

# 12 FOUNDATION STONES—CLASS 5A

## SUCCESS WITH PEOPLE

### THE GOLDEN RULE, PART 1

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#### Section 1: The Golden Rule

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#### ➤ **Matthew 22:37–40**

We're going to start by looking briefly at what the Bible says about relationships with others. The key verses are in Matthew 22:37–40:

*Matthew 22:37–40—Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." (38) This is the first and great commandment. (39) And the second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (40) On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."*

#### ➤ **The Golden Rule**

*Matthew 7:12—Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.*

Philosophers have been speculating on the rules of human relationships for thousands of years, and out of all that speculation there has come one important precept. Jesus taught it among the stony hills of Judea 20 centuries ago and summed it up in one thought: Do to others as you would have others do to you. So let's give to others what we would have others give to us.

How? When? Where? The answer is ... in every way, all the time, everywhere!

#### ➤ **More verses on love**

*1 John 4:7–11—Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. (8) He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. (9) In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. (10) In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (11) Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*

*1 John 4:12,16–17,21—If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us (16) And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. (17) Love has been perfected among us in this because as He is, so are we in this world. (21) And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.*

*John 15:12—This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.*

*1 John 3:16—By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*

*John 13:34–35—A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. (35) By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*

*Galatians 5:22—The fruit of the Spirit is love.*

*Romans 5:5—The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.*

*Galatians 5:14—For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."*

#### ➤ **Love loves whom?**

Love loves the unlovely and casts a veil over countless sins! Love prefers the happiness of others to your own. It's hard for you to see anything good in someone you don't love, but if you really love someone, it's much easier to overlook and forgive his or her faults.

*Proverbs 10:12—Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins.*

God's love can love anybody, even your enemies! Love begets love, and we love Him because He first loved us. Ask God to help you love others with His love which passes all understanding!

Love is not blind.—It has an extra spiritual eye that sees the good and possibilities that others cannot see!

*Matthew 5:44—But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.*

*1 John 4:19—We love Him because He first loved us.*

*Philippians 4:7—And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

➤ **Love never fails!**

Do you want to be successful for the Lord and with others?—Love, and you can't lose—for love never fails! Do you want the key to every heart?—Try love!—It never fails, because God is love, and it's impossible for Him to fail!

*1 Corinthians 13:8—Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.*

➤ **God's love: The answer to everything!**

God's love is the answer to everything: It saves souls, forgives sins, satisfies hearts, purifies minds, redeems bodies, wins friends, and makes life worth living. It's the only truth, the only way, and the only peace!

Love works no ill to his neighbor: you'll not curse him, cheat him, steal from him, or lie to him if you love him—much less hurt him!

Love even prevents accidents! A safety lecture in college once told how most traffic accidents are caused by a lack of love and consideration for the other driver, believe it or not. So not only wars, but also slaughter on the highways is caused by pride, selfishness, and lack of love.

*John 14:15—If you love Me, keep My commandments.*

*John 14:23—Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him."*

God's love is endless and without limit and without bounds. The ways that we can show His love are also limitless!

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## **Section 2: Ten Tips**

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➤ **Introduction**

The verses we've just read tell us that love is the most important thing in our relations with others. The Golden Rule of God's love should reign over our actions and interactions.

Now we're going to talk about how to apply this in our daily lives. How can you put the Golden Rule into action? How can you get along with practically anybody? We all struggle sometimes with acquaintances, work colleagues, relatives, and even occasionally friends and those closest to us. We sometimes have a hard time getting along with people whom we like, just because we are all so different or something comes up. ... Then there are cantankerous personalities, and people who we simply don't get along with. It's obvious that we're meant to get along with people, but how to do this?

We're going to take a little time to discuss practical ways of relating to others in a loving manner. We can't cover everything in one class, but we're going to look at Ten Tips to help you in your interactions with others. Of course these Ten Tips are not all there is to know, but as much as we'll have time for today.

➤ **Being kind to others is being kind to the Lord!**

When you show people love in little ways, when you show them little courtesies and are well mannered around them, it's really showing love to the Lord, because people are His creation and He loves them dearly. When you take good care of people, show them love, do loving things for them, treat them with courtesy and good manners, this is honoring and respecting the Lord. You're being loving and kind to the Lord. You're telling the Lord that you love His creation, His people, and you want to be loving to them not only for their sakes, which is a good enough reason, but also out of love for Him.

➤ **Ask the Lord for the love you need and do your best to put it into practice!**

There are hundreds of things you can do throughout the day, little things that make someone's life more beautiful because of your kindness. If you follow Jesus' golden rule to "do unto others as you would have them do unto you," then you'll be kind and courteous.

When you pray and ask the Lord to help you be more loving, at the same time ask Him how you can be more loving, and then start working on those practical areas.

That's like putting feet to your prayers. As you do your part, He'll put the love in your heart, and soon it will become a loving habit to do those things.

You can't just ask the Lord for more love but then not work on it or do the practical things the Lord shows you to do. Neither can you just try to work it up in the flesh, or it won't come across right. It'll just be dead works, a superficial tradition without the Spirit. You've got to both ask the Lord for the love you need and do your best to put it into practice!

## ➤ 1. Speak to people

*Colossians 4:6—Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.*

*1 Peter 3:8—Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous;*

Courtesy, kind words, loving and considerate language are all part of showing love, and part of our sample of the Lord's Love.

Give a warm greeting instead of an indifferent glance. A smile and cheerful words show a person that you're interested in them.

Take a moment to answer a question with consideration and sincerity, instead of in pressured haste and busy rush, making others feel belittled or in the way.

Slow down. Sure we're all busy, but we're not so busy that we can't take a little time to acknowledge each person we meet. Be sure when you first meet someone each day to greet them.

A tip for married couples: Hug and kiss when waking, when leaving your room for the day, when returning home after a day out, before sleeping, etc.

### ■ Show love by being courteous

You can show others love by being kind and courteous. It's amazing how much little courtesies and good manners affect people. It means a lot to people and they appreciate it when others treat them with love and courtesy. Just ask anyone if they don't feel better when someone says, "Excuse me" if they happen to bump into them, or pass something in front of them, or walk in front of them when they're having a conversation.

It's part of our duty as Jesus' followers to be loving to one another. Showing courtesy and kind manners to others in the little things is a wonderful way to show them the Lord's love. You don't have to do big things to be loving, and as a matter of fact, it's often the little things that are so important.

Little phrases, such as "I'm sorry to bother you." "Would you please?" "Would you mind?" "Thank you!"—little courtesies like these oil the cogs of everyday life and are just plain good manners!

### **Humor: "Please!"**

Jessica was trying to teach her two-year-old son how to say "Please" and "Thank you." She gave him a biscuit and asked, "What do you say?"

"Please," replied Mark.

"No, what do you say after you've been given something?"

"More please," came the reply.

### ■ Show love by including others

It's so easy to unintentionally hurt people or make them feel unloved or unappreciated, when just a little courtesy can do the opposite and make them feel appreciated and loved.

Stop and wait for someone if you're walking too fast and give him or her a chance to catch up, and slow down your pace.

If someone walks up to you while you're having a conversation with another person, try to include him or her in the conversation and fill him or her in on what you've just been talking about. That's just good manners; it is rude and hurtful to people to ignore them or exclude them from your activity or conversation.

We all yearn for attention. We want our ideas and opinions to be heard. The desire for attention is present in all of us. If you think not, let me ask you if you've ever been snubbed by a haughty waiter, passed by at a bus stop by a bus driver or completely ignored by some store clerk!

## ➤ **2. Smile at people**

*Proverbs 15:13—A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance.*

Actions speak louder than words, and a smile says, "I like you. You make me happy. I'm glad to see you."

This is why dogs are such a hit. They are so glad to see us they practically jump out of their skin. So naturally, we are glad to see them. A baby's smile has the same effect.

The effect of a smile is powerful!—Even when it seems unseen. Telephone companies suggest you smile when talking over the phone. Your "smile" comes through your voice.

Smile! Nobody needs a smile so much as those who have none left to give!

### **The sun and the wind (Based on the fable by Aesop)**

One day the sun and the wind quarreled about which was the stronger. The wind said, "I'll prove I am. See that old man down there with a coat? I bet I can make him take his coat off quicker than you can."

So the sun went behind a cloud and the wind blew until it was almost a tornado, but the harder it blew, the tighter the old man wrapped his coat about him.

Finally the wind calmed down and gave up; and then the sun came out from behind the cloud and smiled kindly on the old man. Presently, the man mopped his brow and pulled off his coat. The sun then told the wind that gentleness and friendliness were always stronger than fury and force.

### **The language of a smile**

They say it takes 72 muscles to frown; 14 to smile.

All people smile in the same language.

A warm smile is the universal language of kindness.

A smile of encouragement at the right moment may act like sunlight on a closed flower.—It may be the turning point for a struggling life.

If you see someone without a smile, give him one of yours.

Your life is bound to affect others! "No man is an island!" Everybody's influencing somebody—even when you seem to be all alone! Sometimes just a word or a glance or a smile can make a difference. You're either going to pull people up to your level or drag them down to yours—one or the other!

## ➤ **3. Address people by their names**

The sweetest music to almost everyone is the sound of their own name! Here are some tips for remembering names:

When you are introduced to someone, you are not likely to forget his face, at least not at once, since it is right there before you. His name, however, is another matter. A common embarrassment is to fail to catch a name, or instantly forget it.

To overcome that problem:

a. If you are not sure you heard the name right, ask to have it repeated.

b. If you are still in doubt, then ask to have it not only repeated but also spelled.

c. Check any uncertainties immediately. If you let the moment pass, it becomes awkward to ask the person's name later on—though it would be better to do that than miss the name completely.

## ➤ **4. Be friendly and helpful**

Friendliness, helpfulness, kindness, generosity, and unselfishness are all part of love.

"Little deeds of kindness, little words of love, help to make Earth happy, like the Heaven above."

■ Unselfishness—the J-O-Y formula—Jesus, Others, You

Seeking the happiness of others as God has ordered us to do, is the only way to have true happiness! If you'll try to make others happy, it'll make you happy, and you'll have a little Heaven right here on Earth! You don't find happiness by chasing it. Happiness finds you by your bringing happiness to others. That's God's system; that's God's rule; that's God's way; that's God's Law of Love. God will make you happy if you make others happy. It's that simple!

Love prefers the happiness of others to your own. True happiness comes not in your personal pursuit of selfish pleasure and satisfaction, but in finding God and giving His life to others and bringing them happiness!

If you'll just forget yourself and think more about others, and really try to help and pray for and love them, you'll find that will solve almost all of your problems! If you get your mind off of yourself and

on others you'll find that this is what will bring you true joy and happiness. That's the formula for finding joy: Put Jesus first, then others, and then you!—J-O-Y!

First of all, get your mind on Jesus, and then He'll help you get it on to your neighbor, and help you love him as yourself.

### **The sort of impression that kindness makes...**

In the city of Philadelphia there was a little third-class hotel. Into it one night there came two tired elderly people. They went up to the night clerk and the husband pleadingly said, "Mister, please don't tell us you don't have a room. My wife and I have been all over the city looking for a place to stay. We did not know about the big conventions that are here. The hotels at which we usually stay are all full. We're dead tired and it's after midnight. Please don't tell us you don't have a place where we can sleep."

The clerk looked at them a long moment and then answered, "Well, I don't have a single room except my own. I work at night and sleep in the daytime. It's not as nice as the other rooms, but it's clean, and I'll be happy for you to be my guests for tonight."

The wife said, "God bless you, young man."

The next morning at the breakfast table, the couple sent the waiter to tell the night clerk they wanted to see him on very important business. The night clerk went in, recognized the two people, sat down at the table and said he hoped they had had a good night's sleep. They thanked him most sincerely. Then the husband astounded the clerk with this statement, "You are too fine a hotel man to stay in a hotel like this. How would you like for me to build a big, beautiful, luxurious hotel in the city of New York and make you general manager?"

The clerk didn't know what to say. He thought there might be something wrong with their minds. He finally stammered, "It sounds wonderful."

His guest then introduced himself. "I'm John Jacob Astor." So, the Waldorf Astoria Hotel was built, and the night clerk became, in the years to follow, the best-known hotel man in the world.

In 1976, the 47-story Waldorf-Astoria in New York City served three-quarters of a million guests in its 1,900 rooms.

### **The lost shoe**

This story is told of Mahatma Gandhi. He was standing in the doorway of an open railway carriage as it moved slowly out of an Indian station, when one of his shoes slipped off and fell on to the track. Quickly he took off his other shoe and dropped that on to the track, too.

Seeing the puzzled look of a fellow passenger, Gandhi said, "A poor man may find a pair of shoes now. One wouldn't be much good to him."

It's wonderful to think not only in terms of how things affect ourselves, but also in terms of how they affect others.

### **Loving-kindness**

A class of eight-year-old boys was asked to explain the meaning of loving-kindness; one youngster replied, "If I were hungry and someone gave me a piece of bread and butter ... that would be kindness, but if they put lots of jam on it ... that would be loving-kindness."

## ➤ **5. Communicate**

*Hebrews 13:16—But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*

*Proverbs 10:11a—The mouth of the righteous is a well of life..*

*Proverbs 15:23—A man has joy by the answer of his mouth, and a word spoken in due season, how good it is!*

Obviously, for people to feel our love and care for them, we need to communicate with them. That means giving and taking in conversation. We need to take the time to listen, but we should not only listen in silence: We also need to convey our own thoughts and feelings.

### **The power of listening!**

(From a group of Family members who helps counsel UN peacekeepers in an active zone.)

When we first met one group of UN soldiers, most of them were very much on the defensive. They were "realists" and agnostics, they said. But after a while they saw that we weren't trying to "give them religion" but rather a listening ear, understanding and Jesus—and they became very receptive.

They returned the next day so we could talk some more. At that time we were able to explain more basic principles from the Bible.

One fellow already knew the Lord and had begun reading through the New Testament. "I have a Bible and am reading through it, but with you I have the missing ingredient.—I'm getting the love I need!" he said.

We all prayed together before parting. When we looked up, some of these burly soldiers were in tears.

Later we discovered one example that showed how important our work is: Sheridan is a Canadian peacekeeper who has an extremely dangerous job; he drives a specially designed UN bulldozer that clears

mine fields. He just returned from a mission in the field, and sought us out to tell us this story.

As he was clearing a mined area, he drove over an anti-tank mine, which didn't explode. The 30-ton vehicle behind him ran over that same mine and was blown into the treetops. The driver survived, but he lost both of his legs. Sheridan told us that he believes it was our prayers that protected him. He had received the Lord with us just before going on this mission.

These soldiers constantly face life-and-death situations, so our witnessing to them is also a matter of life-and-death.

### **Listening with your eyes**

A young child returned home with a crayon drawing she had done at school. She almost danced into the kitchen where her busy mother was preparing dinner. "Mummy," she cried in glee, "you'll never guess what!"

"Right," replied the mother not looking up, "I don't know what."

"Mummy, you're not listening." "Yes, I am, darling," said the mother as she attended to her pots.

"But, Mummy, you're not listening with your eyes."

## ➤ **6. Be concerned**

*Galatians 6:2—Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*

*Romans 12:15—Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.*

There isn't any point in paying attention to the other person unless you honestly care about him, unless you are willing to share his pain and help him solve his problems. To be concerned about the other person is the basic foundation for all deep and lasting human relationships.

### ■ Empathy

A vital quality for getting along with people is empathy. Empathy comes from the German word *einführung*, which means to feel into or to feel with. Empathy is viewing life through another's eyes, feeling as another feels, hearing a story through the perceptions of the other person. Christians are called to empathy by bearing one another's burdens and by rejoicing with others in their joys and weeping with others in their pain.

### ■ Prophecy helps!

Ask the Lord to give you prophecies for people you know. If you're having difficulties getting along with someone, ask the Lord to give you something about that person that will help you understand them and empathize with them.

### **Understanding**

It was a cold winter morning. The shopping center parking lot was ridged with piles of fresh snow. I parked my car and headed for the sidewalk, the only exit that had been freed from the drifts of snow. But there was a car left directly in front of the shoveled pathway! I had to trudge around the vehicle, wading into snow up to my knees, to get onto the walk. "How thoughtless can people be!" These words rang through my mind along with a few others. But as I turned to stamp the snow off my trousers, there, struggling along the walk, was a lady with crutches extending from both arms, her legs encased in braces. Slowly, ever so slowly, she inched her way along the slippery pathway, got to the car blocking the walk, tussled herself into the front seat, and drove away. I stood for a moment, ashamed that I had felt the way I had. In seconds I had changed. I saw the woman and her plight. Suddenly I understood!

The absolutely indispensable ingredient to getting along with others is understanding! Differences, displeasures, wrath, frustration, conflict, and separation start where understanding stops.

## ➤ **7. Be generous with praise, encouragement and appreciation**

*Philippians 4:8—Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. [Song: "Whatsoever Things Are True"]*

One of the deepest needs of human nature is the desire to be appreciated. Give sincere, honest appreciation. Be hearty in your approval and lavish in your praise, and people will cherish your words and treasure them and repeat them over a lifetime.

Everyone likes to feel important. People are hungry for praise and starving for honest appreciation.

"I am proud of you" are five of the most precious words you can ever use to make another person feel important.

Almost everybody needs encouragement! Most people are not really conceited, but feel a certain amount of inferiority complex and tend to get a little discouraged with themselves. Therefore, encouragement is a very important thing!

Children thrive on praise! It's more important to praise a child for his good works and his good behavior than it is to scold him for his bad behavior. Always accentuate the positive!

That applies to your spouse as well! Try to remind yourself constantly of his or her good qualities, the good things, and try not to think about the bad things. One of the worst things you can do is pick on every little fault, always belittling, nagging, henpecking!—And that will really break up marriages!

In marriage, with children, at work, in any association—an ounce of praise, of sincere appreciation of some act or attribute, can often do more than a ton of fault-finding. If we look for it we can usually find something to commend and encourage in even the most unlikely, unlikable and incapable person. Most of us, in the glow of feeling we have pleased, want to do more to please, and knowing we have done well, want to do better.

### **Encouragement motivates!**

Aleida Huissen, 78, of Rotterdam, Netherlands, has been smoking for 50 years. And for 50 years she has been trying to give up her harmful habit. But she has not been successful—that is, until recently. She has now given up cigarettes, cigars, and pipes. The secret? Leo Jansen, 79, proposed marriage last year, but refused to go through with the wedding until Aleida gave up smoking. Says Aleida now: "Will power never was enough to get me off the tobacco habit. Love did it."

### **Giving sincere appreciation and praise**

Praise spurs people to achieve, gives them inner confidence, and makes them grow. But how many flowers go ungiven? How many compliments go unsaid? How many people do you admire for certain qualities or accomplishments but have never bothered saying so? Why not practice praise? When you do, consider these thoughts:

— Be sincere, don't give flattery. Being sincere is just a matter of looking for the good in others. You'll find it if you're sincerely looking.

— Be specific. Don't just say a person is "nice" or "good." Pick out specific things to praise.

### **The doggie example!**

Why read a book to find out how to win friends? Why not study the technique of the greatest winner of friends the world has ever known? Who is he? You may meet him tomorrow coming down the street. When you get within ten feet of him, he will begin to wag his tail. If you stop and pat him, he will almost jump out of his skin to show you how much he likes you. And you know that behind this show of affection on his part, there are no ulterior motives: He doesn't want to sell you any real estate, and he doesn't want to marry you. Did you ever stop to think that a dog is the only animal that doesn't have to work for a living? A hen has to lay eggs, a cow has to give milk, and a canary has to sing. But a dog makes his living by giving you nothing but love!

### **Humor: Overlooking the faults of others**

At her golden wedding celebration, Grandmother told guests the secret of her happy marriage: "On my wedding day, I decided to make a list of ten of my husband's faults which, for the sake of our marriage, I would overlook."

As the guests were leaving, a young woman whose marriage had recently been in difficulty asked Grandmother what some of the faults were that she had seen fit to overlook. Grandmother said, "To tell you the truth, my dear, I never did get around to listing them. But whenever my husband did something that made me hopping mad, I would say to myself, "Lucky for him that's one of the ten!"

## **➤ 8. Be genuinely interested in the feelings of others**

Giving and taking goes on continuously in conversation. Human relationships are sustained by this back and forth flow. If the flow becomes one-sided, the conversation wanes for the moment. The conversational fire burns low and dies out.

People need outlets for their feelings. They need someone who will listen with understanding; who will give them assurance for their anxiety, a vent for their anger, acceptance and forgiveness when they need it, sympathy for their grief, and who will share their joy.

Part of consideration is listening. You can't consider someone's feelings if you don't know what they are! And to find out, you'll need to listen to them.

To someone in need of an outlet for his thoughts and feelings, your attention can be a precious gift. As a listener you are more than a recipient of information. You often help the speaker clarify his thoughts and discharge his feelings.

An individual who is annoyed or worried or joyful or guilty about something has to carry the burden of these pent up feelings until he can vent them. Probably the most common way of venting feelings is talking, and talking calls for a listener.

Sometimes all some people need is for somebody to listen.

#### ■ Samples of conversation in the book of Job

Job's appeal to his friends to listen to him.

*Job 21:2–3a—Listen carefully to my speech, and let this be your consolation. Bear with me that I may speak.*

Sample of listening and then speaking:

*Job 32:10–12a—"Therefore I say, 'Listen to me, I also will declare my opinion.' (11) Indeed I waited for your words, I listened to your reasonings, while you searched out what to say. (12a) I paid close attention to you."*

#### **Learning to listen**

I know of no quicker way to insult a person or to hurt his feelings than to brush him off or turn away when he's trying to tell you something. How many times have you been right in the middle of a good story only to have one of your listeners turn away or interrupt you and start talking about a brand new subject?

Learning to listen to the other person with everything you've got means putting aside your own interests, your own pleasures, and your own preoccupations, at least temporarily. For those few moments of time it means that you must concentrate 100% on what the other person is saying. You must focus all your attention on him. You must listen to him with all the intensity and awareness that you can command.

#### **Listen between the lines**

A lot of times you can learn more by what the other person doesn't say than by what he does. So learn to listen between the lines. Just because he didn't say that he doesn't want to do it your way isn't any sign that he does.

The speaker doesn't always put everything he's thinking into words for you. Watch for the changing tone and volume of his voice. Sometimes you will find a meaning that's in direct contrast to his spoken words. And watch his facial expression, his mannerisms, his gestures, and the movements of his body. To be a good listener and to listen with everything you've got means you'll have to use your eyes as well as your ears.

#### **Listening is a proof of care**

"When the word got around that I had cancer," Jan reported, "I soon discovered something surprising about people. After five or six conversations one day, I realized that I had little doubt about who really cared. Those who cared were those who listened, who really heard me without trying to explain or advise or catalogue their own illnesses. It's not hard to tell if you've been cared for. The measuring is done by the listening."

Do you hear Jan? She is scared, confused, angry, and full of feelings that deserve expression. And she is not looking for someone to tell her what to do with her pain or where to go with her problem. Listening is one sign of caring she recognizes.

## ➤ **9. Avoid arguments**

*2 Timothy 2:24—And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient.*

*James 1:19–20—So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; (20) for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.*

#### ■ Avoid getting drawn into arguments

It's been said that there's only one way to get the best of an argument—avoid it!

*Proverbs 17:14—The beginning of strife is like releasing water; therefore stop contention before a quarrel starts.*

*1 Peter 3:8–9—Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tender-hearted, be courteous; (9) not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.*

#### ■ By choosing your words wisely, you can avoid provoking an argument

*Proverbs 15:1—A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.*

*Proverbs 17:9—He who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates friends.*



*Ecclesiastes 5:2a—Do not be rash with your mouth.*

- Love, humility and prayer solve all problems!

*Philippians 2:3—Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.*

*Colossians 3:13—Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.*

### **Share your opinions without starting an argument!**

Proverbs 11:14—In the multitude of counselors there is safety.

Sometimes when you're discussing something with another person, like plans or a project or whatever, you'll find they have a different opinion than you as to what should be done. It's at times like these you should pray and ask the Lord to give you real wisdom and to help you avoid getting pushy or into an argumentative spirit.

You may feel your ideas are the best and therefore you may really push them to the point that you're actually arguing with others. That's a mistake! You are supposed to present your side of the picture, that's expected; you shouldn't just sit there and say nothing when you know some extra facts or other details or important information that might change the outcome.

The problem comes when you become too pushy and argumentative in presenting the facts as you try to get across your point of view. A lot of times it's just your desire to see things done properly and you want the right thing to happen, but if you start pushing and really aggressively advocating your side, then it creates tension.

If you feel the other person is wrong, then you should question it in a nice, loving manner. You shouldn't say, "You're wrong! I think you're making a mistake," but rather something like, "Don't you think maybe we should consider the possibility of doing it this way?" or "Perhaps we should consider this other alternative."

### **How wars begin**

A boy once asked his father, "Dad, how do wars begin?"

"Well, take the First World War," said his father. "That got started when Germany invaded Belgium."

Immediately his wife interrupted him, "Tell the boy the truth! It began because somebody was assassinated!"

The husband drew himself up with an air of superiority and snapped back, "Are you answering the question or am I?"

Turning her back upon him in a huff, the wife stormed out the room and slammed the door as hard as she could! When the dishes stopped rattling in the cupboard an uneasy silence followed, broken at length by the boy: "Daddy, you don't have to tell me how wars begin. I know now!"

## ➤ **10. Be alert to give service**

We're going to talk more about this in the next class, but for now, here is some food for thought:

- Jesus set the example of being a Servant of others.

*John 13:13–15—(Jesus said:) You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. (14) If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. (15) For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.*

*Luke 22:24–26—Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest. (25) And He said to them, 'The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called 'benefactors.' (26) But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves.'*

### **Love not only in word, but in deed.**

A chaplain on the battlefield came to a man who was wounded, lying on the ground. "Would you like me to read you something from this Book—the Bible?" he asked the soldier.

"I'm so thirsty," replied the man. "I would rather have a drink of water." As quickly as he could the chaplain brought the water. Then the soldier asked, "Could you put something under my head?" The chaplain took off his light overcoat, rolled it, and put it gently under the soldier's head for a pillow "Now," said the soldier, "if I had something over me! I am very cold." There was only one thing the chaplain could do. He took off his own coat, and spread it over the soldier.

The wounded man looked up into his face, and said gratefully, "Thank you." Then he added feebly, "If there is anything in that Book in your hand that makes a man do for another what you have done for me, please read it to me."

## **The Good Samaritan**

One semester, a seminary professor set up his preaching class in an unusual way. He scheduled his students to preach on the Parable of the Good Samaritan and on the day of the class, he choreographed his experiment so that each student would go, one at a time, from one classroom to another where he or she would preach a sermon. The professor gave some students ten minutes to go from one room to the other; to others he allowed less time, forcing them to rush in order to meet the schedule. Each student, one at a time, had to walk down a certain corridor and pass by an indigent man (penniless and homeless), who was deliberately planted there, obviously in need of some sort of aid.

The results were surprising, and offered a powerful lesson to them. The percentage of those good men and women who stopped to help was extremely low, especially for those who were under the pressure of a shorter time period. The tighter the schedule, the fewer were those who stopped to help the indigent man.

When the professor revealed his experiment, you can imagine the impact on that class of future spiritual leaders. Rushing to preach a sermon on the Good Samaritan they had walked past the beggar at the heart of the parable. We must have eyes to see as well as hands to help, or we may never help at all.

## **God's Hand**

In a prayer meeting a man prayed with great fervor. The burden of his prayer had to do with a family that had suddenly been bereft of the father and husband. "O God," pleaded the intercessor, "do send someone to that grief-stricken family to touch them for You!" Suddenly the man lapsed into silence. Quietly he withdrew from the group. Before the prayer meeting concluded, he returned. Asked why he concluded his prayer so abruptly, and why he withdrew without explanation, he said, "As I prayed that God would touch that sorrowing family, He seemed to say to me, 'You are My hand! You go and touch them for Me!'"

## ➤ **Summary of the Ten Tips**

1. Speak to people
2. Smile at people
3. Address people by their name
4. Be friendly and helpful
5. Communicate
6. Be concerned
7. Be generous with praise, encouragement and appreciation
8. Be genuinely interested in the feelings of others
9. Avoid arguments
10. Be alert to give service

## ➤ **A principle to base your life on!**

It all boils down to what the Lord said nearly 2,000 years ago: "Love the Lord with all your heart and soul and mind, and your neighbor as yourself."

How do you like to be loved and treated? Think about it. That's how you should love and treat others. "Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them." It's not just a Bible verse or some abstract spiritual principle, but it's something to base your life on!

When you're out and about during the day, look at the people passing by as if they were you. They need love, encouragement, cheerfulness, comfort, hope, peace, concern, and compassion just like you do—and the Lord most of all, of course. What if that person on the street or in the shop or school were you? How would you want to be loved and reached? That's how you can love and reach others, and change their lives forever!

Your family at home deserves the same love, appreciation, and support. Make it a true home of hearts, and in loving and helping both the lost and your family in this way you'll influence multitudes of others! The love will spread from heart to heart, person to person, and you have no idea how far it will go!

(end)