

Love God and Love Others - *Good Manners*

Practical ways of loving your neighbour as yourself!

(third in a series)

-by Judi, The Manners Lady

What did Jesus say were the two greatest commandments?

Number One?

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind.”

And Number Two?

“Love your neighbour as yourself.”

In these two sentences, Jesus summed up The Ten Commandments—His guidelines for living! The first four commandments are our duty to God. The next six commands are our duty to our fellow man. Honour your parents. Don't lie. Don't kill. Don't steal. In summary: Love God and love others.

This is God's plan for us and for our children. As parents, we're doing our best to teach our kids how to love and honour God, but how are we doing in teaching them how to show God's love to each other? Kindness. Respect. Compassion. Obedience. Courtesy. All of these are Godly qualities that we want to teach our children, and we pray that they will become part of “who they are” rather than something they just put on to impress people. It's all part of “manners”... how we relate to one another.

If the children at your church are like the children at my church... they could all use a good dose of old-fashioned manners. They often rush through the foyer with little regard for the elderly. They rarely look at a adult, let alone greet them politely by saying a cheerful “Hello!” When was the last time they thought to offer their chair or get the door for a lady or an older gentleman. They scramble down the pews climbing over knees to get to their seats – without saying, “Excuse me.” “Please” and “Thank you” are often forgotten. And when is the last time they greeted the pastor!? Unfortunately, the kids at church aren't behaving much better than the kids in the public school yards.

It seems like courtesy has fallen on hard times. No longer can we refer to “common courtesy” because courtesy is no longer common. For the past few generations, courtesy hasn't been handed down to our children. And now—with bullying, whining, complaining and bad attitudes at an all time high, parents are waking up and seeing the need for getting back to basics.

Many parents are discovering that they can help meet this need for their families and for the community by not just modeling Godly behaviour for our children, but being intentional about teaching them

the way God wants us to live and treat others. And it helps to make it fun!

When I first started teaching manners and character, I knew the power of music to reach children, so I wrote a song for each of the Biblical principles that I knew as parents we wanted to teach our children... little did I dream that CD would turn into a family ministry used around the world in both churches and in public schools.

It has been said that “manners are the oil that lubricate society.” Every nugget of wisdom and training with regards to manners and life skills that we can build into our children’s character at a young age will help not only ease their way... but “grease” their way! They’ll have more confidence, because they know they’re doing the right thing. Dr. Smiley Blanton, a renowned psychiatrist, said that “Eighty percent of my patients would not have had to be in my office if their parents had taught them manners—how to get along in society.”

Good manners help everyone—of all ages—get along better, whether it’s saying “Thank you” for the church bulletin that’s just been handed to you by an usher; saying “please” when you ask for the ketchup at the table; or teaching our children to say “I’m sorry, will you forgive me?” right away when they’ve hurt or offended someone.

How we act... through our manners and our behaviour—is a choice. Our words and actions can bring light and life to our family and to others—or they can bring darkness and despair. And we want to inspire our children to make the right choices—to bring life... not darkness.

Almost all manners will fall into place and just seem like common sense if we live and teach our children to live by three simple, yet profound, principles, derived from three great Scripture verses.

1. The Golden Rule—Do unto others as you would have them do unto you! (*Matthew 7:12*)

2. Treat everyone in your life with R-E-S-P-E-C-T... starting with obeying mom and dad—“right away without delay” and wearing your “happy eyes”—not your bad attitude eyes! “Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right!” (*Ephesians 6:1*) no “Whiney Rhinos™” or “Grouchy Rouchy’s™” – (two of The Bad Manners Monsters™ from The Manners Club!)

3. Live with a thankful heart—an “attitude of gratitude!” The Bible reminds us not to whine and complain... but “In everything give thanks—for this is the will of God!” (*I Thes 5:18*)

The wonderful thing about good manners is that they help us show God’s love to a hurting world that desperately needs to know and experience him.

Remember the two greatest commandments? Love God. And Love

others. They will know we are Christians by our love.

Reprinted by kind permission of the author. Judi The Manners Lady (Judi Vankevich) is founder and President of The Manners Club & Life Skills, Int'l and Director of the Canadian Project for Manners & Civility. Her award-winning CD is available at Christian bookstores and includes songs such as "It's Fun to Have Good Manners!" features fun songs like "R-E-S-P-E-C-T," "We Want to Obey Your Mom & Dad," "The Five Fabulous Phrases," "The Golden Rule Rap," and "The Bad Manners Monsters!"

For info on The Manners Club curriculum ([The Official Manners Club Handbook for Kids](#)) and CD, and for FREE resources for your church, email info@TheMannersClub.com to request them.

This article originally appeared in the OCHEC Summer 2005 newsletter.

Permission to reprint must be obtained from the author and/or OCHEC office.