

I. 40 Days of Love - Part 4: The Four Marks of Real Love Gee Sprague, Lead Pastor May 2, 2010

II. 4 Marks of Real Love

A. *“Love is not rude. Love does not demand its own way. Love is not irritable, and love keeps no record of when it has been wronged.” 1 Cor. 13:5 (NLT)*

III. “Love Is Not Rude. Love does not demand its own way. Love is not irritable, and love keeps no record of when it has been wronged.” 1 Cor. 13:5 (NLT)

A. **LOVE IS NOT RUDE. So I must be tactful, not just truthful.**

B. *“Answering before listening is both stupid and rude.” Prov. 18:13 (MSG)*

C. *“Stop being bitter and angry and mad at others. Don't yell at one another or curse each other or ever be rude. Instead, be kind and merciful, and forgive others, just as God forgave you because of Christ.” Eph. 4:31-32 (CEV)*

D. *“A wise, mature person is known for his understanding. The more pleasant his words, the more persuasive he is.” Prov. 16:21 (TEV)*

E. *Eric Hoffer* 20th century writer/philosopher said, “Rudeness is a weak man’s imitation of strength.”

F. Here are some good definitions of Tact Croft M. Pentz, *The Complete Book of Zingers*

1. Tact is the art of pretending you didn't notice anything.
2. Tact is the unsaid part of what you think.
3. Tact is criticizing the mistake rather than the person who made it.
4. Tact is the art of recognizing when to be big and when not to belittle.
5. Tact is the ability to raise the eyebrows instead of the roof.
6. Tact is the ability to shut your mouth before someone wants to do it for you.
7. Tact is the ability of making a point without making an enemy.
8. People with tact have less to retract.

G. Firing an employee is one of the toughest jobs a supervisor ever faces. An insurance sales manager was known for his tact and diplomacy. One of his young salesmen was performing so poorly that he had to be terminated. The manager called him in and said, "Son, I don't know how we're ever going to get along without you, but starting Monday we're going to try."

H. In week 3 of the small group study, Rick Warren gives a great formula: **Truth + Tact + Timing = Transformation**

I. **LOVE IS NOT RUDE. So I must be tactful, not just truthful.**

IV. “Love is not rude. LOVE DOES NOT DEMAND ITS OWN WAY. Love is not irritable, and loves keeps no record of when it has been wronged.” 1 Cor. 13:5 (NLT)

A. **LOVE DOES NOT DEMAND ITS OWN WAY. So I must be understanding, not demanding.**

B. *“Your attitude should be the same that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not demand and cling to his rights as God. He made himself nothing; he took the humble position of a slave and appeared in human form.” Phil. 2:5-7 (NLT)*

C. *“Believers shouldn't curse anyone or be quarrelsome, but they should be gentle and show courtesy to everyone.” Titus 3:2 (GW)*

D. *“Do to others as you would have them do to you.” Luke 6:31 (NIV)*

E. *Erwin Raphael McManus Stand Against The Wind Awaken The Hero Within* p 76 "When we consume things, we are materialists. When we consume people, we are cannibals. In the most dysfunctional of human relationships, we see people as existing for our benefit. We are so longing for love that every time

someone comes close to us, we devour them, oblivious to our selfishness. We become emotional leeches. After we've sucked someone dry, we detach and seek our next victim."

F. **LOVE DOES NOT DEMAND ITS OWN WAY.** So I must be understanding, not demanding.

V. "Love is not rude. Love does not demand its own way. **LOVE IS NOT IRRITABLE**, and loves keeps no record of when it has been wronged." 1 Cor. 13:5 (NLT)

A. **LOVE IS NOT IRRITABLE.** So I must be gentle not judgmental.

B. *Homer Simpson's fundamentalist neighbor Ned Flanders*, when Homer asked them where they'd been: "We went away to a Christian camp. We were learning how to be more judgmental."

C. "*Brothers and sisters, if someone in your group does something wrong, you who are spiritual should go to that person and gently help make him right again. But be careful, because you might be tempted to sin, too.*" Gal. 6:1 (NCV)

D. "*Each of us will give an account of himself to God. Therefore, let us stop passing judgment on each other.*" Rom. 14:12-13 (NIV)

E. "*Gentle words bring life and health; a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit.*" Prov. 15:4 (NLT)

F. "*If your boss is angry with you, don't quit! A quiet spirit can overcome even great mistakes.*" Eccl. 10:4 (NLT)

G. *Change the World: Recovering the Message and Mission of Jesus (Michael B Slaughter)* Judgment produces anger, criticism, and slander. Judgment is exclusive and gives one a smug sense of satisfaction over another's failure ("I told you so!"). Discernment creates empathetic pain that leads first to compassion and then to intercession. The spirit of discernment connects one to the heart and patience of God, who is not "*wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance*" (2 Pet 3:9).

H. *Jesus CEO Laurie Beth Jones* p. 37-38 Chapter: He Did Not Waste His Time Judging Others

"Jesus saw judging others as a major energy leak."

"He did not spend one minute on the demolition crew. He spent his energy on creation and restoration.

Judging others was not his job."

"Judgment halts progress."

"Sometimes we judge others in ways we are unaware of, such as looking to see where they are in the race."

I. *John Milton, Leadership*, Vol. 1, no. 4. We read not that Christ ever exercised force but once, and that was to drive profane ones out of his temple, and not to force them in.

J. This week in our small group we are talking about speaking the truth in love. Rick Warren offers one of the best courses of action I have ever seen to help us be gentle and not judgmental

1. **Plan When You Are Going To Say It.**

- A. Not when you are tired
- B. Not when you are under pressure or anger
- C. Not when you are in a hurry
- D. Talk to them on their terms

2. **Plan What You Are Going To Say.**

- a. *Start with affirmation*
- b. *Don't use sarcasm*
- c. *Remember your motive is to Help not Harm*

3. **Plan How You Are Going To Say It.**

- a. *Be civil.*
- b. *Watch the tone and volume of your voice*

c. *Be Gentle and Humble*

K.I am going to use this method whenever I feel there is someone in my life who needs correction or direction.

L.*LOVE IS NOT IRRITABLE. So I must be gentle not judgmental.*

VI. “Love is not rude. Love does not demand its own way. Love is not irritable, and Loves Keeps No Record Of When It Has Been Wronged.” 1 Cor. 13:5 (NLT)

A.*LOVE KEEPS NO RECORD OF WRONGS. So You don’t repeat it, you delete it.*

B. “Whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him and let it drop, leave it, and let it go, in order that your Father who is in heaven may also forgive you your own failings and shortcomings and let them drop.” Mark 11:25 (Amp)

C. “Hate stirs up trouble, but love forgives all offenses.” Prov. 10:12 (TEV)

D. “When someone wrongs you, it is a great virtue to ignore it.” Prov. 19:11 (TEV)

E. “You are only hurting yourself with your anger.” Job 18:4 (TEV)

F. October 2, 2006. Gunman Charles Carl Roberts IV took hostages and eventually shot and killed five girls (aged 6–13) before committing suicide in the Amish West Nickel Mines School, a one-room schoolhouse in Bart Township of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

G. Rev. Rob Schenck, President of the National Clergy Council and founder, Faith and Action, What the Amish Taught Me in Their Terrible Hour of Grief

I was one of the few non-Amish welcomed into the very private Amish mourning rituals for five slain school girls in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Few from the outside world will ever see up close these extraordinarily private and pacifistic people as they deal with the enormous suffering of losing their children to a brutal act of violence.

While they live differently, the Amish are the first to dispel any notion they are better than us. One "preacher" told me, "You English (their term for the non-Amish) sometimes think we're perfect; we're not. We've got all the problems you have, and we have bad people, too. It could have been an Amish that did this." Still, it is at times of great suffering and loss that the best of what the Amish are truly shines.

As I visited in the victims' homes, sat on the mourning benches, talked with the families about the details of that terrible day, and watched one mother tenderly care for her daughter's damaged body, I was struck by how prepared they were for this. Not simply in a technical sense, but in a deeply spiritual, philosophical and moral sense. The Amish were well rehearsed for this tragedy.

This religious movement began five centuries ago under fierce persecution. Over that time they have carefully lived out and preserved a strict way of life based on their interpretation of Jesus' words in the Gospel, "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth. But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.'" (Matthew 5:38-39)

The Amish know this commitment leaves them vulnerable to precisely the kind of harm that befell their children on October 2, 2006. So, they have used their historic silence and cloistered existence as a shield against a hostile outside world. Sadly, that shield proved ineffective against a threat as close as a neighborhood milk truck driver. But they have a backup for such a failure. It was epitomized in a scene I will never forget, when a grandfather stood at the foot of his own murdered granddaughter's coffin and said, "It is important to teach our children not to think evil of the man who did this." It was a remarkable act of generosity; one expressed earlier when Amish emissaries went to the killer's family offering complete forgiveness and an invitation to the funerals.

What I learned from the Amish by watching and listening to them were three things that until now have been mere theory for me, if I knew them at all.

First, I learned to look for a reason to be thankful, even if it's in the very worst of circumstances. One Amish leader pointed out as he wept, "More children could have died, but they didn't; that's a reason to thank God." A family member said, "The girls could have suffered something worse than death. We thank God they didn't." A bishop said, "This has brought the community together, both within the Amish and outside. That's something to thank God for."

Second, faith and family are the bulwarks against evil, the balm for even the greatest pain and suffering

and the strength to carry on after the worst interruptions of our lives. Though warmly received by the Amish, I felt at all times like an intruder, because I knew this was a time they relied completely on the most intimate relationships they have; and for the Amish, that's saying a lot. The talk was constantly of God and prayer and love. It was so pronounced it was palpable. The mother tending to her daughter as the girl lay in an open coffin, said with a teary smile to the many children around her, "See, she's with God in heaven now."

And finally, I observed, first-hand, the power of forgiveness. When I visited the home of shooter Charles Roberts, I saw this amazing principle in action: in the almost supernaturally generous extension of immediate forgiveness by the victims' families; and, in the humble way the Roberts' accepted this gift. Others in the Roberts' circumstances might have refused such an offer, whether out of guilt, or shame, or simply their own pain, but the Roberts humbly accepted. An Amish leader explained the importance of this by saying, "God has offered us forgiveness for our sins in the work of Christ on the Cross, but we must accept that gift to enjoy it. Once we've accepted it, then we can share it in small measure with others." Because the Roberts' accepted the gift, they can continue to share it, and this cycle of forgiveness will go on to heal this community much faster than one embroiled in hatred and vindictiveness.

These are lessons our world needs badly right now. If we learn these lessons and benefit from them, we will have the private, mysterious Amish to thank.

H. The West Nickel Mines School was torn down, and a new one-room schoolhouse, the New Hope School, was built at another location.

VII. Prayer: Father I don't know the hurts that people are going through here today, but I know that you know every one of them and you want them to be freed from it.

VIII. Prepare to Celebrate the Lord's Supper

IX. Stand and pray, "God, I'm tired of the pain. I'm tired of being stuck in the prison of the past. Father, I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired. I'm tired of wasting emotional energy on the people who've hurt me. Lord, I need that energy for the future, for today. Today, I'm asking you to do two things. Jesus Christ, fill me with the Spirit of forgiveness. Fill me with the Spirit of love. Take over every area of my life. I invite you into every crevice and corner of my heart. I ask you to forgive all my sins, all the ways I've hurt other people when I was demanding, not understanding. When I was judgmental, not gentle. When I was repeating the sins instead of deleting the sins. Forgive me for all of that. I want to let go of the people who have hurt me in my life. I want to do what's right. I want you to fill my life with love. I want to be able to love others and not be stuck. So today, dear Jesus Christ, I'm in faith letting them go. I'm letting that person go. If it takes me a thousand times to do this until the pain goes away, I'm going to keep remembering, and every time they bring it up I'm going to remember to say I'm letting them go. I'm letting them off the hook. I've forgiven them. I have forgiven them. Help me to be tactful, not just truthful. Help me to be gentle, not judgmental. Help me to be understanding, not demanding. When people hurt me, help me to not repeat it but to delete it. To be tender without surrender to the people who I need to set boundaries with in my life. Jesus Christ, I want to become a loving person. I want to move to the higher levels of love. I ask your help and your grace. In your name I pray. Amen."