

Perfect, Gentle Courtesy (Part 2)

Real Gentlemen and Ladies Are Polite and Patient

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Today, we will continue with another practical application sermon of very obvious godly qualities. These are things we can take to heart and do something about in a more obvious way. They may not be things that we think of at the level of the Ten Commandments, but they are important nevertheless. The world would consider these things to fall under the area of civility.

At the end of my last sermon Perfect Gentle Courtesy (Part 1), I read Jesus' encouraging promise that He is gentle and humble in the way that He deals with us. In this we find great comfort and encouragement.

Matthew 11:29-30 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

We see there an attitude behind that of gentleness, humility, concern and mercy and of wanting peace. Christ is giving a reason why we should embrace His doctrines. That is, He is not harsh, overbearing, or oppressive, like the Pharisees, but gentle and patient in the way that He governs. His laws are reasonable and tender, and it should be easy to obey Him. Of course, with our human nature at enmity with God, it is not as easy as it sounds.

Wherever pride and anger exist, there is nothing but mind games, frustration and confusion; but, where the gentleness and humility of Christ exist, everything is calm, even, peaceable, quiet and in order. The reason is that the work of righteousness is peace, and the effect of righteousness is quietness and assurance.

Paul, the formerly zealously harsh persecutor of the church, recognized that gentleness does not come naturally for many. He explicitly lists gentleness as a fruit of the Spirit, a virtue that is planted and flourishes where God dwells by His Spirit. It is to be "put on" with other Christian virtues such as compassion, lowliness and patience.

Colossians 3:12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness [includes gentleness], longsuffering [includes patience];

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Gentleness is not a mere contemplative virtue. Gentleness is an excellence in character that acts to maintain peace and patience even in the midst of exasperating annoyances. Within the Bible we find gentleness associated with love, kindness, patience, meekness and humility. Paul told the Ephesian congregation:

Ephesians 4:2 with all lowliness [i.e. humility] and gentleness, with longsuffering [includes patience], bearing with one another in love,

We have no doubt that these are qualities all Christians should have, and that we should be pursuing ourselves.

The church, as individuals and as a group, is gentle. We must be a people who follow in the footsteps of our gentle Lord and Savior in how we deal with one another. To the Corinthian congregation, Paul refers to this attribute of Christ in this way:

II Corinthians 10:1 Now I, Paul, myself am pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ -

We see where our example comes from, and we know that Jesus Christ is in baptized members of His church. We also know where the power and strength is to be of a gentle nature.

Obviously, this is not a gentleness that is naive or spineless, but a gentleness that lives with principled firmness like the innocence of doves is to live with the shrewdness of snakes. Listen to Jesus' commission to the apostles:

Matthew 10:16 "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

Serpents have always been an emblem of wisdom and cunning. Probably the thing that Christ told His followers to imitate in the serpent is its caution in avoiding danger. No animal equals them in the swiftness and skill with which they escape danger. This seems to be the message Christ wanted to convey to His disciples. He was instructing them to be cautious and wise in a world that would stalk their lives. We see such a contrast between our way of life and God's way of life.

He also directed them not to harm or injure anyone, and not to provoke wrath in anyone. Doves are, and always have been, an outstanding symbol of innocence. Most people would foolishly destroy a serpent without a second thought even if it were a harmless one. Few people would take this unsympathetic manner to kill a dove. It is interesting

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how human nature works that way.

Emily Post, who lived from 1873 to 1960, in Chapter 24, of her book on Etiquette, copyright 1922, under The Fundamentals of Good Behavior wrote:

Simplicity and Unconsciousness of Self

Unconsciousness of self is not so much unselfishness as it is the mental ability to extinguish all thought of one's self - exactly as one turns out the light.

Simplicity is like it, in that it also has a quality of self-effacement, but it really means a love of the essential and of directness. Simple people put no trimmings on their phrases, nor on their manners; but remember, simplicity is neither crudeness nor anything like it. On the contrary, simplicity of speech and manners means language in its purest, most limpid form, and manners of such perfection that they do not suggest "manner" at all.

Emily Post lived at a more kindly time, one of more etiquette and more concern for one another. What she is saying in the above quote is that good manners and good etiquette come actually from the heart. Etiquette is something that is not contrived or orchestrated.

In Romans 12, the apostle Paul provides principles that help us understand the attitude we should have while displaying good manners, proper etiquette and politeness especially within the church. The key word here is humility.

Romans 12:16 Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.

In order to have a close relationship with the humble we have to be unpretentious and unpretentious ourselves. Association with the humble will bring about a right and proper influence worthy of imitation. Therefore, Paul tells us here to avoid all pride and snobbishness.

Although the world admires pompous people, we must remember that the standards by which the world judges a man are usually not the standards by which God judges him.

Christian etiquette has nothing to do with social status or wealth. The Christian church is

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the only real place where master and slave, rich and poor can sit side by side as brothers. The church is the only place where all physical distinctions are gone, because with God there is no respect of persons.

Paul was well aware that Christian conduct must not only be good; it must also produce good. Professing Christianity can be presented in the most callous and unattractive way; but true Christianity is something that is gentle and pleasant, and it avoids the appearance of evil.

Ephesians 4:17-24, 29-32 This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

We often think of this, and rightly so, that this former conduct that we are putting off are the former sins that we had. In a sense, we were spiritual gentiles in the world, before coming into God's church. But, it goes further than that. It also means how we witness, how we act, how we portray Christianity and how we represent Jesus Christ and God the Father.

Ephesians 4:29-32 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.

We know that grace to the hearers is something pleasant to the hearers, something that is joyful. We see there that our whole demeanor, our whole way of communicating with other individuals should have these qualities of kindness and tenderheartedness.

Verse 31 says, "*Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.*" Let us look at this simply, in its outward sense, as a lack of

politeness.

Is politeness enough to reflect perfect gentle courtesy from the heart?

The Greeks and Romans were very committed to etiquette. Their etiquette was not the kind that produced any real encouragement to be a moral society. It was not genuine from the heart; it was to get something from the others in the world.

The Chinese have the strictest forms of etiquette, and they have hundreds of books that make a fuss of over-politeness. One of their expositions on this subject is said to contain over three thousand articles.

In the past the custom of salutations, of visiting, of eating, of giving presents, of introductions, of writing letters, and the like, were all strictly defined. They were enforced like our laws here in the United States are, and no one was permitted to disobey them. The Chinese have loosened some, but they still adhere to a more strict custom of politeness than we do in this country. We have been inclined to consider the Chinese as barbarians in a general sense, while in fact they are a far more polite nation than our own.

In Europe, good manners have also been more highly esteemed than here, and have been more diligently inculcated both in the highest and the lowest classes. The children have been taught that it is essential for them to show respect to their superiors and elders, and to be always kind and courteous to those of a lower class. As elsewhere in the world, this has lost a great deal of its importance in the last few decades.

In America, politeness and etiquette are taught in families of inherited wealth and prestige; but is rarely taught at all among the general public. Unlike today, our public schools were institutions of good manners more than half a century years ago. Back then, the children were taught to bow to strangers passing by. Now they would be more likely to acknowledge them with profanity, crudeness and disrespect. Even the "best of schools" has its problems with a lack of etiquette, politeness and civility, so to speak.

Despite this abundance of bad manners there is enough interest to make it worthwhile to *Amazon.com* to offer well over 1,700 books on etiquette! I wonder how many are purchased, because it does not seem to be having much of an effect on this society.

Sadly, good manners are rare in the United States. The lower officials are often bad-tempered and brusque, except when they are on the news or before a microphone. Sometimes they are caught saying things under their breath, with the microphone still

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on. It can be quite humorous although it is a very sad situation. There are a people of this world called "the ugly Americans." That is a name Americans traveling abroad have had since World War II. It is a shame that Americans are not known for their politeness, good manners and that type of thing. To one extent or another we are all products of this society.

This nation's principles of freedom have not stopped this irresponsibility with regard to politeness and courtesy. As a result most citizens throw a shadow of disgrace upon this nation. We in the Church of God should be good witnesses for God the Father and Jesus Christ. We should take note of good manners, but not to the extent that some of these etiquette books go to.

I might interject here, that I read one etiquette book where it told what was proper for a young single woman to do when she shook someone's hand. It depended upon whether the man was married or not, depended on his age, or her age; it depended on whether she was engaged or not. I only remember one of the handshakes; I think it was the one where the single young woman when she shook a man's hand was to let her hand drop out of the bottom of it. These were things that a woman had to do to be proper. If a woman did not do them there was a scandal about her actions. That reminds me of the Pharisees, and how they made so many laws that it became overbearing and made everybody feel like they were under the gun all of the time. I am not talking about those types of good manners and etiquette.

The Apostle Peter assumes that Christians will have good conduct. It is a fact that must be accurate about all the saints. The world may accuse us of insincerity, hypocrisy, and dishonesty, of being enemies of the state, or of horrible crimes. The time will come when they will see their error. Perfect gentle courtesy is an important part of avoiding the appearances of evil.

I Peter 3:15-17 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

I know that sometimes when someone says something negative about our beliefs, or persecutes us, the human nature part of us wants to bounce back with some harsh comment or say something that might be derogatory about their religion. We are to be civil, polite and to have good manners in the way that we deal with people. In addition,

we are to be gentle about it.

We are admonished, in what Peter wrote, not to cause ourselves to suffer because it is our own

fault - - whether it is through sin, foolishness, neglect, or laziness. It is our duty to have good conduct, even if God allows us to suffer.

Daisy Eyebright wrote a good manners guide she called, 'A Manual of Etiquette with Hints on Politeness and Good Breeding.' This was written and published back in 1880's. She is a little bit older than Emily Post. I am going back that far because some of the things they wrote back then really had a lot of depth of understand. They placed a lot of Christian values into the things they wrote.

Before I read from her work, I want to make sure we understand the term "good breeding." I do not want to offend anybody here. The term has over many years picked up the implication of snobbery. Nevertheless, there are certain practical principles about good manners that are timeless and built on Biblical principles. Some in higher echelons have turned some of these wonderful principles that are founded in the golden rule into pharisaical snootiness. As you know we are to, "Do unto others as you would have them do to you." Politeness is an expression of the "golden rule"; and without it life is an arid wasteland.

So let us define what is really meant by 'good breeding.' Synonyms for breeding are: manners, refinement, polish, gentility, politeness, courtesy, grace, upbringing, training, and rearing.

Good breeding, therefore, means to inculcate by training, for example, to instill good manners into one's children. It is the training in or observance of the proprieties. The word 'proprieties' means to be proper. It relates to appropriateness, respectability, modesty and decency. It refers to the customs and manners of a polite society. To be polite you do not have to go to the extent of these experts on etiquette, but we do have a type of politeness in dealing with the world.

There is nothing wrong with good breeding. In fact, every Christian family should be - - not only concerned with good breeding - - but parents should be teaching it to their children. If children are not taught good manners they will tend to be slobs, vulgar, disrespectful, unhelpful, uncooperative and unable to control themselves.

Daisy Eyebright begins her manual of etiquette with a preface qualifying etiquette and

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good manners. Published in the 1880s, her basic premise still holds true. Here is what she says:

Preface

Men often speak of good manners as an accomplishment. I speak of them as a duty. What, then, are good manners? Such manners as the usages of society have recognized as being agreeable to men. Such manners as take away rudeness, and remit to the brute creation all coarseness. There are a great many who feel that good manners are effeminate. They have a feeling that rude bluntness is a great deal more manly than good manners. It is a great deal more beastly. But when men are crowded in communities, the art of living together is no small art. How to diminish friction; how to promote ease of intercourse; how to make every part of a man's life contribute to the welfare and satisfaction of those around him; how to keep down offensive pride; how to banish the rasping of selfishness from the intercourse of men; how to move among men inspired by various and conflictive motives, and yet not have collisions - this is the function of good manners.

I thought that that was a good definition of good manners, and she had a good handle on it way back in 1880. The Bible had a greater influence then than it does in our society today. Reading on with another paragraph from her preface:

Not only is the violation of good manners inexcusable on ordinary grounds, but also it is sinful. When, therefore, parents, guardians, and teachers would inspire the young with a desire for the manners of good society, it is not to be thought that they are accomplishments, which may be accepted or rejected. Every man is bound to observe the laws of politeness. It is the expression of good-will and kindness. It promotes both beauty in the man who possesses it, and happiness in those who are about him. It is a religious duty, and should be a part of religious training.

The apostle Peter tells us that being of one mind requires compassion, love, and tenderheartedness. He goes as far as to place 'being courteous' with these other important virtues of things we must bear in mind.

I Peter 3:8 Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous;

It is interesting that Adam Clarke's Commentary says that 'courteous' is from the Greek

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word *philophrones* in I Peter 3:8 means "Be friendly-minded; acquire and cultivate a friendly disposition." For the same verse, and the same word, Barnes' Notes says this Greek term 'be courteous' means "friendly-minded, kind, courteous."

Christianity requires that we should be courteous and gentlemanly in our treatment of others, but I Peter 3:8 only implies that to be the case. It is not necessarily a proof-text of that point.

Daisy Eyebright continues her manual of etiquette with an introduction that defines etiquette and good manners.

Introduction

Etiquette has been defined as a code of laws, which binds society together - viewless as the wind - and yet exercising a vast influence upon the well being of mankind.

These laws were instituted during the days of ancient chivalry, but as years have flown they have been modified in a great degree, many of them being quite obsolete and others entirely changed. Some, however, have been but slightly varied, to suit the times, being governed by the laws of good taste and common sense, and these not only facilitate the intercourse of persons in society, but are also essential to their ease and composure of manner.

"And manners," said the eloquent Edmund Burke, "are of more importance than laws, for upon them in a great measure the laws depend. The law can touch us here and there, now and then. Manners are what vex or soothe, corrupt or purify, exalt or debase, barbarize or refine, by a constant, steady, uniform and insensible operation, like that of the air we breathe in. They give their whole form and color to our lives. According to their quality they aid morals, they supply them, or they totally destroy them."

Simply put, Edmund Burke is saying that manners, laws and morals are inseparable. If you look at the letter of the law and the spirit of the law they are inseparable. A person can follow the letter of the law and not have politeness, gentleness and tenderness toward others. Agreeable manners are very frequently the fruits of a good heart, even though they may lack somewhat of graceful, courtly polish.

Daisy Eyebright ended the preface of her manual of etiquette with this comment:

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There is a great deal of contempt expressed for what is called etiquette in society. Now and then there are elements of etiquette, which perhaps might well be ridiculed; but in the main there is a just reason for all those customs, which come under the head of etiquette. There is a reason with regard to facility of intercourse. There is a reason in the avoidance of offense. There is a reason in comfort and happiness. And no man can afford to violate these unwritten customs of etiquette who wishes to act as a Christian gentleman.

Who is a gentleman? Believe it or not, in Church of the Great God, I have heard women complain about men, especially older teenage boys, as not being gentlemen or being somewhat crass or vulgar. I think it is important to go through and give you some ideas of what a gentleman is. I am not going to spend as much time on what ladies are following. I think you will find, as I did, this is very interesting and helpful.

Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary defines a 'gentleman' as: "a man whose conduct conforms to a high standard of propriety or correct behavior." A 'Christian gentleman', then, is a man whose conduct conforms to God's standard of righteousness - - to God's way of life!

It is interesting that humans have, through trial and error, arrived at similar rules of etiquette, good manners and politeness to principles of righteous living found in the Bible. Human beings have found that there are certain manners that make life with other people much more pleasant, peaceful and happy. They find that it works. Even in corporations you will find there are certain rules of etiquette that are followed because they realize everything runs more smoothly when people are polite and pleasant with each other.

Some have acknowledged that these logically discovered better ways not only work, but also are eternal and universal truths. Yet most people refuse to acknowledge God as the author of these rules of conduct that work to give everyone a better quality of life.

Daisy Eyebright answers the question "Who is a gentleman?" in her manual of etiquette. Here is an excerpt:

A gentleman is whoever is true, loyal and sincere; whoever is of a humane and affable demeanor, and courteous to all; whoever is honorable in himself, and in his judgment of others, and requires no law but his word to hold him to his engagements; such a man is a gentleman; whether he be dressed in broadcloth and in fine linen or be clad in a blue homespun frock; whether his hands are white and soft, or hardened and stained with drudgery and toil.

In ...an address made by the Bishop of Manchester, England ..., he said "Some people think a gentleman means a man of independent fortune - a man who fares sumptuously every day; a man who need not labor for his daily bread. None of these make a gentleman - not one of them - nor all of them together. I have known men when I was brought closer in contact with working men than I am brought now; I have known men of the roughest exterior, who had been used all their lives to follow the plough and to look after horses, as thorough gentlemen in heart as any nobleman who ever wore a ducal coronet. I mean I have known them as unselfish, I have known them as truthful, I have known them as sympathizing; and all these qualities go to make what I understand by the term 'a gentleman.'

"It is a noble privilege which has been sadly prostituted; and what I want to tell you is, that the humblest man in Leeds, who has the coarsest work to do, yet, if his heart be tender, and pure, and true, can be, in the most emphatic sense of the word, 'a gentleman.'"

We all know that there are those in our midst who object to politeness, or polite phrases, because, as they say, the language is false and unmeaning.....

In the common compliments of civilized life, there is no falsehood uttered, because there is no intention to deceive. In addition, polite language is always agreeable to the ear, and lends a soothing influence to the heart, while unkind and rough words, harshly uttered, are just the reverse.

Children and animals recognize this truth quite as readily as adults. A baby will cry at the sound of harsh language; and your horse, cow, dog, or cat, are all most amenable to kind words and caressing motions. ... Yet kindness is a language, which the dumb can speak and the deaf can understand.

We can convey the plainest of truths in a civil speech; and the most malignant of lies can be also wrapped in specious words. But we cannot consider a love of truth any apology for rude and uncouth manners; truth need not be made harsh, unlovely and morose; but should appear kind and gentle, attractive and pleasing.

Roughness and honesty are, however, often met with in the same person; but we are not competent judges of human nature; if we take ill-manners to be a guarantee of probity of heart, or think a stranger must be a knave

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because he possesses the outward seeming of a gentleman. Doubtless there are many wolves in sheep's clothing in our land, but that does not decrease the value of gentleness and courtesy in the least.

Good manners and a good conscience are very often twin-sisters, and are always more attractive for the companionship. Bad manners are frequently a species of bad morals; and Goethe tells us, "there is no outward sign of courtesy that does not rest on a deep, moral foundation."

Good manners are a very essential characteristic of religion also, as well as a fundamental part of civilization; and we are all duty bound to treat those with whom we come in contact, with consideration, respect and deference."

She had a very wide and balanced coverage of the subject to her introduction to etiquette, and it gives you an idea of why it is important to have such things as good manners and politeness.

In the epistle of James we see a "code of etiquette and good manners" inspired by the supreme Authority of the universe. James wrote that a Christian's character is expressed in such conduct as becoming a servant or slave of God, bridling the tongue, remaining pure and undefiled before God through care for the poor and oppressed, and being unstained by the world, having a gentleness as the result of wisdom. He also lists having a harvest of righteousness sown in peace, drawing near to God and God in turn drawing near to us. Cleansing the hands and purifying the heart, and being humble before God are just some of the elements of good manners that James covers in his epistle.

James speaks of wisdom *"from above"* as *"gentle"* as well as *"peaceable," "willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits."*

James 3:13, 17-18 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

There is a common problem in worldly families that should not be true of families in the Church. Peace is a rare thing in families of this insensitive society today. We might call this problem the habit of faultfinding. This problem is so often embraced by married

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people in front of their children, and it often leads to serious consequences.

A husband may give a ridiculous label to his wife which will raise a laugh at her expense (such as 'chubby' or 'slave' or 'old lady'); but in the end, it will lower him far more than the mother in the opinion of the children. In turn, they will often feel more respect and affection for the mother than for the father. Nothing can be more detrimental, or inconsistent to true politeness, than the constant habit of faultfinding concerning petty trifles, especially when directed at a husband or wife with regard to the home.

Some men rarely, if ever, come to the table without finding fault with the dishes at his place setting; or, if one kind of meat is served they wanted another. No matter what his wife may provide, such a man will always have a desire for something else.

Now, if this man were accused of faultfinding, he would indignantly deny it. At the same time he may be a kind and good and true husband and father, and have only inadvertently fallen into this habit of not being satisfied with what has been provided.

Here is a good way to cure him. His wife can hand him a pencil and a card every morning just before he leaves the house, and request him to put down what he wants for dinner. This should help in reducing or curing the daily faultfinding in this area. This should help convince him of his practice of nit-picking the menu; and go a long way towards him breaking his faultfinding habit. I use this somewhat humorous example to illustrate a point. We fall into habits that many times are just plain bad manners or poor etiquette.

Half of us find fault from habit; but some of us, sadly, do this from an inherited ill temperament. That is, our fathers did it, and maybe their fathers did it, and so on. Many of the flaws in our character are family characteristics that have been handed down from generation to generation. This is not an excuse for what we do but a reason why some bad habits are so hard to overcome.

"If it was good enough for my grandfather it is good enough for me!" goes the old adage.

Constant complaining about the way others live their lives, and serve us, is a form of self-righteousness. Obviously, that is something we must overcome.

In Chapter 24 of Emily Post's book, she discusses 'The Fundamentals of Good Behavior,' and one of her sections is called 'Decencies of Behavior.' I will read an excerpt from this because I think there are some good points, specifically directed at

gentlemen.

Far more important than any mere dictum of etiquette is the fundamental code of honor, without strict observance of which no man, no matter how "polished," can be considered a gentleman. The honor of a gentleman demands the inviolability of his word, and the incorruptibility of his principles; ...; he is the defender of the defenseless, and the champion of justice - or he is not a gentleman.

A gentleman never discusses his family affairs either in public or with acquaintances, nor does he speak more than casually about his wife. A man is a cad who tells anyone, no matter who, what his wife told him in confidence, or describes what she looks like in her bedroom. To impart details of her beauty is scarcely better than to publish her blemishes; to do either is unspeakable.

Keep in mind, this is a book about etiquette, and so you can take or leave some of these more specifics, but it is painting a picture of a principle here that I think you will get the idea from.

Nor does a gentleman ever criticize the behavior of a wife whose conduct is scandalous. What he says to her in the privacy of their own apartments is no one's affair but his own, but he must never treat her with disrespect before their children, or a servant, or any one.

This goes for the wives as well. The men should never put their wives down, or talk negatively about their wives to anyone outside the two of them. The wife should not do this either. So, what goes for the one goes for the other. Sometimes men have a harder time with some of these things.

A man of honor never seeks publicly to divorce his wife, no matter what he believes her conduct to have been; but for the protection of his own name, and that of the children, he allows her to get her freedom on other than criminal grounds. No matter who he may be, whether rich or poor, in high life or low, the man who publicly besmirches his wife's name, besmirches still more his own, and proves that he is not, was not, and never will be, a gentleman.

A gentleman does not lose control of his temper. In fact, in his own self-control under difficult or dangerous circumstances, lies his chief ascendancy

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over others who impulsively betray every emotion, which animates them. Exhibitions of anger, fear, hatred, embarrassment, ardor or hilarity, are all bad form in public. And bad form is merely an action, which "jars" the sensibilities of others.

A gentleman's manners are an integral part of him and are the same whether in his dressing room or in a ballroom, whether in talking to Mrs. Worldly or to the laundress bringing in his clothes. He whose manners are only put on in company is a veneered gentleman, not a real one.

So we get back to it being from the heart determines whether a person is a gentleman or not. Is it part of the man's character to be polite

All thoroughbred people are considerate of the feelings of others no matter what the station of the others may be. Thackeray's climber who "licks the boots of those above him and kicks the faces of those below him on the social ladder" is a very good illustration of what a gentleman is not.

A gentleman never takes advantage of another's helplessness or ignorance, and assumes that no gentleman will take advantage of him.

Joseph, Mary's husband, was a gentleman of the finest sorts. And, he pictures a man of great integrity and excellence of character.

Matthew 1:18-25 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins." So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us." Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.

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Jesus' physical stepfather, Joseph, was a real gentleman. He was a fine example to his sons, including Jesus, who was, and is, a gentleman. What if Joseph, out of anger, had flew off the handle, and made this situation public. How do you recover from something like that? Obviously God knew whom to choose, and He chose a gentleman to be the stepfather of Jesus Christ.

What kind of woman followed Jesus Christ What kind of woman is a good witness for God Remember; we are talking about these things in a practical sense.

Daisy Eyebright answers the question "Who is a Lady?" in her manual of etiquette. Here is an excerpt:

The answers may be difficult to supply on account of the great difference of opinion in various classes of society, upon this subject.

Some would declare that position, advantageous surroundings, great riches, high birth, or superior intelligence and education, gave the requisites; but all of our readers know of persons who possess some one or more of these advantages, and yet they cannot lay true claims to this desirable and distinctive appellation.

Hence we frequently hear these words - - "Ah! She is no lady!" ... applied to those whose standing is high; who possess much wealth; or are endowed with genius; but have neglected to add to their other advantages the touchstone of politeness and good breeding.

Our reply to the question is that a well-bred lady is one who to true modesty and refinement, adds a scrupulous attention to the rights and feelings of those with whom she associates, whether they are rich or poor, and who is the same both in the kitchen or parlor.

In her book on etiquette, Emily Post discusses Ladies. Here is a brief segment under "The Instincts of a Lady:"

The instincts of a lady are much the same as those of a gentleman. She is equally punctilious about her debts, equally averse to pressing her advantage; especially if her adversary is helpless or poor.

As an unhappy wife, her dignity demands that she never show her disapproval of her husband, no matter how publicly he slights or outrages

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her. If she has been so unfortunate as to have married a man not a gentleman, to draw attention to his behavior would put herself on his level.

The Apostle Peter in I Peter 3 places this principle in its spiritual application. He says it is a matter of an attitude that comes from the heart.

I Peter 3:1-4 Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. Do not let your adornment be merely outward - arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel - rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.

God's Word clearly states that men and women are both made in the image of God and are equal. In marriage each has particular responsibilities. God will not save anyone He cannot rule. He tests our character to help us develop faith and obedience. Women train just as much and just as hard in the character developing process.

Proverbs 31:25-30 Strength and honor are her clothing; She shall rejoice in time to come. She opens her mouth with wisdom, And on her tongue is the law of kindness. She watches over the ways of her household, And does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; Her husband also, and he praises her: "Many daughters have done well, But you excel them all." Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, But a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised.

There is the key to "Who is a Lady?" A woman who FEARS the LORD. Whether it ends up as suffering or not, as I read earlier. Any person who truly fears the LORD is a gentleman or a lady.

When considering the Bible's images of women and man, we find that the conditions of ultimate spiritual worth are the same, regardless of one's gender. The virtuous woman, whatever her female beauty and womanly excellence, is commended as the true standard - - because she "fears the LORD. It does not matter what we look like or what type of job that we have; we should have good manners. 'Fear' in this context is reverence, respect and obedience

An effective homemaker employs every one of the tools of effective management. She is developing the qualities needed to direct cities and nations in the world tomorrow, just

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as much as anyone else is. No one should ever make light of a person who is a homemaker.

When we understand the job of the wife and mother, we cannot help but notice that it presents one of the greatest opportunities for skill development. But, even doing all this without love, it is in vain. The home, of course, is the primary training and testing ground for gentleness, good manners, politeness and patience.

Here is another quote from Emily Post:

A generous-minded boy will never forget the unkind and taunting words which he has heard an irritable and ill-governed father address to his dearly loved mother; nor will either girls or boys forget similar breaches of politeness and good breeding exhibited by their mother towards the father.

Truly, we have need of patience! In the family circle it is one of the brightest virtues.

So, what is patience? Dictionaries tell us that patience is "the capacity, habit or fact of bearing pains or trials calmly, or without complaint." That gives us a general idea of its meaning. Two things are involved: 1) being in an unpleasant but common situation, and 2) being calm about it.

God's patience with His people of ancient Israel is an outstanding example of this elusive virtue. Though Israel turned to idols and wickedness, God pleaded with them to repent and call on His name. He told Solomon,

II Chronicles 7:14 if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

Here we see the general process of our calling and conversion. We are to have humility, to pray, seeking zealously to be like God, living His way of life, and repenting of and overcoming sin.

This involves a change of attitude from the start, at the beginning of the process, and then continued throughout our lives.

God waited patiently! He sent His prophets for generations, before exiling Israel and Judah to foreign lands. Nehemiah acknowledged this while praying to God.

Nehemiah 9:30 Yet for many years You had patience with them, And testified against them by Your Spirit in Your prophets. Yet they would not listen; Therefore You gave them into the hand of the peoples of the lands.

We see ourselves living in an impolite, bad mannered nation, and much of that comes by rejecting God's way of life, the commandments, the principles, the statutes and the laws of God. There are several places in the Bible where it says that the penalty is that God will take the land from them. I think this is what God is doing to this nation right now, with the immigration problem and all of the foreigners that we have even legally in this country.

Paul wrote that patience is one of the fruits - - or products, or results - - of God's Spirit. It is not enough to just act patient we must actually be patient. It is something like gentleness that must be produced from within. You cannot fake patience or gentleness.

Christ's mercy toward Saul, who was later called Paul, displays His unlimited patience and mercy. Since sin is against God, Paul's personal attacks against the church were also against God Himself. God forgave Paul. God patiently planned the right time to approach Saul. In this God revealed His love by His patience.

Biblically, "patience" usually indicates a calm, steadfast endurance, sometimes associated with wisdom or humility. It is a hopeful steadfastness - - a looking ahead at God's completion of His perfect work. Patience requires vision - - forethought. As we are being tested through trials involving other people, patiently dealing with the problem according to God's instructions by extending mercy and forgiveness will produce righteous qualities in us. It will give other people a chance to develop qualities of the right type of as well.

James 1:2-4 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

If we meet this testing in the right way, it will produce unshakable faithfulness. The word patience is a far too passive translation for the Greek word '*hupomone*,' used here in verses 3 and 4. It is not just the ability to bear things; it is the ability to turn things into greatness and to glory. It has a very positive side to it.

According to historical records of the centuries of persecution following Christ's death and resurrection, the thing that amazed the world was that the martyrs did not die gloomily, often they died singing. Even many of those who died at the stake, by fire,

were often heard singing. That is amazing, and I only hope that we can have this same cheerfulness and joy if we are under such severe persecution.

'*Hupomone*' is the quality, which makes a man able, not simply to suffer things, but to conquer them - - to overcome them. The effect of testing with regard to patience is that it develops the strength to bear still more and to overcome still harder challenges. Patience promotes more patience, and more strength. This is why good conduct and manners, gentleness and politeness demand a great deal of patience.

To have or not have good manners is both a choice and a test. It may not be on the level of obeying the commandments of God, but it does fall under producing good fruit, which we are commanded to do.

James tells us this unshakable faithfulness that provides us with patience in the end leads us to three things.

1. Unshakable faithfulness makes us perfect, that is, perfect to a given end. We are perfect when we are spiritually healthy enough to be offered to God. Then we are spiritually mature and full grown.

In the way that James uses the word perfect he means unshakeable faithfulness as the result of testing in the sense of being spiritually healthy for the duty we were born into the world to do.

In the way we meet every experience in life, we are either healthy or unhealthy for the duty, which God meant us to do.

2. Unshakable faithfulness makes us complete, that is, perfect in every area. We will be complete when we are spiritually healthy enough to be offered to God having no disqualifying spiritual blemishes. Over time this unshakable faithfulness removes the weaknesses and the imperfections from our character with the help of the Holy Spirit.

On a daily basis the Holy Spirit enables us to overcome old sins and to shed old blemishes so that we may replace them with new virtues. This process goes on until, upon completion, we become entirely spiritually healthy for the service of God in His Kingdom. Perfect, gentle courtesy is arrived at through a process of conversion from a blemished character to a patient godly one.

3. Unshakable faithfulness makes us deficient in absolutely nothing. That is,

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not lacking in the unshakable faithfulness to defeat our spiritual enemies.

Ephesians 6:16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

We never give up a struggle, and we never fail to reach the standard that should be reached. We do this with the help of the Holy Spirit and the fact that Christ is in each and every saint. If we meet this testing in the right way, if day by day we develop this unshakable faithfulness, we will live our lives with perfect gentle courtesy, and reach nearer to the measure and statue of Jesus Christ Himself. We have some perfect, gentle courtesy within us, and we use it, because we have been learning God's way of life. It takes a lifetime for the process of conversion to actually reach that perfection and completion that God is looking for. This is not a matter of just reading a book on etiquette, and feeling that we are well versed in it, and knowing what to do. It is a matter of living God's way of life, with the fear of God and the respect and reverence, and treating others the way God Himself and Jesus Christ would treat others. We must have gentleness, tenderness, politeness and good manners.