

# The Graciousness That We Need

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, I want you to imagine a situation where you have a chance, you have an opportunity to spend some time with an expert.

An expert in the field, in a field that you are very interested in learning about. A field that you're very interested in growing in.

So, let's suppose that you have taken up an interest in golf. And you are at the driving range and there you are hitting golf balls.

And Tiger Woods happens to see you hacking away at that ball. And instead of laughing and deriding or ignoring you, he stops what he's doing.

And he comes over and he wants to help you out. Now, I think at the very beginning you would be extremely excited. Imagine how excited you would be.

[ 1 : 03 ] Wow, I can't believe this is really happening. One, he's talking to me. He's noticing me. He's stopping by. I can't believe this is happening.

And he starts correcting your grip. And he starts helping you with your backswing. And that's when it hits you. What's hitting you?

Well, not an epiphany. Not some sort of sudden realization or something. Tiger must have drank coffee and ate onions and finished it off with something even nastier before he came over and talked with you.

And what hit you is his terrible breath. And suddenly you need space. You need to get out of there. You need oxygen. And you start backing away. And you offer him a mint. And he says, no, thank you. And you offer him a piece of gum. And he still says, no, thanks.

[ 2 : 07 ] And he just keeps barreling in. Well, I don't know what you do in that situation in reality. But for the sake of our illustration, you know, suddenly you need to get out of there, don't you?

You need to go to the bathroom suddenly. You have an appointment. Your dog needs to go to the vet. I don't know what's happening. But you are desperate to get out of that situation.

Now, I'm sure Tiger Woods could help you. I'm sure he would be fabulous at helping you with your backswing and your grip and everything else.

But do you want anything to do with him? Do you want to be around him? Do you want his help? Do you appreciate his participation in your life?

We'll say. Well, the answer would be not like this. Not like this. Not in these circumstances. Not this way. Now, sometimes Christians can mean well.

[ 3 : 16 ] Sometimes we can have the best of intentions. But the way that we go about it. The way that we carry ourselves. How we do it.

Our attitude. It turns people away. They lack graciousness. They lack graciousness. They lack graciousness. They lack graciousness. And so they could be saying or trying to do the very best of things.

But that's not how it comes across. And it really is the difference between intent and impact. Intent is what I want to do.

Impact is what I actually do. Here's a very simple illustration. Let's suppose I want to hang a picture on my wall.

That's my intention. And so I get out my nail and I get out my hammer to hammer a nail into the wall. And instead of gently pulling back the hammer and gently nailing that little nail into the wall, I instead take out a big railroad spike and I take a full-fledged sledgehammer and I smash the wall.

[ 4 : 32 ] And I've intended to hang a picture. I've intended to put a nail in the wall. And instead what I've done, the impact that I've made, is not a nail in the wall but a big hole in the wall.

So intent is what I want to do. Impact is what I actually do. Intent is how I think or feel about a situation. Impact is how I actually make other people feel. And there could be really a world of difference.

Hopefully there's not. But there can be. Tiger Woods wanted to help. But in our silly illustration, Tiger Woods' bad breath ruined his intentions.

Graciousness is about creating the right impact. Graciousness is about using the right size nail and the right size hammer, doing it with the right attitude.

Graciousness is not about what we do so much as how we do it. Now, graciousness is what we are going to be talking about for the next seven or eight weeks in this class.

[ 5 : 45 ] And we're going to be going through a book called Graciousness, Tempering Truth with Love. The author is John Kratz.

John Kratz is a pastor in Georgia. Pastor John actually preached at his church probably quite a few years ago when the ARPCA GA was down there.

So John Kratz is going to be our author and our guide for this book, Graciousness, Tempering Truth with Love. Now, today, this morning, I want to talk about why this is important and then talk about the graciousness that we need.

Oh, what does it do? What is good about it? What is helpful about it? So why is this important in the graciousness that we need? Well, those are the two big points that I want to talk about.

Why is this important? My answer is this, because God cares about more than just the words you say or the things that you do. He cares about how you say those words or the attitude that you have toward others.

[ 7 : 03 ] Graciousness is about more than just what you say or do. It has a lot more to do with how you say the things that you do. God does not just care about the very things that you do.

He cares about the heart behind it, the attitude behind it, the attitude towards others that is behind it. So Paul, in the book of Ephesians, says, speak the truth in what?

In love. Speak the truth in love. Not just speak the truth. Speaking the truth is good. But even speaking the truth can be bad.

If you do it in the wrong way. It can have a bad impact. John, in his gospel, says that Jesus Christ was full of grace and truth.

He was full of grace and truth. Not just truth, but full of grace. And not just full of grace, but he was also full of truth.

[ 8 : 18 ] And so it's not enough to be full of truth. It's not enough to speak the truth. It is good to be zealous for the truth. But even that is not enough.

That is not enough. Truth needs to go down on the inside. So 1 Corinthians chapter 8, knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.

Paul says, the man who thinks he knows something does not yet know it as he ought to know. He does not yet know as he ought to know. This is talking about the attitude in which you carry your knowledge.

So you say, I know this. And you're proud about it. You're boasting about it. And you're telling others about your possession of this truth. And that attitude, the way that you are carrying your truth.

Paul says, it's clear that you do not know that truth as you ought to yet. Because truth really understood leads to a gracious disposition toward others.

[ 9 : 32 ] Truth really understood. Truth really understood and really believed rubs the rough, harsh edges off of a person.

It rubs off. It's like a kind of sandpaper that takes off the condescending attitude toward others. The critical spirit towards others.

The kind of acidic way of holding that truth. Of declaring that truth. That instead of inviting people in. Is like bad breath.

That drives you away. That makes people take a step back. That turns people off. From what you are saying. So Jesus spoke the truth. He loved the truth.

He spoke nothing but the truth. He said, I only say what my father has told me. Has taught me. To say. That there was a one-to-one correlation between what Jesus said.

[ 10 : 35 ] And the truth. But look at who is all around Jesus. Look at the people who are drawn to Jesus.

Look at the way that this, his, the way that he speaks this truth. And the way that he was attracted people to him.

So who's there? Well, like moths to a flame, sinners are there. Sinners are there. Tax collectors. Prostitutes. Rustic fishermen. Remember. The Sanhedrin were surprised and shocked. With the way that Peter and John spoke.

Because they hadn't grown up and they hadn't been trained in their schools. They were just nobody. Rustic fishermen. Salt of the earth kind of people.

[11:34] Salt of the earth soldiers. Jesus' whole banner. And what he said. Drew. People to him. Drew.

Drew. Sinful people to him. Drew. Hurting people. Simple people. To him. We sing that wonderful line that you have the true and perfect gentleness.

No harshness hast thou and no bitterness. To taste Jesus is not to taste something bitter. Or someone bitter. It's to taste someone sweet.

To touch him. Was not to touch something that was harsh. But something that was. That brought comfort. He was full of grace.

And truth. Now. This is why this is important. Because this is the way Jesus was. And this is what the Lord is seeking to build in us.

[12:42] Not only in us singularly as individuals. But as a congregation. Ephesians 4 talks about the whole body working together and using their gifts.

And them as a body. Us as a congregation. Growing up together into Christ. Christ. So not only as individuals.

Are we becoming more like him. But as a congregation. There should be a more of an atmosphere. More of a culture.

Of grace. And that's where you can tell. People are becoming like Jesus. They love the truth. And yet the way they hold it. People are drawn to it.

Why is this important? Because 1 Corinthians 13. 1-3. If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels. But have not love.

[13:38] I'm only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. I'm just noise. Resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. That's either meaningless noise.

Or annoying noise. That's all. That's. So you can speak. With even the tongues of men and all of angels.

And if you don't have love. It's not good. If I have the gift of prophecy. And I can fathom all mysteries. And all knowledge. And if I have a faith that can move mountains.

But have not love. I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor. And surrender my body to the flames. But have not love. I gain nothing. Love is patient.

Love is kind. It does not envy. It does not boast. It is not proud. It is not rude.

[14:43] It is not self-seeking. It is not easily angered. It keeps no record of wrongs. In other words. Love. Is gracious.

It's gracious. Towards other people. It's open-hearted. It's generous. Towards other people. That's why this is important.

Because this is the true measure. Of religion. Religion. This is the true measure. Of religion. This is the true measure. Of our heavenly mindedness.

Of our. We are now being prepared to live in heaven. Because heaven is a world. Where people. Are gracious. Faith and hope. Will. Will disappear.

They'll be swallowed up into sight. And into reality. But. Heaven is a world of love. Are we being fitted. To live there. Well.

[15:44] Am I generous. Am I patient. Am I kind. Am I gentle. Am I not rude. But I'm considerate. Of others. Well those are the kind of people.

That live in heaven. So why is this important. Because this is the true measure. Of religion. This is the true measure. Of whether I am. What I'm doing. Amounts to anything.

This is the true measure. Of my. Sanctification. Not by. How many books. I've read. Not by. All of the truth.

I know. And understand. But. Whether these things. Are working. In my heart. It's no good. To have all the right doctrine. And have a closed.

Unloving. Spirit. It does no good. To have right. Opinions. About anything. And have an ungentle. Proud. Spirit. Spirit. We can excuse.

[16:40] A lot of. Our sinfulness. By saying. But I meant. Well. Or. But I'm right. I'm right.

So it doesn't matter. How I act. They're wrong. They need to change. But you know what. God is not only interested. In what we say and do.

But he is interested. In how we say and do it. And his. We are his ambassadors. To a watching world. And it's not enough for us.

To be filled. With messages. With his messages. But. He wants us. To speak them. In such a way. And carry ourselves.

In such a way. That it reflects. Well. On. Our king. The one who has sent us. So. He's. The world.

[17:33] Is watching us. To see. Not only what we do. And say. But how we do it. And how we say it. I'm afraid that.

Many times. The world. Is not so much offended. By what we say. But by. Our attitude. And even our hypocrisy. When we say it.

And so. This is important. Now. Let's then. Just move on. To the. The greater part. Of this lesson.

Is. Let's talk about. This graciousness. What we need. The graciousness. That we need.

What is it. What does it do. What does it create. What is it. Why is it so helpful. Why is it so useful.

Why is it so good.

Well. Let's have another. Illustration. Let's suppose. There's two very serious. Christian men.

They're meeting.

[18:29] At a coffee shop. They're having. A discussion. And as they discuss. The things of the Lord. They're talking about church. Or whatever. The conversation. Moves towards.

What. What church. Should be like. On Sunday. What church. Should be like. On Sunday. We have two people here. We have Joe. And we have Bob. Joe.

Is convinced. That the church. Meets on the Lord's Day. To reach. Unbelievers. With the gospel.

Unbelievers. So Joe. Joe. Thinks that the church.

Meets to reach. Unbelievers. With the gospel. Bob. On the other hand. Believes that the church. Is. It exists. So believers.

Can gather. To worship God. And build each other up. And unbelievers. Are. Our welcomed.

Guests. They are only. Welcomed guests.

[19:21] Now. Both of them. Are able. In some ways. To support their position. From the Bible. Both of them. Have verses. That they're. They're.

They're. Painting. They're using. They're pulling out. And saying. Well. Have you thought about this? This verse. This text. And. They go back and forth.

But. Bob. Remember Bob. Bob. Believes that. Church is for. Mainly for believers. And not unbelievers. Bob. Gets more and more critical. And argumentative.

And Bob's. Tone of voice. Turns. Mocking. And harsh. And. Bob. Says that. Joe's unbeliefs. Are no different than.

Joel Osteen's. Or some other celebrity. Shallow. Preacher. And. Bob. Assumes. He's right. And he. Impatiently. Finishes. All of Joe's.

[20:16] Sentences. And he knows. Why Joe. Is saying. What he's saying. And. What he's. Where he's going with this. And so he answers Joe. Before he really understands. And. And appreciates Joe's concerns.

Have you ever had a conversation like that? Maybe. You've. Talked like that. Well. Let's just say that Bob's views are the correct one. Which I. I think they are.

But the way he. The way he carries on. The way he speaks those things. His attitude. His rudeness. Undoes everything.

That he is seeking. To accomplish. Remember. Intent. Versus. Impact. Maybe he intends. To. Convince Joe. Of his position. But. What is the actual impact? What actually happens? Well. He wants Joe to understand. A more biblical way of thinking.

[21:15] That's good. Those are good intentions. But what's the impact? Well. Joe probably. Doesn't. Soften. His position at all. Does he? Joe.

If this is me. I'm having a hard time. Listening to Bob. I'm having a hard time. Giving Bob. Any room. An inch.

I'm having a hard time. Really opening my ears. And my heart. To what Bob is saying. Now maybe I should. I probably should. I should be the bigger person. I should have the more humility. And. But Bob is not making this easy. Bob isn't making it easy. Bob isn't promoting. Instruction. With pleasant. Words. If he's trying to build a fire. He might be using some good wood. But he's. [ 22 : 14 ] He's doused it all with water. And it's. It's not going to work out. Take your Bibles. And turn to Proverbs chapter 16. Proverbs chapter 16.

Proverbs 16. 21. Bob is not promoting instruction.

Bob is not being gracious. And. As smart. And as knowledgeable. As Bob is. About his Bible. And he's holding the right doctrine. Bob is not.

Wise. He's not being wise. We can be this way. We can have the right doctrine. And. We can be foolish about it. Look at Proverbs 16. 21. The wise in heart.

Are called discerning. And pleasant words. Promote instruction. The. So. Just look at that very first part. The wise in heart. Are called discerning.

[ 23 : 15 ] Who do you think is calling this wise person discerning? Do you think he's calling himself that? No. Other people are calling him discerning. Other.

The people that he is talking to. They say. Wow. That was really helpful. That was really helpful. You really get what I'm going through. You really took the time to listen. And that was. That was helpful. And that's it. I wasn't thinking of it like that before. But now that you've talked.

Oh. That was good. I see things a little differently now. And the wise in heart. Are called discerning. The people that they are talking to.

Have this opinion of them. They say. You are discerning. You know what you're talking about. But. Why do they get that reaction?

[ 24 : 16 ] Why do they get that reaction? Why do people say that about them? Well. The second part. Is the answer. The second part. Pleasant words. Promote instruction.

They talk. And people listen. It's not just what they say. It's how they say it. It's intent versus impact. Go down to verse 23. 16. 23. A wise man's heart. Guides his mouth. And his lips. Promote instruction.

Then the next verse. Pleasant words. Are a honeycomb. Sweet to the soul. And healing to the bones. Wise men.

Wise men. Try to think of the very best. The most pleasant. Way. Of speaking. They're not.

[ 25 : 19 ] Boisterous. They're not. Opinionated. They're not. Proud. They're pleasant. They're not.

Unasked for. Giving their opinion. They're not. Holding out. And. Talking. Long. About things that they don't know.

Their. Their hearts. Guide them. They try to think of the very best. Most pleasant way. Of speaking. And.

And I think that. To a great degree. Is. Graciousness. It's graciousness. Uh. One author writes. Gracious speech. Is words.

And tones. Marked by. Pleasantness. Kindness. The will to help. To encourage. And to convey.

[ 26 : 16 ] Regard. Regard. Now that's an unusual way of talking. But so I want to. To convey. Regard. Convey means to bring something to something. You have a conveyor belt.

To convey means. You're. You're bringing. You're showing them. Regard. You want them. To receive in their hands. And in their lap. This person.

Regards me. This person. Considers me. This person is. Thinking about me. That's what a gracious person does. He. He makes other people.

Realize. He's thinking about them. He's. He's. Being considerate towards them. He's not rude towards them. It is pleasantness. It is being kind.

It is having a desire to help. And to be a blessing. To another person. Someone else said this. I think this is Ted Tripp. Or Paul Tripp. Graciousness is an absence of deliberate aggravation.

[ 27 : 15 ] And any kind of rabble rousing. It is impregnated. Graciousness is pregnant with. Courtesy. And love.

And humility. And transparent. Sincerity. Transparent sincerity. It's not being harsh. It's not being critical.

It's not being judgmental. Yes. Sometimes we have to say things that are difficult and hard. And that's true. But we always begin with the most pleasant, gentle sweetness. Gentleness doesn't mean we're compromising the truth.

Gentleness keeps the truth from being compromised by harshness and insensitivity. Do you understand that?

Being gentle does not compromise the truth. That's how a lot of people think. That if I am not absolutely adamant and violent about believing this.

[ 28 : 16 ] Well then that's saying the truth. That it's not important. No. No. The exact opposite is actually happening. Gentleness keeps the truth from being compromised by harshness and insensitivity.

Now where does that come from? Well out of the heart the mouth speaks. What's at the bottom of harshness and criticism?

What's at the bottom of gentleness and winsomeness? Well whatever is there. It starts in the heart. Jesus exposed the Pharisees and he said you brood of vipers.

How can you who are. How can you being evil. Speak good things. That is an impossibility. A good man out of the good stored up in his heart brings forth good things.

He brings the evil men out of the evil stored up in his heart brings forth evil things. So what we say and how we say it shows in our hearts. That's where it comes from.

[ 29 : 24 ] That's where graciousness begins. You're not putting on sweetness. You're not putting on gentleness. You're not putting on kindness. You're not putting on a soft pleasant disposition.

You actually have those things in your heart. The Lord has so worked in you. That the hard stony harsh acidic heart.

That doesn't care what other people think and how they feel. I just want what I want. A new heart's been born in you. A new heart's been worked in you. And out of that new heart you speak differently.

So what does this graciousness do? Four things. One, it builds people up. It builds people up. Why is this important and what does it do?

One thing that graciousness really does. The impact that it has on other people is they are built up. They're not torn down.

[ 30 : 31 ] They are not worn out. They are built up. A lot of what in 1 Corinthians, Paul is answering a series of questions. The Corinthians had all these different questions for Paul.

And so they must have written a letter to him. And so now about half of 1 Corinthians is him answering these concerns. And you can see he says, well, now concerning A, this.

And now concerning B and C and so forth. One of the questions was about food offered to idols.

And 1 Corinthians 8.1 says, now about food sacrificed to idols.

We know that we all possess knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. Now, what was going on here, and I don't want to take too much time, but some of the Corinthians believers had real knowledge.

These idols were not really gods. They were nothing. They weren't gods at all. And so he says, there's one Lord Jesus Christ through whom all things came and through whom we live.

[ 31 : 35 ] We know that. That's what he says. These idols are nothing. Jesus is the only one. But, he goes on, but not everyone knows this.

And so for them, that food is defiled. And to eat it was to do something sinful.

Now, Paul's answer was to help them, to help the whole congregation move closer to the truth. He does explain, these idols are nothing. And it really is okay, in and of itself, to eat these things, eat this food.

But, that wasn't his primary concern. His primary concern was not doctrinal clarity and precision. He does care about that. I'm not putting one against the other.

I am saying, he does care about that. He does teach them. But, that's not where he stops. He didn't say, we can't have any unity until we all believe the exact same thing.

[ 32 : 39 ] And so the answer is, everyone believe the exact same thing, and that's it. No, sometimes, well, here, this is, sometimes people say doctrine divides.

And that's a wrong attitude. That's a wrong notion. But, sometimes the tendency can be to overreact to that statement and to say, no, no, no. The only way you can have unity is through exact doctrinal agreement.

And I would say that that is true to a great degree. But, that's not everything. If you believe all the same things, let's suppose that we have complete and utter doctrinal unity about everything, and yet we are being jerks towards each other, there can't be unity.

It isn't enough. And so Paul's first concern was not absolute doctrinal unity and agreement. It was how they were treating each other. It was how they were treating each other. Some of them had a lot of knowledge, but it was divorced from love. And so they used their knowledge to tempt others and to hurt others. But that's not what graciousness does. It's sensitive to others.

[ 33 : 58 ] It's sensitive to others' consciences. What are they thinking? How are they processing this? And love builds up. That's what graciousness does.

Knowledge puffs up. Love builds up. We have to keep going. Secondly, graciousness is how we do mutual ministry within the body. It's how we do mutual ministry within the body.

We don't have time to turn to Ephesians chapter 4. But in that passage, you see the body working all together. Everyone's using their gifts and affirming.

And this is how they build each other up into Christ. But at the very heart of it, verse 15, it says, Speak the truth, speaking the truth in love.

That's how you do all of these things. So loving, gentle, encouraging, affirming, truth-telling is how we speak and act towards each other in such a way that we build each other up.

[ 35 : 00 ] Let me repeat that. Loving, gentle, encouraging, affirming, truth-telling. That's how we do mutual ministry here.

That's how we each serve each other. And when we are like that, people are going to want to be around us. That's where that new atmosphere and that wonderful kindness is flowing in a place.

And we grow together and people get stronger together. Number three, what else? Graciousness trusts God to change others. Graciousness trusts God to change others.

What are we doing when we yell at someone? When we're being shrill and angry with someone?

When we're attacking, attacking, attacking. What are we doing? Well, one thing we're not doing is we're not trusting the Lord to change that person. Listen, the anger of man does not bring about the righteousness that God desires, the righteous life God desires.

[ 36 : 13 ] So Paul writes to Timothy, and he says, don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments because you know they produce quarrels. Proverbs says, starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam, so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out.

You don't have anything to do with it. Don't go into it. And Paul goes on, the Lord's servant must not quarrel. Instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.

And those who oppose him, he must gently instruct in the hope that God will grant them repentance, leading them to the knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil who has taken them captive to do his will.

I think you can hear the graciousness in this passage. He's saying, be kind, be gentle, not resentful. Don't be indignant.

Don't be abrasive. Because the point is not for you to conquer your opponent. The hope is that they will come to their senses and that God will do something.

[ 37 : 28 ] So you're not trusting yourself. Graciousness requires that we actually be trusting the Lord. If we're not trusting the Lord when we're dealing with someone, we are going to be harsh and critical and shrill and angry and all the rest.

So graciousness, you're trusting God. You're letting God work. Instead, you want God to bring change, and that's what we're looking for.

Now, last of all, graciousness wins a hearing for the gospel. It wins a hearing for the gospel. Let me just read Colossians chapter 4, 5, and 6. Be wise in the way that you act toward outsiders.

Make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. So what does wisdom look like toward outsiders?

These might be your own children. What does wisdom look like toward outsiders? Well, you're ready for opportunities. Your head is up.

[ 38 : 42 ] Your eyes are open. You're ready for action. You're ready to say something. But when you talk, it's pleasant. It's gracious. It's full of grace.

It's seasoned with salt. Seasoned with salt was a figure of speech in that time and place that it met witty or clever in a pleasant, joyful sense.

It was a way of speaking that created interest in what you were saying. For some reason, just the idea of, you know, people would gather around Mark Twain to hear his stories.

And it's not just the content of his stories. It was how he spoke them. They were seasoned with salt. They drew people in. They drew in interest. Paul is saying the way that we speak.

We don't have to be like Mark Twain. But what we do need to do is have such a pleasant attitude, a winsomeness about us that people want to hear the gospel.

[ 39 : 48 ] They want to hear what you're saying. That's what we do when we're gracious. We invite people in to think with us. Graciousness has a wonderful and beautiful way of slipping past every defense.

And we stir up their appetites. And so I want to hear more about that. I can't put my finger on it. But it is attractive. There's just something about that person.

The smile. The kindness. The friendliness. The patience. The gentleness. The just the winsome personality. Maybe I don't believe what they're saying.

But I really like them. So graciousness. It builds people up. It's how the body grows up in Christ. It trusts God to bring change.

And last it opens doors for opportunity. Now we all need to grow in this grace of graciousness. It begins in the heart. And it begins I think primarily. Or not even primarily.

[ 40 : 49 ] It grows as we grow in our appreciation of God's kindness and graciousness to us. When the Lord is sweet and gentle and kind and patient with us.

And as we experience that. We go around. We turn around. And we do the very same thing to others. That's how you can know that you're forgiven.

That you forgive others. That's how you can know that you've really experienced grace. Because now you're willing to be gracious towards others. He really is that kind.

And that patient. And that cheerfully good to us. And that's why we can. And that's why we should.

Do the very same thing for others. Well our time is up. We're just.

We're just right. We'll be right back. We're just.

[ 41 : 47 ] We're just.