



I Want to Know What Love Is Part 6 – Love is not Rude Pastor Ted Cunningham

We're in a series called **I Want to Know What Love Is**. We've been going through 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7, a line at a time, as we look at what love is and what love is not. Today, we're looking at *Love is not Rude*. We've been looking through 1 Corinthians for a lot of the illustrations for this as well. What Paul has in this letter to the Church at Corinth is this fatherly tone. It's a strong tone, it's a corrective tone, but he's saying, "Hey, I don't expect you to be mature Christians on the day of your salvation. I don't expect you to know everything and to be mature in the faith, but the expectation that is upon you is that you would be growing in the faith." You see this imagery throughout 1 Corinthians of child/adult, infant/adult.

He says this in 1 Corinthians 13: 11. ***11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me.*** He's saying this to believers saying, "As you are going along in the faith, you should be maturing. You should be more mature this time next year than you are right now."

He says this in Chapter 14. ***20 Brothers and sisters, stop thinking like children.*** This is toward the end of the letter. He's saying, "It's time to start taking some steps and growing in your faith." That's what 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7 is. It's not a passage that was written to be read at weddings, although there is application for marriage. It's Paul telling the church at Corinth, "Hey, the way you're treating one another is not the way love acts. Here's what love is and here's what it is not." In Chapter 14, he says, ***In regard to evil... In regard to sin, ...be infants... Don't be mature in sin, ...but in your thinking be adults.*** He's saying they should be growing.

Last week, we took the Lord's Supper and we saw in 1 Corinthians 11 that they were not even showing brotherly love toward one another when they gathered as a church to take the Lord's Supper together. They were going ahead with their private meals and Paul has to come in and instruct them again on what love is and what love is not.

Here's the outline from Verses 4-7 in Chapter 13. ***4 Love is patient... Adam covered that. ...love is kind.*** Travis covered that. Then Shay covered, ***It does not envy, it does not boast... Last week, I covered ...it is not proud... for the few dozen of you that were here. Today, we're looking at 5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking... That's next week. ...it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.*** I'm looking forward to that one. ***7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.***

Let's look at this "Love does not dishonor others." We get the title of the message today from the ESV version that says "Love is not rude." The NASB says, "Love does not act unbecomingly." And, being the good independent, fundamental, premillennial, King James Version only Baptist, I'm throwing in the old King James language, "It doth not behave itself unseemly." Love is not rude.

I love, with all of this, John Piper's commentary on it. I think it serves us well as a launching place today. Love *"seeks to be proper and in place rather than out of place. It seeks to honor commonly accepted standards."*

We've never spoken on this, at Woodland Hills, for on almost 17 years. But love seeks to fit in, and in a culture where it's even written into our founding documents as a nation this idea of independence, you should be going out of your way to stand out. Many of you are headed off to college. You're writing resumes or applications and you're trying to figure out how to stand out among your peers, but love does not stand out to the point that it's rude and that it makes itself known in every environment that it goes into.

Here's the bottom line of what we're look at today: **Love is considerate of those around you.** It's thinking through other people in the room. We've been teaching this to our kids for years. Be aware when you're driving, when you're walking, when you're getting off a plane, when you're sitting down in a restaurant, when you're shopping. Be considerate of those around you.

If you're in one-way traffic at the end of a sporting event and you see a friend coming your way, don't stop in the middle of all this traffic and have a conversation, with you and your bags and your purse, and think about no one else but yourself. Be considerate. Step out of the way. Think what other people are doing. You love that guy when you're getting off the airplane who decides to get all of his bags prepared right at the door of the jet bridge. It's like if you could just step out another 15 feet, you wouldn't hold up the hundred people coming behind you.

When you're driving down the strip. Oh, I said it. When you're driving down the strip, you're considerate of these people trying to make what I consider impossible left-hand turns. How many of you do it? You're like, "I will not let you in." No. "I'm going to let you in." But the rules of engagement are only one of you am I letting in. I have no verse to back this up, but how many of you agree with me that the next guy has the obligation and the courtesy to let one in? It's going to happen over at that fence today as you're leaving here. We've got three different ways to get out. It's always awkward as the passenger sitting there going, "Go ahead... No, you took too long; you're looking at your phone. I'm going."

Love is not just thinking about who I am and where I am and what I need to do and where I need to go and how fast I need to get there. Love is thinking about everybody else around you. It's not rude.

Love honors others by fitting in, not standing out. This is not going to be something familiar to us today as we look at this. Today, Shay has already introduced it, but we're going to look at my manners and my mouth when it comes to love is not rude.

1. Love requires that I watch my manners. Courtesy, etiquette... How about this word that's missing from our culture: *civility*? Treating others well with our mouths and with our manners. Paul wrote to Titus. He left him there in Crete - you read right off the bat in Chapter 1 - to establish elders to get this church going. Here's what a qualified elder looks like. He goes through exhorting Titus and the church there. Titus 3 - **1 Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, 2 to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy** (love and kindness) **toward all people**. Fitting in with the generally accepted standards of that culture, show kindness to them.

Most of us learn manners from Mom and Dad, probably more from Mom than from Dad. Our moms kept repeating and repeating and repeating and pouring this into us when we were children. I just sat down this week and I wrote down all the manners I thought my mom taught me and I texted it to her. I said, "Mom, you taught me all this. Is there anything I'm missing or that I'm not doing today that you would like to challenge your 45-year-old son with? She responded back with, "I think you covered it." She made a few edits and you'll see that reflected in the list.

The first one is **say "Please," say "thank you."** This was my parents over and over again. How many of you absolutely love Chick-fil-A? Of course, we all do; we're Christians and it's the Lord's chicken. I was pondering it this week. Why are we all so impressed with Chick-fil-A? I think it's this word *manners*. "It will be my pleasure." My daughter told me a couple of weeks ago, "Dad, you know they are told that they have to say, 'It will be my pleasure or my pleasure' every time you say thank you. I said, "let's see how many times we can get them to say it as we go in.

There's always a smile on their face and they're always like, "It would be my pleasure." It's manners. I think the reason we're so amazed when we go into a Chick-fil-A... I want to remind you it's French fries and fried chicken with manners. I think we're so impressed because we don't see it at other places. I hear people say that all these other fast food places need to send their employees over there to be trained. No, they need to send their employees back to Mom because Mom is the one that taught us this. Chick-fil-A is just keeping it going. This courtesy and kindness and love to all that come in here. Say "please," say "thank you."

If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say nothing at all. How many of you were taught this? My mom texted me this week and she said, "Yeah, by your Grandma Mary Jane had something better than that. She would always tell us, "If you can't think of anything nice to say, think again. And keep thinking until you come up with something nice to say that's even kinder and shows greater love."

Take your turn, no cutting. Take your turn in line, Branson tourists.

Don't interrupt. If you do interrupt, you just simply say "Excuse me." Or maybe if you bump into somebody or you weren't aware... How many of you maybe have a family member that's not aware of what's going on around them and they start to back into somebody and you have to stop them. Or if in traffic, you cut somebody off. They can't hear you, but we just have expressions or gestures, good gestures, that say, "Hey, I'm sorry." So, they can see it in our posture that we didn't mean to do that even when you did mean to do that. This is common courtesy we were all taught. Love is not rude.

Get the door. This was big. My mom raised two boys and she always wanted us to get the door for women. She said, “If we’re walking in as a family, if there are two or three other folks in front of us, I want you to run ahead – literally jog if you have to – and get the door from people.” How many of you were raised this way? More people in the 8:30, I have to be honest with you, the senior adults in the 8:30.

I’ve been teaching this to my son as well. What I love is most restaurants have two doors. So, Carson gets the front door and I’ll go in and get the next set of doors. Then he follows in front of me and then I’ll walk in and shut that door. The struggle is figuring out how long you hold the door for the people behind you. What’s the distance between the last one and our party? It’s kind of a struggle.

We were just at Cantina Laredo this week. Their doors are a little far apart and sometimes, if you’re alone, you have to do that thing where you kind of prop one door open and then try to get the other one. This week, Carson got that outer door and I got the inner door, but the people behind us were kind of dilly dallying, looking at their phone. This is a tough one, so he came in behind me and as soon as he let the door go, I saw the woman roll her eyes and make a comment about Carson to her husband. I locked eyes with her, and I immediately grabbed that door before it shut all the way and propped it open the best I could. She walks in and I go, “I saw you.” She says, “Oh, I was kidding.” I said, “No, you weren’t.”

If the door is closed, knock. Let me say this again for all the children in the room. If the door is closed, knock... or you’re going to see your parents wrestling.

Return phone calls. How many of you this drives you crazy? People don’t even have the common courtesy of returning phone calls. Return the phone call.

Be on time. Love is not rude. For you to be late all the time... And I’m talking to some people this morning. You’re known for this in your family and among your circle of friends to always being fashionably late. There is no such thing as fashionably late; you’re being rude. How many of you on-time people want to hear that again? You’re being rude. You’re not valuing another person’s time. They got there on time and you’re fashionably late. No, you’re being rude.

Send RSVPs and thank you notes. How many of you wish you would get RSVPs back? How many of you still write and send thank you notes? This common courtesy, civility, etiquette, manners, whatever you want to call it, is what our parents taught us. When we see it on display today, we have these moments of how great it is because we’re losing it.

Since we’re back in the full swing or getting into the full swing of show season in Branson, I want to put out some manners and etiquette and courtesy for those of you who will be attending shows this year. How to sit in audience and show good manners and etiquette and love to those who are performing. In the movie theater it’s the same thing. People are up on stage, with blood sweat and tears going into this production. How do you participate in that? You don’t participate by looking at your phone. How many of you this wears you out when someone decides they need to start a texting conversation in the middle of a show? How many of you are like this is just the new world order? Have you seen this at the

beginning of movies? They have those three pictures and one of them is somebody on their phone and it says, "Don't be obnoxious, don't be rude."

Another is this: you don't need to take a phone call during a show. I love you, but you're just not that important. You can wait. And seniors, you're just as guilty of the technology crisis as young people. Don't blame young people. They at least whisper into the phone. Senior adults have no such filter. They answer the phone and loudly proclaim, "We're on the front row. I'm waving at you right now. Hey, down here; right here." Learn how to fit in, showing manners and courtesy.

We're at the Captain Marvel movie this weekend and this guy, like in the opening scene... You've got to watch the opening scene; you can't miss the opening scene of a Marvel movie. This guy decides to just... He's in the middle row. He walks in and then he decides to get all comfortable. He takes his jacket off and for the two or three people behind him, I'm thinking this guy is just clueless. These people just paid \$38.00 to get into this movie and they want to see the opening scene of Marvel. Sit down and take your coat off. Think through what's going on.

One theater in California got so fired up about this that they employed... I love this and I think we should do this in Branson. I want to encourage the first theater that comes up with this. You have my 100% support. They are called Theater Ninjas. Listen. I think this is a new job market in Branson, Missouri to pay young people looking for work. Listen, they're only allowing some of them to work three hours a day? That's perfect. Give them a costume like this and have them go around taking phones out of people's hands and putting their hands over people's mouths. Let's get this going. Love is not rude.

Now, we talked about theaters and we talked about home, what about when we take mission's trips and foreign travel? You don't have to leave the country to experience another culture. We were talking to our friends, Jill and David, this week who lived in the Netherlands and they've traveled extensively around the world. I kind of engaged them in this conversation. I know we Americans don't have a great reputation around the world. I know some of you are going, "We saved half these countries." I get all that, but I think we could do a better job when we travel to not be rude, to be loving.

Jill said this, "Most Americans have the reputation for being loud, obnoxious, and opinionated." Pat Kershaw, who has traveled the world, said, "Ted, and when you see this, it starts in the airport. You'll see it a lot with mission's groups that are traveling." This is why when we travel as a mission's team, we do not wear matching shirts. We don't want people to know we're all... Because we can be loud, obnoxious, and opinionated. We can turn people off.

We show up to another culture and we want to push our way of life. We just want to be who we are. We live in a time where you're being told to be who you are. Celebrate who you are. Don't ever shy away from who you are. You have messages and books out that tell you to be your best you. It's all about you, you, you. Then Amy asked the question this week and I told her that's exactly what we're talking about. She asked, "When is being who you are not okay?" When you're loud, obnoxious, opinionated, and rude.

There are times you don't need to push your way. Pat Kershaw told me... I went right to her after the last service and she said, "I could give you 30 stories, but I remember my husband Max and I coming into Thailand. A friend who has visited us in the States I don't know how many times met us at the airport. We rushed right up to her and gave her a big hug and she backed off. She said, "You're not going to greet people here like that." That's their culture. You're like, "We're Americans; we give big hugs." No, it's that I want to be loving and kind, not rude. I'm going to work to fit in.

When we traveled with our family to Haiti, I sat next to Jim Cavanaugh at a restaurant. When food would show up to the table, there were times where I feared for my health. The scrambled eggs that were half cooked and everything inside me was like, *I've got my small children here...* I asked Jim, "What do you do?"

He's been all over the world. He goes through passports like crazy. He said, "I've just always told the Lord, 'I'm committed to eating whatever is placed in front of me. I'm going to be kind. I'm going to be courteous. Even if I'm apprehensive of what is placed before me, I'm committed because I want to be honoring.'" Honor and love says, "When I show up in someone's home and their culture says you take your shoes off and line them up by the doors, I don't have this attitude of *what? Do they have a problem with my feet?* No, I'm going to do what their culture says. When it comes to meals around the table, every culture is different.

I have a pastor friend. I was just with him last week. He's a loud guy. The food is being served and I love it because you don't even know when the prayer is coming. While the food is being brought to the table, this is his loud prayer: "Father, we thank you for this food and everybody said amen." I didn't have time to close my eyes. That doesn't count. We've got to do this again. But that's his way of saying, "As soon as the food is here, everybody dig in." Now, I could sit there and be like "That's not how we do it. Everybody knows you have to say 'in Jesus name, amen.' Your prayer didn't even count. You just said 'amen;' that's invalid. And you prayed with your eyes open. That's doesn't work for me." Or, do you go with it?

I've also been at the table of the guy who no one eats... The food is sitting in front of you and the head of the household gets up and walks around the table and stops at every single person and prays a blessing over them. Everything inside of me is going, *The food is right here! we should be eating, but no, you're praying still! Come on, get going, let's eat.* We are always pushing our ways and our agendas.

Love understands that our way of life is not the only way of life. Americans, we need to hear this. Follower of Jesus in America, we need to hear this. **Love understands that our way of life is not the best way of life.** When you show up places, work to fit in rather than stand out. Don't be loud, obnoxious, and opinionated; work to fit in.

Pat said, "Ted, one of my favorite times was going to France. We were in Paris and there were two people in front us with jackets from their plumbing business in Kansas. The couple ordered, 'We'd like some crosaints.' The lady across the counter was trying to help them with the correct pronunciation of the word. The couple just kept going back, 'No, we didn't say that, we said crosaints.' Max and I just sat there just cringing on the inside like honor these people."

When we were landing in Haiti – I think Carson was six or seven – I was saying to him, “There going to be speaking to us in French, so when we land just say Bonjour. The whole way down from Miami to Haiti, we were practicing the word. We landed and saw the missionary and what does Carson, the comedian of our family, say? He said Bonjour it with a heavy American accent.

Love honors another’s way of life. And isn’t pushing our way of life. If you take a mission’s trip, if you take any sort of foreign travel, or, young people, your school may take you to St. Louis for a mission’s trip or Kansas City for a mission’s trip and you’re going to be in another culture, you going to be in another way of doing it. Don’t dishonor people by your behavior and by your words. Find ways to honor them.

I visit all different shapes and sizes and denominations of churches. Is it my job to walk into a church and say, “This isn’t how we do it, this isn’t how I would do it”? No, not every church I go to desires flannel and jeans on Sunday morning. They want you to step it up a notch. I don’t want to ever go in with the attitude of *this is who I am, so you either take it or leave it*. That’s dishonoring. Honor says I choose to fit in.

This is what I always love about watching our presidents do foreign travel. When I see pictures like this... Do you know what this picture says to me? It says honor. It says I’m wearing something I would never wear at home or in my country. Here’s George Bush. It’s the same thing. Sometimes we look at that and sneer and go, “He’s wearing his pajamas. Why is he wearing his pajamas?” No, he’s honoring. With Laura Bush, it was the same thing when she covered her head at the Western Wall in Jerusalem. What is she doing? She’s honoring. She’s saying I seek to fit in. I don’t need to be one who stands out.

2. Love requires that I watch my mouth. This one I’m going to spend the least amount of time on this week because this is the one I’ve struggled with the most this week, so we’re going to get through this as quickly as possible.

In Ephesians 4, Paul says, ***29 Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up...*** Remember we looked at this in 1 Corinthians 8 that love builds up. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. ***...as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.***

In Chapter 5 - ***4 Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.*** We saw this last week in Chapter 5 that they were sinning and bragging about it. That’s different than when a word comes out of their mouth and the Holy Spirit is working on them because it’s what I call residuals from their past life that’s still in the wellspring or on the tablet and every now and then something will happen and that word will come out and they’ll be shocked. But be growing, be maturing.

I was in Springfield a few years back and I was parked on the side of the road in Springfield while Amy and Corynn were shopping. I had a great parking space near the sidewalk, so the passenger side was on the street. I saw a friend of mind from about 50 yards away coming toward my car. I thought, *This is great. Right when he gets to my front bumper, I’ll lay on the horn with everything I’ve got. I’ll scare him to death; it’ll be hilarious.*

He got to my front bumper and I laid on the horn. He jumped back and a word came out of his mouth. I mean a word I hadn't heard in a while and I could tell it was a word he hadn't heard in a while. He looked in the car and said, "Hey, pastor." We talked for a bit and I got a text from him a little bit later that said, "I hate that. I can't believe that came out of my mouth." I called him back to reassure him. I said, "I've watched the Lord doing such amazing things in your life. You are growing like crazy. We're going to call that residual. That popped out because it's been in there."

I have a pastor friend who was a Marine for 22 years. Every time he would have surgery in his senior years, he would tell me, "If you hear anything, that's because I am under anesthesia and I am not controlled by the Spirit." My friend called another friend in the church and goes, "You won't believe I just said this word in front of Ted. I do think Ted caused me to stumble. I do put a little bit of it back on him."

I'm just going to ask that you allow the Holy Spirit to grow you from infancy to adulthood with your mouth as well. For some of you, it's time we start... and I'm with you because there are times I can jump right in there. I listened to Dave Ramsey for years. You've probably noticed that. I was using *crap* and *freakin'* more often in sermons. I started getting notes from some of you. One of them was anonymous from a senior. I could tell because it kind of had scribbly handwriting. It said, "Pastor, stop using the word *freakin'*." I left it on my table. How necessary is that? Scripture says this in James 3: ***9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. 10 Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be.***

Over the years, the Lord has worked on me with this because... You'll hear a lot of pastors using questionable language, primarily in California, but it is different culturally. You go and hear language out there versus the Midwest. I'm always trying to think what part of the country I'm in and who I'm with.

John Piper just gave this warning to young people in ministry. Just be very careful. Don't think that you have the freedom to just... He calls it, "Casual, cavalier joking in an effort to be trending and cool." I'm here to confess to you today. I need to watch my mouth. We all need to watch our mouths. We need to be growing in this. As Paul said at the beginning, let's not be adults with sin, let's be infants when it comes to the ways and strategies of the world. Let's not focus on that, but let's be growing in our thinking. When I was child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child, but when I became an adult, I put this away. I want my mouth to reflect that of an adult as well.

Joe White had Men at the Cross going about ten years ago and he asked me to be a speaker. You had to sign a contract for each and every event. At the bottom of the contract, right before your signature, he had something called an "inappropriate language clause." He listed all the words you were not allowed to use. I started look at the list and thought I was good, then I said, "Okay I won't use that one anymore."

I asked him if I could share this. He just said, "It's just inappropriate, unnecessary, and not acceptable. If you are going to be on our stage, speaking before men and adolescents and young people, you're not going to use that type of language."

Proverbs says it this way. ***4 The soothing tongue is a tree of life, but a perverse tongue crushes the spirit.***

I think Jesus gives the best biology lesson in scripture in Matthew 15. ***11 'What goes into someone's mouth does not defile them...'*** Not worried about whether the hands were washed or whether the meat was sacrificed to idols. It's not what goes in a person that defiles them. Paul talks about this in 1 Corinthians 8 as well. ***"...but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them."*** Why? Because the heart is a wellspring; it's deep waters, a tablet.

Mom and Dad, we're not obsessed with the behavior and language of our children; we're obsessed with the heart because that's where all the behavior and the language flows from. Today, as we talk about manners and my mouth, I want the Lord to work on my heart because everything I say comes out of the heart. May the Lord continue to work on each one of us that we would go out and not be known as rude Christians because I'm here to tell you that you don't have to leave a culture to be known as a rude, obnoxious, loud, opinionated Christian. Maybe it's time, with our mouths and our manners, we start showing the love of Christ to one another and to a lost and dying world.

Father, in the name of Jesus, we come to you, thanking you for this series. I thank you for this word that you have given us that we would honor people with our manners, with our mouths, that we would be encouraging to one another, but also, when we're together in public, brothers and sisters in Christ, that people wouldn't look at us as loud, obnoxious, rude, opinionated people, but they would see the love of Christ among us and in us and out of us into those that gather around us. May we all learn from this today.

I thank you for what you continue to do at Woodland Hills. We're grateful for this church, grateful for each person here who has placed faith in Jesus. For the one who has not placed faith in Jesus, that today would be the day of their salvation, that they would believe in their heart and confess with their mouth that you are Lord, that Jesus has been raised from the dead, and with that profession of faith, they would be saved and for that we are grateful.

It's in the name of Jesus that everyone agreed and said... Amen