

Love is Not Rude

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[0 : 00] Well, it's been a while, but we are in 1 Corinthians chapter 13, and we're talking about love. I want you just to remember, or to get a few things, in this chapter where Paul is talking about love.

Paul is, first of all, not saying to do this, act like this. He is saying this is how love does act. Love in your heart will invariably do these things, and that's why love is the greatest.

Faith and hope and love, so to speak, are the greatest, the first and last, so to speak, of all the Christian virtues. But he says that love is the greatest. Love powers hope.

Love is the source of hope. We're going to get to it, Lord willing, someday, but love always hopes. It's going to keep you going.

It's going to keep you hoping with those difficult people in your life. Love does that. And faith works through love. So the beginning of hope is love, and the end of faith is love.

[1 : 10] Faith without love is a dead, useless thing. It's a corpse faith. It's the devil's kind of faith. But where you have true faith, there's love. Love. So I can have faith that moves mountains.

So I tell a mountain, get up and go, and it actually gets up and moves for me. But Paul says, if I have not love, I am nothing. No matter how great your faith is, if it doesn't have corresponding love, then I am nothing.

So there's no greater virtue, no greater thing a Christian can do than to love. Love God and love your neighbor as yourself.

The other thing is, I think if we reverse engineer this passage, so to speak, or if we kind of put it in rewind, or we look at it from the opposite end, it's telling us something extremely profound.

The reason I'm not patient, the reason I'm not kind, is because I have a love problem. So, yeah, impatience, unkindness, that's not acting in a loving way.

[2 : 21] I'm not loving, that's true. But it's true because I have a love problem to begin with. If I have love in my heart, I will be patient with people. If I have love in my heart, I will be kind to them.

And so the reason I'm impatient is not because of something in you, or something you've done, or I'm tired, or whatever. Those might be contributing, so to speak. But it's because I don't have love in my heart.

If my patient's car is not going, I don't have love in the tank. And so it's not that I'm not tired. It's not just my personality. It's a love problem. I'm loving me, indulging me, and not loving you.

Those two things I want you to understand as we just look at this whole passage. He's talking about the greatest of all Christian virtues. He's talking about the source of all the other Christian virtues.

And then the third thing I want you to understand is that this is very practical. And we're going to come to that point. But this is a very practical passage.

[3 : 33] It is a very poetic passage. It's very beautiful. It's very memorable. It is a lovely poem. It's not really a poem, but it almost is like that.

But it's more than that. My grandma was a junior high English teacher. And she was doing a section on poetry where you had to write your own poem.

And so each of the sixth or seventh graders or whatever they were had to write their own poem. And one of her students thought she was pretty clever, had a pretty good idea.

And so she turned in a poem called Love. And it began like this. Love is patient. Love is kind. Love is kind. And it ended with, but the greatest of these is love.

She had got her King James Bible out, I think, and quoted verse by verse this whole thing. It was pretty smart. It was pretty good poetry. And it is. Paul's words are beautiful in their simplicity, in their directness.

[4 : 37] They're elegant. I'm sure they're elegant in any language. But, alas, our junior high teacher, our junior high student got an F because my grandma was like, are you kidding me?

You're quoting the most famous thing about love as your own. They are glorious words, but these are practical words. They have dirt under their fingers, so to speak.

They're not being driven to work in a Rolls Royce with a chauffeur. They're going to the work site of our lives with the boards and the dirt. And they're pulling up in one of those big Dodge Rams or Chevy Silverados.

This is a practical passage. And that's what we need. We need doctrine. We need experience. We need practice. Practical Christianity.

And today is practical. It is super practical. Because what we've come to in 1 Corinthians 13 is love is not rude. Love is not rude.

[5 : 37] So we've talked about Paul's poetry. Paul's words. And so I have my own version, and it's called Rude. It is rude to interrupt.

It is rude to call names. Rudeness is noisy in a movie theater. It doesn't put away its shopping cart. It dominates the conversation. It litters. It doesn't use its turn signal.

It cuts you off while driving. It drives too slow in the passing lane. It chews with its mouth open. It talks with its mouth full. It reaches across another person's plate.

It slurps loudly. It doesn't hold doors. It lets the dog bark at night. It lets the dog jump on guests. It parks its monster truck in four spots.

I went to a church, and that's what I saw. Text at the table. It wears PJs to Walmart. It doesn't replace the toilet paper roll after it's empty. It lets the children scream and throw fits in public, and it screams at the children in public.

[6 : 39] It makes a public spectacle of itself. It doesn't say thank you. It doesn't say you're welcome. It doesn't say please. It uses foul language in public.

It doesn't listen. It delights in grossness. It always hurts, always teases, always ignores. Rudeness is never acceptable.

Now, I understand that's not very good poetry, but I hope you get the point. Loving and being rude are the exact opposites.

Love is not rude. Love is none of those things. Love is none of those things. Love and rudeness are exact opposites. It's not that love is never offensive.

Nowadays, everyone is being offended by anything and everything. And so on the one hand, it is a very strange day that we are living in. People are being offended by every little thing, and no one can be contradicted or told that they're wrong.

[7 : 42] And on the other hand, there is an amazing amount of rudeness in our world. But love knows how to cut that line.

So I'm not talking about never contradicting or being unpleasant, because sometimes love is going to do that. But I am talking about civil society.

I'm talking about manners. I'm talking about etiquette. Not stuffy manners. But decency.

And consideration. Consideration. Rude people act like they are the only ones. They're the only person in the world.

I'm just living in it. Love, on the other hand, says, hey, you are there. You are out there. You are living in this house.

[8 : 43] You are living in this society. You are in this store. You are there. You have feelings. You have preferences. You are living in the same world as I am.

So love is considerate. That's what I'm saying. It considers other people. It considers that they're there. It considers what they like. It's considering their culture.

It considers their feelings. And so what does love do? Well, love doesn't interrupt. Love doesn't call names.

It isn't noisy in a movie theater. It puts away its shopping cart. It doesn't dominate the conversation. It doesn't litter. It uses its turn signal.

It doesn't cut you off in driving. It doesn't drive too slow in the passing lane. It chews with its mouth closed. It doesn't talk with its mouth full.

[9 : 41] It doesn't reach across another person's plate. It doesn't slurp loudly. It's not silly. So I'm glad we have some kids here. Kids, those table manners, they aren't just silly rules.

They're about being considerate to other people that are sitting with you. And so I don't want to see your food all chewed up inside your mouth. I don't want to see your food falling out of your mouth when you're talking.

It's gross. And it's not loving. It's not being considerate. Love holds doors. It doesn't text at the table. It wears pajamas at home and respectable clothes at Walmart. It replaces the toilet paper roll after it's empty. And that little act is being considerate.

It's treating others how you want to be treated. So love doesn't let the children scream and throw fits in public. It doesn't scream at the children in public. It doesn't make a public spectacle of itself.

[10:48] Love says thank you. Love says please. Love says you're welcome. It's about being considerate to others. And it doesn't use foul language in public or anywhere.

Love listens. It's not just sitting there waiting to get its word in edgewise. You know people that talk like that. They're always not listening to you.

But they just can't wait to get their two cents in. So love is polite. It's considerate. Now, I just have three quick lessons and we're done.

I told you this is very practical. It's hard to make a great theology of rudeness in a very long way. So here's three quick lessons.

One, children manners matter. They do. Usually they're not just silly rules made up by adults. Maybe sometimes they can be.

[11:56] But most of the time they are not. All those things that your parents that are trying to teach you, all those things where mom and dad say to you, what do you say now? Please. Thank you.

You're welcome. What do you say? And when they're telling you, don't talk with your mouth full.

Those things matter. They matter because it's about love. They aren't usually silly rules.

Like I said, they're treating people how you want to be treated. They're showing that, oh, we're living here together. It's creating a society where we can live together, where I recognize that there's other people out there and we're living in this world together.

And it's about making their lives better. Society as a whole better. And so when you go into McDonald's, do you want that person across the counter to ignore you or act like they wish you weren't there?

It's rude. And so don't do it to other people. Do you want to have to clean off someone else's happy meal box and their little ketchup thingies?

[13:06] No. So clean up after yourself. Do you want to hear that family over there carrying on loudly? When you go to the movies, do you want to have to struggle to listen because someone over there is making too much noise or to be distracted because someone has their cell phone, their phone out?

It's inconsiderate. When you're rude, children, you don't make anyone's life better.

It's just that simple. You don't make anyone's life better. It makes it harder, more unpleasant. And life is hard enough and unpleasant enough without other people aggravating it.

So when you're at your house, when you're with your brothers and sisters, picking up after yourself, putting your dishes away, picking up your little trash, your Kleenexes or whatever, those are the things that make people's lives better or at least keeps them from being worse.

It's loving. So manners matter. They're important enough to say that God, in his wisdom, put it in his book that love is not rude.

[14:30] Love is not rude. Now, the second lesson. So I talk to children about manners mattering. Adults, I want to just talk to you for two minutes.

The rudeness sometimes found in children is because they are young and they need to be taught. And so we need to teach manners. We need to teach those things and not think, oh, that doesn't matter or Jesus is way more holy and God doesn't care about those things.

God does care about those things. All those things are about loving other people, about being considerate in the moment of our life. And so you need to teach manners. And so, yes, sometimes the rudeness found in children is because they simply don't understand or they haven't thought through their actions and they need to be instructed.

They need to be taught. So we need to teach them. But also to adults, the rudeness sometimes found in children should definitely not be found in you as an adult.

Sometimes children or adults act like petulant children in public and it's because they haven't, they don't think manners matter.

[15:44] They don't think it's a big deal to be rude. Well, adults, we should know better. We should know better. You've lived in this world long enough.

You know that there are other people out there. This isn't your world. We have to live in it. We have to share it together. And so be decent to each other. Your religion should go with you to Walmart. It should be there in the parking lot when you decide, do I just leave this cart here or do I take it where it belongs? It should go out with you on the highway, in the bathroom, in the kitchen, at McDonald's, at church.

You see, love never takes a minute off. It's never a place where you don't need to be considerate of others. It never goes on vacation.

Now, number three, do you want to be an attractive Christian? An attractive Christian that people are genuinely attracted to.

[16:50] They say, I like being around that person. That person is nice to be around, pleasant. Do you want to make the gospel of Jesus Christ attractive? There's a lot of things you can do.

I think maybe one of the bare minimums is to be a polite Christian. To be a polite Christian, a considerate Christian. Polite, considerate people, polite, considerate Christians are always attractive Christians.

They make the gospel of Jesus Christ attractive, or at least they keep it from being unnecessarily offensive. The gospel is going to offend people because it calls them sinners.

It says they need to be saved. They need Jesus Christ. But we don't need to make it more offensive by our unbecoming behavior, our rudeness, our boorishness, our just us not being considerate of others.

So what does that look like in real life? We have a wonderful example in Hudson Taylor. He loved Christ. He loved people. He was called to be a missionary in China.

[17:58] And the prevailing thought when Hudson Taylor went to China was it was okay. It was what you did was you just remained British. You remained English.

And you maybe got them to think the way that you dressed and everything like the way you did. Pretty soon he realized if he was going to reach the Chinese for Christ, he was going to have to become like them as much as possible.

Any way that he could to be considerate towards them. Now that meant several things for him. It meant the minimum was he's going to have to learn their language. But it also meant that as much as possible, he would live the way they lived because he didn't want to be rude.

And some of the things that he was doing just because of the cultural differences were considered rude. They're not polite. It wasn't considerate of their feelings. It wasn't considerate of their culture. And so what did he do? Well, he gave up his native British dress, his clothing. And he began to dress Chinese. And he grew out his hair and he changed his hair so he didn't look like Charles Spurgeon in London.

[19:08] He looked like a Chinese man in China. He began using chopsticks. Even when he and his wife were out walking, his wife would walk a few steps behind him because that was the way it was done.

It was a sign of respect. Now, the other missionaries criticized him. But he kept going on that because he was convinced that love is considerate.

It thinks about other people. It thinks about their likes and their feelings. It's not rude. You see, it's not all about what I think and what I like.

Rudeness says I'm the only one and I'll do whatever I want and I'll say whatever I want to however I want to say it to whoever I want to say it and I'll act however I want. I'm the only one.

It's all about me. But love is all about including others. It's about drawing people together and it's thinking about others and that's attractive.

[20:16] It's attractive. And that's what Jesus did. He came. He considered where we were. He considered our culture.

He considered our problems. He came to us. He brought us in. He didn't go around saying, I don't care what all these people think. I'm going to do whatever I want. No, he came and he was considerate.

So he made himself like us in every way. He wore sandals and he lounged to eat because that was how it was done.

He loved us. He thought of us. He realized that we were there. And so in the most profound way, he was considerate.

Considerate of others. We need to say he was not a pushover. He was not polite and unrighteous.

[21 : 20] He was polite and he was righteous. He wasn't a pushover, but he wasn't rude either. It's interesting.

If you look at what some people are saying, if you just type in sort of Google, was Jesus polite? The answer invariably always comes back, oh, he wasn't polite. He wasn't polite.

And what they're trying to say was he didn't always tell people what they wanted to hear. But he was polite. He wasn't unnecessarily rude to anyone.

So he wasn't a pushover, but he wasn't rude. And so let's go and do likewise. Parents, let's teach our children the same.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for the example of Jesus Christ, and we thank you for the lived out life of our Savior.

[22 : 19] Because to a man, a woman, a boy, or a girl here, we have been rude. We have been rude to people. We've been inconsiderate.

And we need your forgiveness for those things. And we thank you that our Lord Jesus was always considerate. He was kind and honest and truthful.

And he was not rude. Thank you that he was all those things for us. He never lost his patience. He never lived boorishly.

But he was polite and considerate. And that righteousness is now ours, where we have failed so many times. But please, Holy Spirit, help us to be mindful, mindful of this truth, that love is not rude, that this is important.

But help us to be mindful in those moments where we are. when we are put to the test of being selfish and inconsiderate or to do something kind and polite.

[23 : 30] Holy Spirit, help us to see that situation and help us then to live in a way that pleases the Father. We thank you for Jesus, our Savior.

We thank you for the word of God that is true. Please help us to live on it, to trust it. In Jesus' name I do pray. Amen.