

“Love is not rude” 1 Corinthians chapter 13 verse 5

Sometimes the Amplified Bible is very helpful. It tries to convey the full meaning of the original languages, which helps our understanding, even if it does sacrifice a little in readability and rely a lot on brackets.

In the Amplified Version, the verse goes like this; “Love (God's love in me) is not rude (unmannerly) and does not act unbecomingly.”

Good manners and courtesy are usually understood to be matters of etiquette, or simple, everyday good behaviour towards others. Actually they are expressions of grace. For example, I was always taught by my parents to give up my seat on the bus for an elderly person, or a disabled person, or someone with a lot of shopping, or a lady (I know I'd probably get a flea in my ear these days for that last one). But in doing so, how do I know that any of these people actually deserves my sacrifice of my seat. However old and frail a person might be, they could have spent a wicked life being selfish and cruel at the expense of everyone else in their lives.

So everyday courtesy is a small, undeserved gift of kindness that comes, not from the deserving of the recipient, but from a desire within us to bless the life of another person. As such, it is also a small revelation of grace which we can carry out towards each other in the fellowship of the church and in our lives in the world every day, so let's not think it is unimportant.

We can practice loving others with the love that comes from God and not being rude by; waiting our turn and not pushing in; letting others go first; holding doors for people; the aforementioned giving up of our seats; not making personal comments, especially disparaging ones; showing a genuine interest in the lives of others; offering help. I'm sure you can think of many other examples.

The Amplified Bible suggests that rudeness carries a sense of acting “unbecomingly”. That would mean acting in a way that is not in keeping with the way it is right for a Christian to act, and to do that means acting in the best interests of others.

How can we Christians know that we are acting in unbecoming ways? The New Testament simply tells us that whatever we do we must do it in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving glory to God through him. So we can ask ourselves the very simple question; “Can I do or say what I am planning to do or say in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and will it bring glory to God.” That might make us stop and think if we feel the urge to behave discourteously, rudely or unbecomingly.

Prayer.

Father, I want to represent you in all I do. I want to reflect your grace towards me in my own behaviour towards others. Please keep uppermost in my mind that, in all that I say and do, I need to be able to speak and act in the name of Jesus Christ and so bring glory to you. In Jesus' name, amen.

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