. It's for that very reason he came. To seek and save that which is lost. He highly valued these lost image bearers of God. And so must we.

[ 22 : 46 ] There's nothing put offish about the Savior toward the lost sinner. Yes, his words were repent for the kingdom of God is at hand.

You must turn or perish. But his manner toward them was loving and gracious. Well, that's how we're to value the lost.

Now, how about the saved? Do you think our valuation of the saved is higher or lower? That's not a trick question.

You're to do good to all men, especially the household of faith. So, yes, you're to value all men.

They're all image bearers. But especially those in the family of God.

They're your brothers. Your sisters. And so, we're to appraise them even higher. In Romans chapter 14.

[ 23 : 52 ] Paul is dealing with the issue. Now that Christ has come in the new covenant. What do we do with foods that were clean and unclean in the old covenant? According to those Old Testament civil laws for the Israelite nation.

Well, Jesus brought an end to them. He declared all foods clean. And so, that meant that believers were free to eat anything. But for a while, many didn't have that knowledge in their conscience.

They thought of that food as being offered to idols. Or they thought of that food as being unclean.

And therefore, we can't eat it. And so, while there is this confusion. Paul is saying.

Be careful that you don't. Violate your conscience. If you think it's wrong in your conscience. It is wrong. Even though it isn't wrong. You understand?

It's not wrong to eat the meat. But if you and your conscience think eating the meat would be sinful.

For you, it would be sinful. And furthermore. If eating the meat in front of your brother.

[ 24 : 55 ] Would cause him to stumble. You ought not to eat meat as long as you live. So says Paul. So, here we have it. Romans 14, 20 and 21.

Do not destroy the work of God. That is the work of God in your brother or sister. For the sake of food. All food is clean. But it's wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble.

It's better not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything else that will cause your brother to fall. What is he to you?

He's your brother. That ought to determine. Your valuation of them as a brother ought to determine how you act toward them. Verses 13 through 15 of the same chapter.

Therefore, let us stop passing judgment on one another in these issues. Instead, make up your mind to not put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way.

[ 26 : 01 ] As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I'm fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean.

If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died.

Oh, there's that blood of Jesus that raises the value of my brother. Jesus shed his blood for him.

So that's how I need to value him. Jesus poured out his life's blood to purchase this guy and to make him my brother. That valuation then should really affect my actions toward him.

Even to where I would set aside my liberties for a while in his presence and not be a stumbling block to him. So we see each other as valuable and extremely precious to Christ.

[ 27 : 09 ] 1 John chapter 3. We have another way that we are to be valuing one another.

1 John 3, 1 and 2. How great is the love the Father has lavished upon us that we should be called children of God and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

Dear friends, now we are children of God and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears we shall be like him for we will see him as he is.

Now here we have at least two terms of how we view our fellow believers. Dear friends. So when you are speaking to any believer you should regard them as your friend.

They are not the enemy. They are your friend. So speak to them as friend speaks to friend. With the graciousness of a friend to a friend. We saw something of that Sunday night when we talked about

how friends treat friends when they come knocking at midnight.

[ 28 : 18 ] Well, when you regard them as friends it raises the way you treat them and you treat them with grace. But it's also as children of God.

These are, again, fellow children of God that we think of each other as such. Now the world doesn't treat us as royal children of God, does it?

Does it treat you like the king's sons and daughters? No. No. Why not? What does he say? The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

They don't know our value. They don't know who we are. They don't know we're the king's sons and daughters. So they don't treat us in any special way. In fact, they hate us and persecute us.

But again, their mindset toward us determines the way they treat us. Well, it's different for us. We do know who we are. As children of God.

[ 29 : 19 ] And that valuation should change the way we treat one another. So right now, even though Christ hasn't come and we haven't been made perfect like him, that's coming.

And right now, we should have a mindset that values each other highly for Jesus' sake because of who they are and whose they are. They're chosen by the same father. They're bought by the same Savior's blood.

They're born again by the same Holy Spirit and indwelt by the same Spirit. They share the same eternal inheritance and destiny with us. Part of the same body of Christ.

Destined for the same glory. They're not enemies. They're brothers. They're not foes. They're friends. They're not competitors. They're joint heirs and fellow citizens with you of the kingdom of heaven. So is that how we think of our fellow Christians when disagreeing with them?

This is the mindset. This is the soil out of which graciousness flows. It requires a proper appraisal of people's value.

[ 30 : 30 ] God's appraisal instead of the world's. So again, this is something we need constant renewal of the mind for. And we too easily revert back to the world's appraisal.

So the second thing we need if we would have a gracious mindset is to remember what you owe those who differ from you. We generally don't think of that question.

What do I owe to Christians that differ from me? But we need to, and that's the gracious mindset.

That's what Jesus says in giving us the golden rule in Matthew 7, 12.

So in everything, includes everything, which includes controversies and differences that we get into. In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.

For this sums up the law and the prophets. It's the summary statement of the whole Bible, which then was the Old Testament, the law and the prophets for them.

[ 31 : 32 ] You can sum it up in one rule. It's due to others as you would have them do to you. Treat them as you would like to be treated. If you don't like to be interrupted, don't interrupt them.

If you don't like to be treated harshly and in condemning tones, don't speak that way to others. Now, this requires thinking, doesn't it? A mindset. How do I know how I should treat you?

Well, I've got to think. How do I like to be treated? And in thinking of that, then I come up with the gracious way to treat you. Reformed theologian Roger Nicole wrote a classic piece that I received several years ago, just entitled, How to Deal with Those Who Differ From Us.

It's an excellent thing to look up on the Internet and read the whole article. Because Roger Nicole was a professor in a seminary, and he was constantly dealing with people who differed with him on theological points and would get into arguments, disagreements over what each other believed. And so he wrote this article, How to Deal with Those Who Differ From Us. And his first point is, think what you owe the other person. Let me just read what he says.

[ 32 : 56 ] Our author quotes it. This does not involve agreeing with them. We have an obligation to the truth that has priority over agreeing with any particular person.

If someone is not in the truth, we have no right to agree. We have no right even to minimize the importance of the difference. And therefore, we do not owe consent, and we do not owe indifference.

But what we owe that person who differs from us, whoever that may be, is what we owe every human being. We owe them to love them. And we owe them to deal with them as we ourselves would like to be dealt with or treated.

Again, he cites Matthew 7, 12, the golden rule. So this is what we owe to those that differ from us.

And we especially need to think of that when we are in conflict with others. So when you're in a discussion with someone that's different, thinks differently than you on anything, don't you want that person to know what you are saying and thinking and not some twisted form to take your words and twist it and make you say something that it doesn't say?

[ 34 : 22 ] We don't want to be misunderstood or misquoted. And that's done all the time in the media, isn't it? That's the world's way. Grab a few words that came out of the president's mouth and put it on a headline, and it will draw readers.

You click on it, and you read it. Oh, well, that's what he meant. It's completely different. Context. We don't like being quoted out of context. The world loves to do that because it's hating and being hated.

That's the world's valuation of people. But we're loving and being loving. And so we must not misunderstand or misquote what someone actually said and meant.

We're not looking for headlines. We're looking for love. So we must work to become better listeners.

Listening well shows respect for the other person. Listen, I want to know what you think.

I care about you. I care where you're at. And if you're in the wrong, I care to see you come along to the truth. I care for what you think. And if I'm in the wrong, I want to be brought closer to the truth.

[ 35 : 34 ] It shows respect. And you owe that much to them. Listening well. Showing you really want to understand them. Sometimes we're barely even hearing what they're saying because we're thinking about what we're going to say next.

And we miss what they're saying. Nicole says, rather than preparing ourselves to pounce on that person the moment he or she stops talking, we should concentrate on apprehending precisely what the other person holds so that we can then state their position clearly.

We should ask clarifying questions with a gracious tone and attitude. Do you mean this? I'm hearing you say this.

Is this what you mean? And allow them to correct us if we're misunderstanding them. Again, Nicole, I think in a helpful way, says, my aim then in the midst of all these theological discussions he's had and disagreements over a lifetime, my aim was to represent the view faithfully and fully without mingling the criticism with factual statements.

In fact, so faithfully and fully that an inherent to that position might comment, this man certainly does understand our view. That's what we want.

[ 36 : 54 ] We want them to, even if we're on polar opposites on the situation, we want to state his view in such a way that he will say, well, he surely understands what I mean and what I believe.

It would be a special boon if one could say, I never heard it stated better than from your mouth. This then could earn me the right to criticize. If I have something negative to say and to say, but what about this verse?

You see, if I've rightly represented what they believe, then I earn the right to share something that they may not be in agreement with. Well, we must be interested in what we can learn from them. And so show that humility. A fool finds no pleasure in understanding, but delights in airing his own opinion.

So the fool is not out to understand the other person. He's just out to air his own opinions. So that's the second thing. We cultivate a mindset of graciousness by remembering what we owe to others.

[ 38 : 01 ] And then thirdly, we make charitable judgments. Again, these are all ways to develop a biblical mindset. Make charitable judgments. If you love someone, you discipline your mind to assume the best about that person's words, actions, or motives until the facts force you to think otherwise.

And that's what 1 Corinthians 13.7 is telling us, is the way that love acts. That list of how, what does love do? What does it not do? We come to verse 7 of 1 Corinthians 13.

Love bears all things, believes all things. Oh, but maybe it's not true. Well, until you know for sure it's not true, you better believe what they're saying.

And hopes all things, and endures all things. You see, love puts the best construction possible on the words, actions, and motives of others. Ken Sandy says, if people sense that you've jumped to conclusions about them, and you enjoy finding faults in them, then they're likely to resist correction. If, on the other hand, they sense that you're trying to believe the best about them, they will be more inclined to listen to your concerns. So make charitable, loving judgments by assuming the best until you can do so no more.

[ 39 : 17 ] And then, fourthly, if we would develop a mindset of graciousness, think about the practical outcomes. And this is really the book of Proverbs, the book of James.

It's thinking of the consequences of certain actions. If I do this, this will happen. What a man sows, that will he also reap.

So certain behaviors will reap a certain response. Think about that. Again, there's the mindset. The Bible is calling us to think about what our way of treating someone will do in the other person, the outcome.

So Proverbs 15, 1. A soft answer turns away wrath. But a harsh word stirs up anger. So if you want anger coming back at you, throw a harsh word their way.

If you want to have a soft turning away of wrath, then give a soft answer. You know, I don't remember who it was or when or where, but there's a lot of things that are said online that could be said better.

[ 40 : 40 ] That's just an understatement, right? There's a lot of this ungracious treatment. If you've done any, and I don't go online much, but I know when I go to conferences and brethren are talking about what so-and-so said on the Internet about so-and-so pastor against pastor, it's so easy to hear something and fire off a message right back.

But we're to think about the outcome of the way when we hit send, what is that going to produce coming back? And someone, yeah, somewhere along the line, I learned that go ahead and type your response.

And then just go talk to Jesus about it. And ask him, is there anything in that letter that could be said more graciously, less harshly, less prone to receive a harsh answer coming back?

And what I found is that there's often a second and third edition that needs to be written of my response before I hit send. So that's to think about the practical outcome.

The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit. Are these words going to bring healing or are they going to smash and crush the spirit?

[ 42 : 08 ] Proverbs 15, 18, a hot-tempered man stirs up dissension, but a patient man calms a quarrel. Are my words such that will stir up dissension or calm a quarrel?

Think about the likely outcome before you speak, before you write, before you hit send. James chapter 3 speaks of the capacity of this little member.

Again, we're to think of its powerful outcomes. You think of them as I, the powerful outcomes of the tongue as I just read this portion, James 3, 5 to 8.

Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body.

It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by men.

[ 43 : 14 ] But no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil full of deadly poisons. Poison. Poison. So, what we're seeing is that outcomes are better when our conversation is full of grace.

Always full of grace. Colossians 4, 6. Though no man can tame the tongue, the Lord can. And with the help of his Holy Spirit, the Christian can make real progress in graciousness.

But it begins then with this inward cultivation of a right mindset toward those that we're speaking. And what we owe. So, let me just review the four points. Properly appraising people's values. Remember who we're talking to. Remember, secondly, what you owe those you differ with. And thirdly, make charitable judgments in assuming the best. And fourthly, think about the practical outcomes.

Krotz ends by saying, the Lord Jesus not only forgives his unkind children by the power of his indwelling Holy Spirit, he also changes them into kind children. This is the saving grace of God that makes for gracious children of God.

[ 44 : 29 ] The supernatural power of God within gives us positive hope for change and growth in the grace of graciousness. Well, may the Lord help us then to apply this chapter on graciousness, tempering the truth with love.

Word dismissed.