

Love is Not Rude By Wendy Wood



Love is not rude. The NASB translation says love “does not act unbecomingly.” The NIV says, love “does not dishonor others”. The Greek word is *asch mone* which is translated as “uncomely”. Paul writes this in the negative form to say love is not rude. Love is not inconsiderate. Love is not inappropriate or improper. In Ephesians 1 - 3 Paul tells about all that Christ has accomplished on the cross and who we are ‘in Christ’ as a result of grace through faith. He then begins chapter 4 with, “Therefore, walk worthy of the calling to which you have received”. To walk worthy of our calling as children of God, is to walk like God’s Son, Jesus . We are to love in conduct that “becomes” or is beautiful to Christ. We should display conduct that becomes a believer. So often we display conduct unbecoming of a believer, similar to a military person being discharged for conduct unbecoming the uniform. While this verse describes what love

is not, put positively, it is clear that love is courteous, attractive, polite, and mature. Love considers others when speaking and acting.

Jerry Bridges, in his book *Respectable Sins*, says this about being inconsiderate. “The inconsiderate person never thinks about the impact of his actions on others. The person who is always late and keeps others waiting is inconsiderate. The person who talks loudly on his cell phone to the disturbance of others nearby is selfishly inconsiderate. So is the teenager who leaves her mess on the kitchen counter for someone else to clean up. Anytime we do not think about the impact of our actions on others we are being selfishly inconsiderate.”¹⁴

Certainly “love is not rude” goes hand in hand with love being patient and kind. But let’s look at a few more ways that love can be expressed with considerateness.

Philippians 4:5 says “Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.” As you have conversations with people throughout the day and as you respond to people and situations around you, are you prone to gentleness or rudeness? Is your gentleness, the evidence of God’s grace in your life, evident to all? Are the people in your home likely to receive gentle words or a rude tone? What about the people you deal with in public? Would people characterize you as a gentle person who looks to the interest of others in the way you interact with them? Do other drivers on the road think you are rude?

Philippians 2:3-4 says, “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.” Do you count, or consider or reckon others more important than yourself? This gets to the awareness of others whether we are alone or around other people. When you are in a store, are you aware of and

¹⁴ *Respectable Sins* by Jerry Bridges

concerned about blocking other people's way? Are you quick to run to get to the front of the line, concerned about yourself, or do you care more about making other people's day easier? Do you have loud conversations in public not caring if you are disturbing others? What about your habits? Are there some that annoy the people in your family? Are you willing to change habits so that you show love to the other person? Do you consider your spouse's preferences and seek to meet them rather than your own preferences? There are so many examples throughout the day when we can seek to honor others ahead of ourselves. This consideration is what it means to "not be rude".

Romans 14:13 "Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister." Rude people are quick to judge others, especially ones that are weaker or struggle in some way. Do you exercise your freedom to do things knowing that in Christ this preference is not forbidden even if it is an area of struggle for someone you are with? For example, you may feel free to watch certain television shows but if you know someone else is tempted by them, do you still watch while they are present or talk about the show in their presence? Or maybe you enjoy a glass of wine with dinner but the couple you have over to your house feels strongly that they shouldn't drink. Are you willing to forego your desires to not be a stumbling block to others?

Ephesians 6:5-7 "Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man". Love is not rude means that we show honor to our bosses and others in authority over us. How do you think and respond when your boss makes a decision you disagree with? Does your body language show honor when you get an email you don't like at work? Do you obey the laws and rules placed by police and government even if no one else is around?

Romans 12:10 “Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.” Brotherly affection means we treat others as we want to be treated. We show up on time so we don’t keep the other person waiting. When we make a commitment we keep it. Outdoing others in showing honor means we take our responsibilities seriously both at home and at work. We get our job done and offer to help others. We come alongside other people and work as equals whether the other person is as skilled or not. We don’t look down at others but appreciate them for who they are as image bearers of Christ.

Speech is one way it is easy to be rude. Proverbs 15:1 says “A soft answer turns away wrath but a harsh word stirs up anger.” Ephesians 4:31 says, “Let allclamor and slander be put away from you”. Listen to your words for a week. Are they kind, gentle words or do they tend toward rudeness?

James 1:19 tells us to be quick to listen. Are you a polite listener? Most people will interrupt and cut off other people while they are talking. This is rude. Examine your conversations this week. Do you wait until your spouse is done talking before you respond? Do you take the time to hear all that your child has to say before you make your decision or judgement? Polite, considerate listening is giving the other person your full attention. Make eye contact. Show with head nodding or other body language that you are hearing and understanding what is being communicated. If you have questions, ask or clarify what is being said. Do you ask questions when having a conversation or do you make statements? Humble, polite people ask questions. They show interest in others and don’t assume they know everything. Proud and rude people make the conversation all about themselves.

The list of ways rudeness shows up seem endless. Take inventory of how you live daily life. Do you go about your day thinking about how you can be polite and considerate of others, or are you focused on what you need to get done?

Love for others is patient, kind, not envious, not boastful, not arrogant, and definitely not rude.

Application:

What concepts of rudeness caught your attention.

As you think about how you live, on a scale of 1-10, how do you rate yourself in rudeness (with 10 being very rude).

In what areas of life are you prone to rudeness?

What are some specific ways that you could be more considerate of the people in your immediate family? Write down each name with something specific you need to change to show polite consideration of each person.

What are some specific ways that you could be more considerate of others when you are out and about during the week? Write out specific occurrences where you struggle with being rude and what love would look like instead.