

# THE SOUTHEAST SOWER

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## “PARENTS, TEACH YOUR CHILDREN COURTESY”

JIM DEASON

Note to self: *You can get killed in the speedy checkout line at Walmart!* The speedy checkout line is for just that—it’s supposed to be for speedy checkout. People who only want to buy a few items. Almost always in a hurry. Wanting to rush to get where they are going. Be careful!

It was a busy day at Walmart. I only had six items. The “speedy” checkout lines were backed up. A new resister opened up in front of me and a young couple, twenty-ish, nearly ran me over trying to get in front of me—and they did. I just stared with a smirk on my face thinking, “How rude!” And the sad thing, I fear, is that this behavior is becoming what we routinely expect.

The word “courteous” (actually, “courteously”) is found only one time

in the *New American Standard Bible Updated*. On Paul’s journey to Rome, the natives of Malta treated him with “extraordinary kindness” and Publius welcomed and entertained him “courteously” (Acts 28:2, 7). *The American Heritage Dictionary* defines courtesy as “polite behavior; gracious manner or manners.” To be courteous is to be considerate; thoughtful of the rights and feelings of others. Courtesy and kindness go hand in hand.

To be *kind* is to be “of a friendly nature; generous or hospitable; warmhearted, good; forbearing; tolerant; charitable; courteous; thoughtful” (AHD). Demonstrating kindness is one way we bear the influence of the Spirit in our lives (Gal. 5:22).

It seems to me that *rudeness* is nearly if not altogether the op-

posite of kindness. It denotes “lacking the graces of civilized life; unrefined, uncouth; ill-mannered; uncivil; discourteous” (AHD). Love “does not act unbecomingly” (1 Cor. 13:5), or is not “rude” (ESV).

Kindness is an attribute of God (Eph. 2:7; Titus 3:4; 1 Pet. 2:3). All of us have been blessed by His benevolence. Since our goal is to “partake of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4), we should develop this quality of God. But, more than that, kindness is commanded. “Do not let kindness and truth leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart” (Pro. 3:3). “So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of ... kindness ...” (Col. 3:12). Dorcas was commended because “deeds of kindness

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### **SERVICES:**

*Sunday*

*Bible Study:*

*10:00 am*

*Worship:*

*10:50 am*

*6:00 pm*

*Wednesday*

*Bible Study:*

*7:30 pm”*

and charity” were abundant in her life (Acts 9:36).

The wise man spoke from a practical standpoint when he observed, “What is desirable in a man is his kindness ...” (Pro. 19:22). Kindness is something we want to see in others. It stands to reason. It is the application to the golden rule, “In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you ...” (Matt. 7:12). You do not want people to treat you rudely. Rather, you want them to be kind and courteous. We should, therefore, act in the same way.

Parents, if you want your children to be kind at twenty, you have to teach them courtesy at two. May I offer three suggestions . . .

#### Teach Your Children To Be Courteous

If you desire them to be courteous and kind, you must diligently teach these principles to your children in your house, when you travel, when you lie down, and when you rise up (cf. Deut. 6:7). In other words, these must be an intentional, determined, consistent, and constant effort on your part to instill these values in your child. Show them that we serve a kind God by teaching them the stories of His kindness from the Bible.

Teach your children to say, “Yes Sir/Mam” or “No Sir/Mam” “Please” and “Thank You” should be a regular part of their vocab-

ulary. Older brothers and sisters in Christ should be addressed as “brother Jones” or “sister Smith.” I realize that some conventions change with culture, but these manners are still appropriate and need to be encouraged.

#### Insist That Your Children Speak/Act With Courtesy

Yes, as a parent you have a right to reinforce your teaching by insisting that your children speak or act in courteous ways. Here is where you have to be intentional, determined, consistent, and constant. Correct you children/grandchildren when they speak or act in a rude manner. “For commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light; and reproofs for discipline are the way of life” (Pro. 6:23).

#### Be An Example

Be a role model of courtesy and kindness. It is hard to teach your children to be something you are not. Lead the way, therefore, and set an example. Open doors for others. Give others your seat in a waiting area. Speak kind and courteously. Be careful what you say and do when someone treats you rudely, and do not respond in kind. And remember, courtesy begins at home. When you lead the way, your children can see that kindness and courtesy are important to you—and it will become important to them.

Courtesy may not always be an expression of faith, but rudeness is definitely a reflection of a lack of it. Oh, and be careful. It’s a jungle out there.

*“He who sows courtesy reaps friendship, and he who plants kindness gathers love” (Basil, A.D. 330-379).*

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#### Thoughts on Kindness

I have wept in the night  
For the shortness of sight  
That to somebody’s needs I  
was blind;  
But I never have yet  
Felt a tinge of regret  
For being a little too kind.  
(Author Unknown)

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#### An Unused Book

“Mother, I found an old  
dusty thing  
High on the shelf—just  
look!”  
“Why, that’s a Bible, Tommy  
dear;  
Be careful—that’s God’s  
Book!”  
“God’s Book!” the child ex-  
claimed;  
“Then, Mother, before we  
lose it,  
We’d better send it back to  
God,  
For, you know, we never use  
it.”  
(Author Unknown)

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#### Don’t Forget Our Shut-ins

Pat Shane  
Delores Otto  
Rod Schwaben