



Four Habits of Gracious People

February 9, 2025

Today we are going to talk about the Four Habits of Gracious people found in Philippians 1:2-6.

There are five letters in the New Testament Paul wrote while in prison in Rome.

Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon are called the prison epistles because they were written by Paul during his first imprisonment in Rome.

Acts 28:17-20

17 Three days after Paul's arrival, he called together the local Jewish leaders. He said to them, "Brothers, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Roman government, even though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our ancestors. 18 The Romans tried me and wanted to release me, because they found no cause for the death sentence. 19 But when the Jewish leaders protested the decision, I felt it necessary to appeal to Caesar, even though I had no desire to press charges against my own people. 20 I asked you to come here today so we could get acquainted and so I could explain to you that I am bound with this chain because I believe that the hope of Israel—the Messiah—has already come.

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

The Greek word charis is packed with meaning in the Bible. Charis can be succinctly defined as "grace," as in "the unmerited favor of God." The term charis and the theme of grace permeate the New Testament in a variety of ways. Of the approximate 150 occurrences of charis, the vast majority appear in the letters of the apostle Paul.

G...GOD's
R...Riches
A...AT
C...Christ's
E...Expense

The Movie 42 is the story of Jackie Robinson, the first African American man to play major league baseball.

April 15, 1947.

On that day a black man and a white man together changed a game and a nation forever. The black man, of course, was Jackie Robinson. The white man was Branch Rickey, the President and General Manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers. Branch Rickey was both a great baseball man and a deeply devoted disciple of Jesus Christ. His Christian faith led him to the conviction that the color barrier in baseball had to be broken and that he was the person to do it. He knew that he had to pick just the right player to accomplish this revolutionary change—a player who not only was an extraordinary athlete but also a player who had the spiritual strength to withstand the pressures, prejudice, and persecution which surely would come.

Branch Rickey's eye fell upon Jackie Robinson. Robinson was a dynamic young player, but much more to Rickey's purposes, Jackie Robinson, first from his mother and later from a black Methodist minister who befriended him during his troubled adolescence, had been given a strong faith in Jesus Christ and a belief that God had great plans for him in his life.

So it was that Branch Rickey called Jackie Robinson into his office, and an amazing conversation took place. It is said that on small moments history turns. Well here was a small moment, but it turned history.

Branch Rickey said to Jackie Robinson, **“I know you are a good ball player but what I don't know is if you have any guts!”** Robinson immediately stiffened but Rickey quickly said, **“I'm looking for a ball player with guts enough not to fight back.”**

Suddenly, surprisingly, shockingly, Branch Rickey then stripped off his coat and began to act out the kinds of abuse he knew Jackie Robinson would have to face. Verbally he poured out venom on Robinson. At one point he even swung his pudgy fist toward Jackie Robinson's head. Then he screamed at Robinson, “Do you have courage enough not to fight back?”

Jackie Robinson calmly replied, “Mr. Rickey, I read the Bible. I know how Jesus teaches us to turn the other cheek. I know how to do that.” Now on the coffee table in Rickey's office was a book which was quite popular at the time. The book was

entitled “The Life of Christ.” It was written by a man named Alfred Edersheim. Branch Rickey picked up the book, sat down next to Jackie Robinson, and the two of them read together a passage from that book where the author referred to Jesus’ words about turning the other cheek as the most revolutionary of all His teachings.

It was at that point that the two men struck a covenant with the Lord and with each other, went on then to strike a blow for justice on the baseball field, and ultimately struck the spark which launched the Civil Rights Movement in this country.

GRACIOUS PEOPLE KNOW GRACE.

3 Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God.

George Müller

He cared for 10,024 orphans during his lifetime,[1][2] and provided educational opportunities for the orphans to the point that he was even accused by some of raising the poor above their natural station in British life. He established 117 schools which offered Christian education to more than 120,000.

Through all this, Müller never made requests for financial support, nor did he go into debt, even though the five homes cost more than £100,000 to build. Many times, he received unsolicited food donations only hours before they were needed to feed the children, further strengthening his faith in God. Müller was in constant prayer that God touched the hearts of donors to make provisions for the orphans.

For example, on one well-documented occasion, thanks was given for breakfast when all the children were sitting at the table even though there was nothing to eat in the house. As they finished praying, the baker knocked on the door with sufficient fresh bread to feed everyone, and the milkman gave them plenty of fresh milk because his cart had broken down in front of the orphanage.[12] In his autobiographical entry for 12 February 1842, he wrote:

A brother in the Lord came to me this morning and, after a few minutes of conversation, gave me two thousand pounds for furnishing the new Orphan House ... Now I am able to meet all of the expenses. In all probability, I will even have several hundred pounds more than I need. The Lord not only gives as much as is absolutely necessary for his work, but he gives abundantly. This blessing filled me

with inexplicable delight. He had given me the full answer to my thousands of prayers during the [past] 1,195 days.

4 Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy, **5** for you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now.

The biblical definition of joy says that joy is a feeling of good pleasure and happiness that is dependent on who Jesus is rather than on who we are or what is happening around us. Joy comes from the Holy Spirit, abiding in God's presence and from hope in His word.

At the age of twelve, the Catholic Albanian girl Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu heard a call. God demanded that she devote her life to Him. She entered a nunnery, received an education, and was sent to Calcutta in India to be a teacher.

Her new name was Teresa. In India she received a second call from God: to help the poor while living among them. She founded a new sisterhood, Missionaries of Charity. Mother Teresa and her helpers built homes for orphans, nursing homes for lepers and hospices for the terminally ill in Calcutta.

What is Mother Teresa so famous for?

Mother Teresa is one of the most well-known recent saints in the Roman Catholic Church. She is best known for her work with the poor in Calcutta and for founding the Missionaries of Charity. St Teresa of Calcutta became renowned worldwide and even won the Nobel Peace Prize.

What did Mother Teresa do to change the world?

Mother Teresa treated everyone with compassion and supported them regardless of their religious beliefs or social status. Her efforts helped millions of people who were suffering from disease, poverty, homelessness and starvation. Her work made a difference.

The Key To Her Joy Was How she lived Her Life.

People are often unreasonable, illogical, and self-centered.
Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind,
people may accuse you of selfish ulterior motives.
Be kind anyway.

If you are successful,
you will win some false friends and some true enemies.
Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and frank,
people may cheat you.
Be honest and frank anyway.

What you spend years building,
someone could destroy it overnight.
Build anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness,
they may be jealous.
Be happy anyway.

The good you do today,
people will often forget tomorrow.
Do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have,
and it may never be enough.
Give the best you've got anyway.

You see, in the final analysis it is between you and God;
it was never between you and them anyway.

6 And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.

Graciousness is a character trait that refers to the ability to show kindness, warmth, and courtesy towards others, especially in difficult or uncomfortable situations. A gracious person is patient, understanding, and empathetic, and can make others feel comfortable and appreciated, even in challenging circumstances.

WWII combat medic. Desmond is physically one of the best men in his squad, but he refuses to hold a gun. Because of that, he has been reprimanded and beaten by

his fellow soldiers, harassed by his commander, and threatened to have his position in the army terminated. Desmond's biggest desire is to serve his country, but the people around him never seem to understand just how important his beliefs are to him.

On April 1, 1942, Desmond Doss joined the United States Army. Little did he realize that three and a half years later, he would be standing on the White House lawn, receiving the nation's highest award for his bravery and courage under fire. Of the 16 million men in uniform during World War II, only 431 received the Congressional Medal of Honor. One of these was placed around the neck of a young Seventh-day Adventist, who during combat had not killed a single enemy soldier. In fact, he refused to carry a gun. His only weapons were his Bible and his faith in God.

Doss successfully rescued 75 men trapped at the top of the escarpment by lowering them with a special knot he knew. He had miraculously not been wounded and stayed in the fight with B Company. On May 21, Doss was wounded several times by grenade fragments and a sniper's bullet through his arm.

How gracious are you?