

Perfect Courtesy

Titus 3:1-2 Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people.

As you know, I've began to prepare my lessons and classes at Starbucks around 2011. At this point, I've spent a reasonable amount of time in 7 locations (some more than others). As time went on I began to take note of how each location was managed. As you would imagine, some were better than others. However, the ones that do better have something in common: they don't forget to look at the their store from the customers point of view. What's the customer's experience? What would you take note of and what is it that you couldn't care less about? So, for example: a customer couldn't care less about how clean your storage room is or if you hit your numbers last quarter but are running behind that particular month. They don't care if you're getting along with your coworkers. They don't care. You know what they want to see? They want to see their coffee ready to go when they walk in to grab their mobile order. They want creamer. They want Splenda or Stevia to be available. They want clean bathrooms. They want you to make their drinks consistently. And here's what will keep them coming back if you have off days - they want friendly baristas. I go to the Melissa Starbucks right now and I gotta tell you: they may be out of stock at times (because there's a shortage on everything), and they may have a trainee that's going at a snail's pace, but something I'm hearing again and again from customer's: they love how kind and positive they are. I know I feel appreciated when I walk in and they jokingly say, "Hey, Shawn! You're late for work!"

I'm sure you can relate. I know when I first started in banking as a teller I learned that lesson. Most people coming in aren't millionaires. They're not meeting with the VP. They're not in the loan department all the time. They're not even talking to the personal bankers most the time. Most of the time they were dealing with who? The tellers (although that's changed a lot these days). You were the face of the bank. You are the reason they keep coming back.

Why am I bringing this up today? Well, there's a principle that applies to our lives as we interact with others. I'm not at all implying that we've got a product we're trying to sell others. We have nothing to sell. We've been purchased. In fact, people don't like it when they feel you're trying to sell them something. You know why? Because most people who try to sell you something are't necessarily crazy about the product. It's just something that brings home the bacon. The greatest salesman actually believes in what he's selling and thinks you need it.

We're a little different. We've been purchased by God. We've been adopted. We're grateful to have such a master. We're beyond loved by our Father. Jesus continues to mold us and it's genuine. So, we're not trying to sell anything. We're changed sons and daughters of God. We're just "being". But as we're changing, people see that in us, and they become interested.

See, people don't necessarily care about your specific beliefs at first. We've got to look at ourselves through others eyes. "What's kind of experience does one have after meeting me?" Remember, they don't care (at first) about all the behind the scene responsibilities and stresses. Those who we're trying to reach have their own struggles. Like a guy or gal that is just looking for a good cup of coffee to bring a little joy in their day, you and I want to provide a little living water that can quench their soul. They are people who are hurting and lost. They may not have loving fathers or friends. They don't care about all the "behind the scene" info. They just take note when you are caring and loving.

Faith can move mountains is what Jesus said. You know what else is true? Faith produces a courteous spirit and that can move people. Maya Angelou said, "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." That is a general truth. I'm remembering, for example, one waiter a few years back. I cannot remember exactly what he was saying, but I remember walking away thinking he had an exceptional attitude and courtesy.

We're talking about perfect courtesy today. It is doctrine, that is, healthy instruction. This is another part of what makes a Christian what he/she is all about. It was important to God and Paul that courtesy be discussed. I'm thinking about one instance, for example, in Ruth. This has stood out to me for a long time.

- **Ruth 2:** There's the obvious kindness that Boaz shows to Ruth, but there's also a little detail that has stood out to me. Do you notice how he addresses his workers and they answer back. It's interesting that it's included in the account. It seems that the purpose is to paint a picture of Boaz.
- **2 Samuel 9:1-3, 6-10:** The apple doesn't fall far from the tree! David is Boaz' descendant. David wanted to show him the kindness of God.

Why? Many times, when we encourage each other to know "why we believe what we do", it's in the context of our form of worship or teachings on controversial topics such as divorce, homosexuality, abortion, etc. However, we also need to ask, "why are you the way you are?" See, you can what the "why/what you believe" thing figured out, but no one is going to care because of "why/who you are." Does everyone have a responsibility to receive the truth regardless of the spirit of the truth teller? Well, I would agree with that. For example: were those in Nineveh long ago accountable to his message? They absolutely were. But, here's another question: would you rather hear the truth from Jonah or Jesus? Which one do you think you'd want to hear from? Jonah is the guy you "have" to listen to. Jesus was the man you "wanted" to listen to, thought it could be hard from time to time. Why? Because Jesus was aware of His surroundings. Jesus cared about people. Jesus wanted to help, not hurt. Jesus was kind, humble and gentle (all words used to translate the word "courtesy" in **Titus 3:2**). In fact, the root word is used in this passage by Jesus:

- **Matthew 11:28-29** "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 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."

See what I mean? The Bible isn't going to discuss His day to day interaction with people at the market, or what He was like when playing with friends or talking to His friend's parents. He's called the "carpenter" in [Mark 6:3](#). Yet, we never do read about a business interaction between Jesus and Jewish brother down the road. How do you think Jesus was in business? Brethren, I'm not at all downplaying the "big picture" moments of Jesus, but I'm saying that we've got to think and appreciate how others viewed Him from day to day, moment by moment, interaction by interaction.

Jesus is the reason we do what we do and are the way we are. Let's go back to our original passage and finish the context:

- [Titus 3:3-7](#) For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.
- The word "courtesy" has been translated "meekness, gentleness, consideration, and humility." But here's one of the definitions that I really appreciated:
 - the quality of not being overly impressed by a sense of one's self-importance, gentleness, humility, courtesy, considerateness, meekness (BDAG)
 - Very fitting, don't you think?
- [Galatians 5:16-24](#). Not only do these characteristics focus on others instead of ourselves, but there's no law against any of them. You can't go wrong doing them. It's God living in you. Being gentle (same term as courteous) is being Godly.

So, what's being said?

- There's a reason you prefer Chik-fil-a customer service over every other fast food business.
- It's why you've never met a Mormon you didn't like.
- Men should still open the door for women.
- Our kids can open the door for the elderly or look adults in the eye when an adult is talking to them.
- Reply to a friend who texts you.
- Show up on time for a scheduled appointment (whether that's a doctor or dinner).
- Be that person who looks to the interests of others and not just yourself.
- See yourself from someone else's point of view.
- Do what benefits others.
- Leave people feeling the love of Christ.
- It was what others saw in Jesus, so being His children, need to see in us all. Courtesy.
- It's the result of the goodness and lovingkindness of God our Savior!