

A Culture Of Incivility (2)

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How Is Rudeness Facilitated?

By Exposure To It

Rudeness is fed by exposure and exhibitionism. The more we surround ourselves with it, the more we become accustomed to it. It becomes a second nature out of habit. Remember the following verses, *“Do not associate with a man given to anger; or go with a hot-tempered man, lest you learn his ways, and find a snare for yourself”* (Proverbs 22:24-25). The writer also states, *“Do not associate with a gossip”* (Proverbs 20:19), which is one of the most blatant ways that rudeness is manifested.

By Anonymity

It is very easy to be rude to somebody when you do not have to actually face him or her. Sadly, our generally anonymous internet culture has made habitual rudeness a dangerously accessible lifestyle. Have you ever noticed that internet blogs and message boards are homes to some of the most disrespectful, uncivil, and trashy discourse? I have never seen such profanity and disregard for humanity! But because nobody has to face the consequences of their disrespect, everybody can get away with it. We can be racists, perverts, and dissidents without ever feeling the sting of the people we hurt.

How Do I Combat Rudeness In My Life?

“Nor filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not befitting; but rather giving of thanks” (Ephesians 5:4). There is an ideal that should exist in the Christian spirit that is higher than the world. It is not just that we need to abstain from evil or refuse to give in to just the most heinous crimes, but, as the previous verse states, *“Let it not be named among you, as is becoming saints”* (Ephesians 5:3). Paul writes later, *“But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices and have put on the new self...”* (Colossians 3:8-10). Perhaps the greatest concept which could help stem the tide of rudeness today is Jesus Christ’s own immortal, immovable “Golden Rule”: *“Therefore, however you want people to treat you, so treat them, for this is the Law and the Prophets”* (Matthew 7:12).

- Give other people the benefit of the doubt; do not always assume the worst motives;
- Think before you speak; if that is too hard, get your spouse to help you;
- As goofy as it sounds, count backwards from twenty before responding to a difficult situation;
- If you have a tendency to make hurtful jokes, get into the habit of toning them down several steps beyond what *you* might think is funny;
- Be gracious in victory, as obnoxious sports fans can have a surprisingly hurtful effect on those who have been defeated;

- For a refreshing change of pace, turn off the television and spend quality time outdoors with your family;
- Try to reflect on times you have been hurt by rudeness, and put yourself in the shoes of others;
- Remember that you have a responsibility to God, and that He is listening to every word that proceeds from your mouth. It will all be judged (1 Corinthians 5:10).