

Resolve arguments with grace

By Elise L. Moore, C.S.

Have you ever gotten into an argument with a friend or your parents? How do you resolve strongly held differences of opinion without sacrificing your integrity or looking like a wimp? The Bible tells us...with grace.

Paul says, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." (Colossians 4:6) Grace is the divine influence on the heart reflected in the life. It is the spirit of Christ. More than the letter or just the word of righteousness, grace is the spirit of truth which reaches the heart.

Our opinion might be right. Our words might be eloquent. But right words pounding against a closed door will not reach the heart within. Grace is the key that unlocks the door.

Grace is described as a disposition to be generous or helpful, goodwill, friendliness, mercy. Grace is beyond power. Power still implies opposition, something or someone to be conquered. Grace is the spirit of love which sees beyond opposition.

Grace is willing to sacrifice the superficial for the substantial. The issue causing the argument is probably not as important as the relationship between the two people. The superficial is the issue, the disagreement. The substantial is the eternal relationship between two of God's children. Even if there is no resolution of the issue, the relationship can be preserved with grace.

One of the most touching Biblical examples of grace resolving an argument is the story of Abraham and Lot. Abraham was Lot's uncle. Both were wealthy, powerful men with vast flocks and herds. Their herdsmen were constantly in conflict, clashing over water and grazing rights.

Abraham, being the elder and more experienced of the two, chose to address the substance rather than the superficial. Instead of focusing on who was right or wrong, he addressed the importance of their relationship to one

another. “And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen; for we be brethren.” (Genesis 13:8)

Then he suggested a solution which from a human standpoint appeared foolish. He allowed Lot to choose the area he wished to occupy. Lot chose the plain of Jordan which certainly appeared to be the most fertile land available. Abraham agreed. He had no way of knowing that this well-watered area which included Sodom and Gomorrah was soon to be destroyed along with all Lot’s wealth.

God rewarded Abraham for his grace by giving him all the land that he could see. But more than material wealth, Abraham’s life was blessed with peace, health, happiness. These were the fruits of grace.

Christ Jesus gave us the clearest example of grace. He approached hatred and violence with the divine influence of grace. It was grace that touched the hearts of his enemies. Grace that opened the hearts of the multitude to God’s message. Grace that healed. Grace that resurrected Him from death.

The next time our human ego and pride is causing us to be angry and violent, remember Jesus who overcame all evil through grace. Grace is the key to every closed heart, ever closed door.

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