Christian Manners

(Selected Scriptures)

12/17/2006

Introduction: How do we approach others? Are we approachable? How do we deal with others? Are you a true friend?

See James 3:13-18

James 3:17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, *and* easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

**** To make a positive impact for Christ in the lives of others, we must have Christian manners!***

What Biblical mannerisms should we all have?

I. A Gracious Spirit (Proverbs 11:16; Ecclesiastes 10:12)

II. A Respectful Disposition (1 Peter 2:17; Romans 12:10)

III. An Attentive Mind (A Listening Ear) (Proverbs 18:13; James 1:19)

IV. A Seasoned Tongue (Edifying Words) (Colossians 4:6; Ephesians 4:29)

V. A Friendly Countenance (Proverbs 18:24)

VI. A Helpful Attitude (A Servant's Heart) (Galatians 5:13; 6:2; Matthew 20:26-27)

VII. A Loving Admonition (1 Thessalonians 5:14)

Conclusion: The bottom line: It's a heart issue. If you're not right with God, you can't be right with anyone else.

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WISDOM HAS GOD-HONORING CHARACTERISTICS (v. 17)

It reveals itself in:

1. Holiness - "pure"

   "First, pure" - points out that the inner quality is of utmost importance! God is primarily concerned with what we are and only then with what we do.

   "Pure" = holy, set apart from contamination unto God.

   We need to practice a lifestyle that flees away from inner contamination. We need to develop a delicate sensitivity to pollution of any kind.

   (A pure person will have pure words thoughts actions)

2. Meekness (v. 13b; v. 17)

   v. 13 "Meekness" - is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22) so it cannot be manufactured by man.

   Meekness is not weakness but power under control. The Greek word was used for a horse that had been broken so that his power was under control.

   II Tim. 2:24 - "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient.

   I Pet. 3:15 - "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."

   a. Peaceful personality

"Peaceable" - seeks to restrain discord, and promotes "right relationships between man and man, and between man and God."

**But note: it does not pursue peace at the expense of purity! It will not compromise with sin to maintain peace.

Illus. Abraham Lincoln has been called a man of velvet steel.

What we need to be are Christians with steel convictions but with velvet attitudes in dealing with others.

b. Gentle personality

"Gentle" = a considerate person. Respects the feelings of others.

It's the disposition of a superior to an inferior who will listen to his speech when really it is an earsore to listen.

c. Reasonable personality

"Easy to be entreated" = reasonable; easily persuaded when one learns that he has been wrong.

Describes one who is open to new light, and is willing to learn from others.

It's not a stubborn know-it-all.

The only one who ever lived who didn't ever change his mind, or take advice, or revise his opinions was Jesus Christ because He was God incarnate!

Many people think that stubbornness is conviction, and that they are always right and never wrong. When God's wisdom is at work, there is a willingness to listen, think, pray, and obey whatever God reveals.

Are you teachable?

3. Goodness

a. "Full of mercy"

"Mercy" = compassion that leads one to help. One who withholds judgment, knowing it belongs to God.

"Full" = shows that heavenly wisdom is characterized by an abundant measure of mercy.

b. "Full of good fruits"

the phrase "full of . . . good fruits" stands in contrast to "every evil work" (v. 16)

4. Consistency

a. Undivided

"Without partiality" = undivided. Not being "two-faced" toward people. Not one who is always looking to choose sides to join (Ex. Corinthians's sin - chap. 1)

It is the direct opposite of the duplicity of an uncontrolled tongue as described in v. 9-12.

b. Unhypocritical

"Without hypocrisy" = true wisdom is free from all masks because it has nothing to hide. It is genuine and sincere! What he says is what he is.

THIS WISDOM PRODUCES FRUITFUL RESULTS (v. 18).

"The fruit of righteousness" = the fruit that righteousness produces can only be sown by peacemakers.

"A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." (Prov. 15:1)

Col. 4:5-6 - "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."

Eph. 4:2,3 - "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

We all want to see fruit. But if your attitude is not that of heavenly wisdom, you will see none.

Paul urged us in Eph. 4:15 to always speak the truth "in love"

When you speak in true wisdom, you never have to shout.

When you teach, if you speak in a tempestuous, harsh manner, your students will not receive what you are saying. (ex. Mad-dog - a teacher I had).

**Don't throw out seed (Ex. "Hey, bud, get saved or go to hell" "Turn or burn") but plant it in love and care.

Righteousness is no sudden growth but is the product of seed sown in peace.

Our lives are lives of sowing and reaping (Gal. 6:7). The way you sow is just as important as what you sow!

If we live in God's wisdom and sow righteousness in peace, we will reap God's blessing. If we live in man's worldly wisdom and we sow in discord and selfishness, we reap "confusion and every evil work."

. . . What do you want to reap??

**** To make a positive impact for Christ in the lives of others, we must have Christian manners!***

What Biblical mannerisms should we all have?

I. A Gracious Spirit

To be like God is to be gracious:

Psalm 103:8 The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.
Psalm 111:4 He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the LORD is gracious and full of compassion.
Lu 4:22 And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

Proverbs 11:16 A gracious woman retaineth honour: and strong men retain riches.
Ecclesiastes 10:12 The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious; but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself.

It's not just what you do that counts--it's how you do it!

We can do all the right things as Christians, but if we do them in the wrong Spirit (attitude) we are just as bad as if we didn't do them at all.

EX: Ladies, what would you think of your fiance if he bought you a $5,000 diamond engagement ring, but threw it at you?

II. A Respectful Disposition

1 Peter 2:17 **Honour all *men*. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.**

"Honor all" - Treat everyone with value, dignity and respect. (not only authorities, but everyone is worthy of honor).

The tense means to <u>begin</u> honoring; to start something you may not have been doing.

All men should be honored (regardless of race, sex, social status, color, etc.) because the human race was created in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:27; 9:6; James 3:9)

"Love the brotherhood" - Continue to have agape (Godly, sacrificial, unconditional love) for your fellow believers. Love shows respect; it also expresses the value you have for others.

We are to do good to all men but *"especially those of the household of faith."* (Gal. 6:10).

Romans 12:10 ***Be*** **kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love*;* in honour preferring one another*;***

*<u>Types of "Friendships</u>":
1)<u>Spiritual</u> Friendships (develops relationships for <u>mutual edification</u> - a church)
2)<u>Social</u> Friendships (develops relationships for <u>emotional needs</u> - a night club, bar)
3)<u>Superficial</u> Friendships (develops relationships for <u>business reasons</u> - a business deal, bank/store)
4)<u>Selfish</u> Friendships (develops relationships for <u>lustful gratification</u> - a sexual/money manipulation)
5)<u>Sinister</u> Friendships (develops relationships for <u>sinful exploits</u> - a street gang)

"Kindly affectioned" = Greek "philostorga" "Phileo" - affection; "Storga" - loyal, family devotion.

"To have a family affection; a loyal devotion like you have with your natural family members"

"Brotherly love" = we are to love each other as you do your physical brother. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. We are in God's family.

We should love each other because we are <u>brethren</u>.

"We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren" (I Jn. 3:14; cp. Gal. 6:10).

In the early church, during a time of severe opposition to Christian, God's people stayed close to each other and cared for each other. The heathen were so deeply impressed by

such a unique display of generosity, grace, and selflessness, that they said, "Behold, how these Christians love one another!"

"In honor" = treat others like a dignitary, someone special.

"Preferring" = lit. to let others go ahead of you. The word corresponds to the word "honor." Someone who is honorable goes first.

We need to put others first, to esteem others as better than ourselves (Phil. 2:3).

As Christians we should not strive to outdo one another to gain honor, but we should try to outdo one another in showing honor.

In other words, whether or not you honor me, I should turn around and give you double honor in return.

III. An Attentive Mind (A Listening Ear)

Proverbs 18:13 **He that answereth a matter before he heareth *it*, it *is* folly and shame unto him.**
James 1:19 **Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:**

"swift" = quick, fast, speedy, without delay. From the Greek tachos from which we get our English word "tachometer" which measures the speed of the RPM's on a car motor.

"Swift to hear" - eager and attentive, ready to receive and assimilate the message heard.

DON'T INTERRUPT

"Slow to speak" - does not mean slowness in speaking; but is an exhortation to restrain hasty, wrong reactions to what is heard.

Illustration: People in the Middle East love to talk but don't like to listen.

Don't be anxious to add your two cents.

God has given us 2 ears and one mouth!

IV. A Seasoned Tongue (Edifying Words)

Colossians 4:6 **Let your speech *be* alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.**

"Your speech" = lit. your word (logos); your message (same as "utterance" - v. 3)

Always with grace

"Alway" = no matter who you are speaking to or no matter what your are saying, at all times our speech should be gracious.

"That ye may know" - ("Oida" - an intuitive knowledge) - when put on the spot, you will not have the right words nor say them in the right way if you are not accustomed to doing so all of the time ("alway") (at home, at work, etc.)

The way you speak to your wife will affect the manner in which you share the Gospel with the lost!

"With grace" - words that give; speech that edifies because of its content and tone (how you say something is every bit as important as what you say)

Eph. 4:29 - "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."

Seasoned with salt

"Seasoned (flavored) with salt" -

Salt has 3 key features:

1) It has a distinct savor (Mt. 5:13)
2) It has a preserving effect (Mk. 9:49-50)
3) It creates a thirst

Correspondingly, our speech to the unsaved:

1) Must be distinct from the way the world speaks (speak like a Christian should; curse words, immoral slang, obscene or corrupt words, etc. are unbecoming). Our speech should be distinctly wholesome and holy!

2) Must preserve. Your speech will either help or hurt; tear down or build up.

3) Should create a spiritual thirst

"We are to flavor and turn the conversation to tasteful and enjoyable subjects and away from corruptible and tasteless subjects" (Preacher's Outline Bible)

"Answer" - to respond to a question. In context, the question is no doubt directed toward someone who has a distinctive walk, a walk of "wisdom" (v. 5).

EX: "What is it that makes you different?"

I Peter 3:15 - "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."

"Every man" - each individual one [referring to those "that are without" (v. 5) - the unsaved]

Not everyone should be answered in the same manner. The content of our message must never change, but the manner in which we deliver it, the choice of words, our tone of voice, etc. must suit the person we are dealing with. [EX: How Jesus spoke differently to the woman at the well (Jn. 4) than He did to the Pharisees (mt. 23)]

"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver" (Prov. 25:11)

"A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good is it!" (Prov. 15:23)

V. A Friendly Countenance

Proverbs 18:24 A man *that hath* friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend *that* sticketh closer than a brother.

VI. A Helpful Attitude (A Servant's Heart)

Galatians 5:13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

Galatians 6:2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

Greatness is in serving others:

Matthew 20:26-27 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:

"It shall not be so among you" - God has different standards for His people. Different ways of achieving desired goals.

Today, a dangerous trend exists in the world, and it has afflicted many who name the name of Christ. It is a proud, self-centered, self-love philosophy which has a "me first" drive and an "I" agenda. If society were to write a Bible, its Golden Rule might read: "Thou shalt shove thy neighbor and love thyself."

Life itself depends on service! Every legitimate job is a service for someone else.
Teacher - instructs others
Bus driver - transports others

Farmer - provides food for others
Grocer - stocks and distributes food for others
Fireman - saves others
Police - protects others
The measure of your job is determined by the degree to which you really aid someone else.

We were saved to glorify God by serving (Eph. 2:10).

"Servant" (*doulos)* - a slave for life, a "bondslave," one who gives up his will to do the will of another, to advance the cause of another, to be devoted to another to the disregard of one's own interests.

You will be successful if you live to make others successful!

Examples of people with servants hearts:
--Sarah - obeyed her husband (I Pet. 3:6)
--Rebekah - watered Eleazar's camels (Gen. 24)
--Moses - led Israel for 40 years
--Ruth - gleaned for Naomi
--Jesus - washed the disciples' feet (Jn. 13:14)
--Stephen (etc.) - dispersed money to Christian widows (Acts 6)
--Barnabus - encouraged new and weak Christians
--Aquilla & Priscilla - opened their home to disciple new converts and hold church meetings (Acts 18:26; I Cor. 16:19)
--Dorcas - sewed coats and garments for the needy (Acts 9:36, 39)

VII. A Loving Admonition

1 Thessalonians 5:14

Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all *men*.

1. God wants us to bring loving confrontation to those who go astray

(We must help straighten out the thinking of those who go astray)

"Unruly" = a military term that described a soldier who neglected his duty and was out of order, out of step, and out of rank. It also described an army that was marching and advancing toward the enemy in disarray (disorderly confusion).

One who is unruly is one who…

1) is not doing what he should do (sin of omission)
   EX: not working (cp. II Thess. 3:6 - idleness)
2) is doing what he should not do (sin of commission)

How do we handle such a person?

"Warn" = is the same word as translated "admonish" in f. 12. It basically means to put into the mind, to confront the mind; to correct someone's thinking.

Thinking affects behavior.

Wrong thought patterns result in wrong patterns of behavior.

Many times we waste a lot of time trying to change someone's external actions without dealing with the cause (the root) of sinful thinking. What a person thinks reveals what he is (his character)

To confront someone who is going astray, you need:

1. To know Bible doctrine
2. To have courage and boldness (confrontation is not easy)

2. God wants us to bring loving comfort to those who are easily discouraged

(We must strengthen the hearts of those who are easily discouraged)

The word translated "feeble-minded" does not refer to someone with a mental deficiency, but to someone who has a mind and heart filled with worry, fear, and discouragement (the word literally means "little-souled).

Why do people get discouraged?

a. Adverse circumstances
(financial misfortune, physical suffering, opposition for the faith, family hardships)

b. Struggle with sin
(a deep consciousness of their own sinfulness which causes them to despair of being able to live the Christian life - Hiebert, p. 235)

Many people seem by nature (old nature, of course) to be negative. Perhaps through parental example they learned to fear the worst. They face each trial in life with apprehension and timidity.

What they don't need is for you to pound them over the head and say, "I can't understand how you can be this way! Don't you know the Bible says that `God has not given us the spirit of fear but of power and love and of a sound mind?'" (II Tim. 1:7). I'm not saying this verse is not a good one for this type of person. It's excellent! It's how you say it that matters!

Don't blast him! (he needs to be cheered up, not chopped down).

The discouraged Christian does not need to be rebuked like those who are deliberately walking disorderly. He needs to be cheered up; softly and tenderly encouraged; stimulated by caring words--well-thought-out words; to continue in the battle; to not give up; to re-focus his eyes on Christ and the promises of God!

3. God wants us to bring loving <u>support</u> to those who are <u>without strength</u>

(We must support the weak <u>knees</u> of those who can't stand on their own)

It is said of Job that he was a man who "strengthened the weak hands." His words had held up "him that was falling." And he had strengthened the feeble knees (Job 4:3-4).

"Weak" = lit. "without strength" The word here does not refer to physical weakness in context, but to moral and spiritual weakness.

a. Weak areas are often problems of the lust of the <u>flesh</u>. Examples:

1) Poor self-discipline
2) Out of control appetites
3) Sinful thought life

"Support" = lit. to "hold on firmly" or to "cling on" to someone

It means to give support to someone by putting your arms around the weak and holding him up. God is <u>not</u> calling on us to condone sin!

We are never to sympathize with the sin, but with the struggling sinner. We are not to smear the sin in their face, but we are to lift them up out of it!

b. How can we support (hold up) those whoa re sapped of spiritual vigor or moral muscle?

1) They must <u>confess</u> their weak areas to you (James 5:16)
2) You must keep the information confidential and <u>pray</u> for your brother or sister (James 5:16)
3) In an encouraging way, you must hold that person <u>accountable</u>. (Periodically check up on that person)

4. God wants us to bring loving <u>patience</u> to everyone we deal with

(We must suffer long with everyone we care for)

Patience is how you apply the medicine. It's your attitude in putting on the needed balm.

"Patient" = to be long-fused; long-tempered; lit. to be able to put up with "much internal heat" without "blowing your tope" or "Losing your cool" with someone.

"Patient <u>toward all</u>" - would specifically include those 3 types of people just mentioned.

It would be easy to lose your patience with the unruly, feeble-minded, and weak.

Conclusion:

"Lord, make me an instrument of your peace!
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy."

The bottom line: It's a heart issue. If you're not right with God, you can't be right with anyone else.