

**Living in the overflow of God's love**  
Love is not rude

Let's face it: the Golden Rule is tarnished...

Common courtesy doesn't exist anymore. Civility, manners, and politeness are nostalgic memories. We're more mean-spirited than ever.

At concerts, in the air, in supermarkets, in business dealings, at sporting events, everywhere, people are selfish, angry, rude and crude.

'It's about the daily assault of selfish, inconsiderate behavior that gets under people's skin on the highways, in the office, on TV, in stores and the myriad other settings where they encounter fellow Americans.'

An ABCNEWS/World News Tonight Poll confirms that most of us (85%) feel that a simple "thank you" and "please" would make the world a better place. And more than **8 out of 10 Americans** "say the failure of parents to instruct (my addition: it's not instructing but the modeling that needs to happen) their children in good behavior is a 'major cause' of bad manners" -- adults with kids are "as likely as those without to say that **bad parenting is a major cause of bad manners.**"

Experts agree that there's a general breakdown of civility. When you're **surrounded by media with attitude**, ill-mannered sports stars, and the rest of us snarling at each other everywhere, the result is **pervasive rudeness**, observes the editor of the Saratoga News.

The evidence is in: most of us work in a "toxic" environment. **Workplace incivility is rampant** -- rude, petty, mean, bullying, back-stabbing, and disrespectful co-workers and bosses are responsible for job stress, low morale, and more.

A writer for the Los Angeles Business Journal examines the rudeness of air passengers and airline personnel toward each other – uncivil behavior that's at an all time high. He says, "The environment at airports is more hellish than heavenly."

When we're not in dyer straits it's amazing what we will not put up with.

The reality of our lives is that God has provided for us again and again. God has given me gift after gift.

The gift that moved me/you from

1. Sinner to saint
2. Hell-bent to heaven bound
3. Confused to clarified
4. Guilty to justified

If anyone has received from God, it's me! If anyone has received the gifts of God without paying a cent, it's me! And the truth is, it's the same thing for you.

But you'd think that by the way we act sometimes, that we paid full price for everything we have.

Do we have rights? Yes. And requests for many of our rights are not wrong. But for many of us, it's the way we request our rights.

The Bible uses a four letter word for this kind of bad behavior-- "R-u-d-e"

When Paul defines for us what love is not, rudeness makes it on the list. Paul says, "**love is not rude.**"  
**1 Cor. 13:5**

The word "RUDE" really means shameful or disgraceful behavior.

Can you see why God calls us to a higher level of concern? God's call for us is not "what are my rights" but "what is loving?"

**Here's what it looks like:**

- Do you have the right to dominate a conversation? Yes, but the question is: is it loving to do so?
- Do you have the right to pretend you don't hear your wife speaking? Maybe! But the question is: is it loving?
- Do you have the right to bark at the waitress, or store clerk or your kids? Yes, but the question is: is it loving to act this way?

Helen is a great wife. But there are some things she hates to do: 1. Cook 2. Go food shopping  
There was a time that it was like pulling eye teeth for Helen to go food shopping. Until I began to say to her that I want to be with her and that food shopping is just one of the many other ways for us to be together. I know, you're probably rolling your eyes at how corny this sounds... But do you know what she's been doing... shopping with me and sometimes (when I'm really busy) she goes shopping without me. Not because she loves shopping... it's because she loves me.

Isn't that courteous of Helen? In fact, it's down right Christlike? Have you ever thought about the word courteous next to Jesus?

**Quote from Max:**

"You know how you never notice double-cab red trucks until your friend says he wants one-- then you see a dozen of them? I had never thought much about the courtesy of Christ before, but as I began looking I realized that Jesus makes Emily Post look like Archie Bunker."

Jesus doesn't stand over you with a stick! Jesus doesn't come to us with manipulation and coercion to get us to do what he wants us to do. Jesus doesn't barge in on us. But make no mistake, he does knock. He knocks on the door of our heart. I know that he owns our hearts, but he knocks anyway- **Rev. 3:20a "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock"**. And when we finally answer, he waits for our invitation for him to enter.

When Jesus enters, he brings a house warming gift for us. (**Acts 2:38**). The Holy Spirit.

When we invite Jesus into our lives, he stays! and he serves- **Mark 10:45 "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."**

If your missing your towel, you'll find it on Jesus- **John 13:3-5 "Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel round his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped round him."**

God is courteous enough to tell us his name- **Ex. 3:14-15 "God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: `I AM has sent me to you.'" God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, `The LORD, the God of your fathers--the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob--has sent me to you.' This is my name for ever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation."**

Jesus also calls us by name! **John 10:1-3 "I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out."**

Jesus never interrupts. There's nothing worse than trying to express yourself to a person who thinks they know what you're asking before you ask. I had a professor who did this often. In the middle of my question he'd answer a question I never asked. But with Jesus, he never interrupts even though he **knows** what we need or what we're asking before we ask him. Jesus is courteous!

Jesus knows what you've done before you ask him for forgiveness. Nothing can be hidden from him. **Heb. 4:12-13** "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account." But a God with lessor courtesy wouldn't even let you get it out of your mouth and would remind you about how many times you've had this same conversation him. He'd remind you of your track record. But not Jesus. Love is not rude. Jesus listens.

Jesus is never late, nor is he ever early. Solomon tells us that there's a time for everything (Eccl. 3:1) Jesus is right on schedule with your life.

### Cast Away (Chuck Noland played by Tom Hanks)

Once he makes it past the greatest wave into the open sea, the music begins. This is an emotional scene. He and Wilson look back on the island as it fades in the mist. During the night a whale comes alongside the raft. Chuck hears it, sees it spout water, and then watches it surface. One large eye opens and looks at him. This is very symbolic. A storm comes; and Wilson floats away. You hear the whale, and he sprays Nolan's face awakening him to the fact that Wilson is lost. Chuck goes after Wilson, but cannot reach him. This is a scene of the breaking of his heart. When a heart can be broken, it can love. This whole vignette is very moving. Noland releases his oars into the water and totally surrenders.

In the next scene, the whale comes back and sprays Noland's face again, awakening him this time to draw his attention to the passing ship. The whale has watched over him and awakened him at the right moments. This is an incredible picture of an all knowing God who watches over His children.

The ultimate courtesy of Jesus is that he watches over us and he is leading us to the seat he's given us in Heaven!

I can still see the look on the kids faces. When I was the Director at Camp Gander Brook, I would go to singing class and deliberately sit next to a different kid everyday. You should have seen what I saw. A kid feeling loved, accepted and in good company.

Has it been a awhile since you've felt loved, accepted and in good company? People can be so rude. We snatch parking places, we forget names, we interrupt and we fail to show up. Could you use some courtesy?

If so, let Jesus give you some courtesy. Jesus is your groom! And you know what a groom does? He cherishes his bride. He respects his bride. He honors his bride. Today, let Jesus do what he longs to do to you.

Here's why: When you let Jesus love you, you'll find it easy to give your love to others. As you reflect the courtesy he's given to you, you'll be more likely to show courtesy for others. This is what it means to "live in the overflow of God's love." Don't think through this part too fast now. If you do, you'll miss the point of the lesson.

We are called to represent the King! "*You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.*" **Mt 5:13-16**

Imagine with me— if we had a sign on our foreheads for all to see... “I wear Christ!” Would we act differently? Those around us who are not believers would note what we do. They would be affected about what they think of Christ by watching us. When we are kind they would assume that Christ is kind. When we are gracious, they would assume that Christ is gracious. But if we’re audacious, brazen, cheeky, sassy, blunt, curt, flippant, harsh, sarcastic, snippy or rude, what would people think about our King?

Do you suppose that wearing this sign would change things? For us? The truth is, we are wearing a sign. Here’s something for you to consider: **“for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” Galatians 3:27**

No wonder Paul tells us : **“Be wise in the way you act towards 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.” Colossians 4:5,6**

### **Courteous conduct honors Jesus!**

Courteous conduct also honors His children. When you surrender a parking space to someone, you honor that person. When you make an effort to greet everyone in the room, especially the ones others may have overlooked or avoided, you honor God’s children.

So we come back to the place we began today... our Scripture reading **Rom. 12:18** **“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”**

Remember, you cannot control another’s attitude, but you can manage your own.

God is amazing: I completed this lesson and finished at 12:30 pm on Friday... and wouldn’t you know it, the phone rings in the office. It’s a telemarketer. And he was good one (if you know what I mean) and I didn’t hang up on him. Imagine that! I am simply amazed at God.

When we live in the overflow of God’s love, we will have a love worth giving!

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