

20 Days of Trouble

Topic #5 - Rudeness

Textbook Def:

Being discourteous or impolite, especially in a deliberate way.*

Real-Life Look:

It's clear you're walking to a particular register to check out, and as you're on your way, someone who obviously has more important plans cuts right in front of you. They saw you, they knew you should have been next in line, but they didn't care.

You're out to dinner with friends at a local restaurant. There's a problem with a customer's order one table over. Instead of addressing the issue with respect, the patron raises their voice, berates the waitress and reads her the riot act.

As a man walks by Boy Scouts in front of a local store he utters, "Losers." Gosh, this may even qualify for beyond rude! (this just happened to my cousin!)

You're at work and someone overhears a telephone conversation you're having. When you're done, they question you about it, even though you didn't invite them into the conversation nor did you solicit their opinion.

There are five couples in your bible study group. You love them all dearly, but there's one gal who commandeers every conversation. She interrupts, talks incessantly, and is clearly only interested in her own opinion.

You're in the middle of a conversation with your friend. Her phone goes off. While you are mid-sentence, she looks down and begins responding to the text message. She's actually sending two messages at once – a response to the 'texter', and a message to you that you're really not all that important.

Sword of the Spirit:

"Those who guard their mouths and their tongues keep themselves from calamity."
Proverbs 21:23

“Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful.” 1 Cor 13:4-5

“Wisdom’s instruction is to fear the Lord, and humility comes before honor.”

Breaking It Down:

You CANNOT believe he just said what he did. It takes a lot to shock you, but he managed to leave your mouth hanging open in utter disbelief. Or you’re rolling your eyes in disgust and your insides are itching (anyone else ever get this feeling when you are uncomfortable?). Will she EVER stop talking and give someone else a turn?

Have you ever had these moments? Oh boy, I’ve had many.

In the past, though, *I would combat rudeness with rudeness*. That approach is akin, however, to trying to teach your child not to hit by spanking them. It’s not the most effective method.

Actually responding with rudeness is just as wrong as someone who was rude to begin with.

What if you are the one with the initial problem?

- You can’t seem to give anyone your attention if your phone is in your hand.
- You’re busy formulating your response to what someone else is saying before they are even done. Often you completely mow over their last few words, not asking them questions about what *they’ve said* or showing interest in *their* story, but instead, being far too eager to share your own input.
- You’re rushed, tired, and late. The line was long and the cashier slow. Sharp words tumbled out of your mouth before you were able to catch them. And you just didn’t care enough to apologize.
- Your son needs to speak to you and you tell him to, “Go ahead,” but the computer screen has captured your attention. You look up at your son, but quickly back down at your computer. Then you go for round two... back to your son, back to the computer. You’re distracted and your son knows it. And his feelings are hurt. Rightly so.

Guilty, guilty, guilty. My most common slip? Jumping the gun before asking questions. I’ll see or hear something and my sharp tongue fires back with assumptions. RUDE!

Now I try to ask well-meaning and non-aggressive questions before sharing my opinion. Oh, yeah, and WAITING for someone to actually ASK my opinion. What a concept!

The Benefit in Decluttering Trouble

Rudeness is never okay. Whether you're initiating the poor behavior or reacting to it, being rude is dishonoring, disrespectful, and just plain wrong.

It's difficult to be patient in conversation, calm in irritating situations, and composed when you're under attack, but the way you handle challenging circumstances really speaks volumes to your faith walk. And your character.

God expects us to go above and beyond and rise to a standard that defies the norm in today's society. You know the slogan, "Not of This World"? This is *precisely* what it's referring to, behaving in a way different from the world. And different can be better!

It's crazy when you consider all it takes is a little patience, courtesy and civility to improve the standard, but it's true. *Stand down and you will likely stand out.*

This isn't to say you're required to be a doormat or present a timid personality, but it does mean that there's a right way and wrong way to handle things. Decluttering rudeness and displaying courtesy, respect, and care provides a number of attractive benefits.

- You may not 'win' every argument if you aren't the loudest or successful in getting the last word in, but you may prevent escalation and walk away with your self-respect intact. *That's a bigger score!*
- You will be welcomed and appreciated in group activities.
- You won't compromise your witness.
- You will gain the admiration of your peers and set a great example of character and integrity for those around you.

You can be right but wrong at the top of your voice. Focus on simply doing what's right and let the rest work itself out. Rudeness is of the world but God isn't! He's got this!

*dictionary.reference.com

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