

A Gift of Faith Book

16

Part 3

HELPFUL HINTS

—BOOK 1—

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Helpful Hints

—Book 1—

Written by: Chariane Quille and Dina Ellens

Cover photo: M. McNally

Part 3

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17.) Obedience

Do you remember Jonah and how he told God, “I don’t want to do it!”? Uh oh! Did things turn out very good for Jonah? They sure didn’t, did they? Eventually, Jonah got around to obeying and doing what he was supposed to do. But wouldn’t it have been better if Jonah had obeyed right away? I think so.

We can learn a lesson from Jonah about obeying right away when we’re asked to do something.

It’s not always easy to obey and do what we’re asked to do, but Jesus is always there to help us. Whatever we are learning, we can always ask Jesus for His help and He’ll help us.

“I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.” (Philippians 4:13).



Photo by Chariane Quille

Learning to obey is part of growing up and Jesus will always help us.

If people all over the world only did what they thought of, and never listened to or followed the advice or instructions of someone else who knew more about the situation and was trying to make things better, that would cause a lot of problems!

Those flying in a plane need to listen to the crew. They need to do what is asked if they want to have a nice and enjoyable flight, and stay as safe as possible. The pilot also needs to listen to those down in the control tower when he's going to land, and do what they say, so the plane can land safely.



Photo by M. McNally

Those going to a zoo need to read the signs on the fences and cages of the animals, to stay safe, to make sure they don't do things that upset the animals, and to help the animals to be well cared for.

When a traffic policeman, or a construction worker is motioning for some cars to go and for others to stop, motorists need to pay attention and follow the directions, or it might cause an accident and take them even longer to get to where they are going.

Listening to the wise instructions of those that are trying to help us and others to be safe and well cared for is a very wise thing to do.



Photo by Naomi

18.) Quietness

Just think what it would be like if the adults interrupted your favourite video by talking loudly and laughing.

Or say you were listening to someone telling an interesting story and others kept talking real loud, making it impossible for you to concentrate or hear it well?

Would you feel like asking them to be quiet? Would you like it if they responded with something like, “Oh sure! Sorry.”?

Think of the times when you’ve been noisy or talkative and others had to ask you to be quiet.



Photo by Curtis Peter van Gorder

Or perhaps your mummy was talking to another adult and you rushed up and interrupted their conversation?

I'm sure your mummy was patient with you, but all the same, part of being loving and considerate is not disturbing people when they would appreciate quietness or would rather not be interrupted.

Other times we can try to practice being quiet is when someone is taking time with Jesus, reading His Word and praying; when people are sleeping or aren't feeling well and are getting some rest; when someone needs to concentrate on their work or when they are reading or studying; when out in nature and you and others want to see some interesting birds or animals, and noise would make them stay away.



Photo by Curtis Peter van Gorder

When you try to be quiet and not disturb people when they're working or talking or sleeping, that's being loving and considerate. You'll appreciate when others then show you the same consideration in return.

Sometimes the best gift you can give someone is the gift of being silent.

There is a saying that says,
"Silence is golden."

Quietness is a precious thing that takes effort and the thoughtfulness of others.



Photo by Chariane Quille

It's easy to make noise, but sometimes it takes real self-control to stop yourself from talking or making noise. But sometimes it's real good to just take time to be quiet. It gives you a chance to think clearly, and most of all gives Jesus a chance to talk to you.

If you are always talking, playing, laughing, singing, and making noise, it's rather hard for you to hear the small little sounds that can best be heard when things are quieter—like Jesus' voice doesn't come booming through the racket and confusion or loud speaking. His voice can be heard more easily by those who stop and get quiet.



Photo by Naomi

19.) Listening

Part of good manners and part of simple courtesy is not interrupting people when they're talking. It could be your mum or dad and it could even be your brothers or sisters who are talking and would appreciate consideration.

Everyone deserves to be treated with courtesy. If there's something really important that you have to say when somebody is talking, wait for a pause, when they stop for a minute. Then you can say, "Excuse me, ..." and then go on to say whatever it is you have to say.

It's also part of good manners to listen when people are talking to you. That means looking at people, eye-to-eye, and thinking about what they want to tell you.



Photo by Curtis Peter van Gorder

That way, Mum or Dad won't have to repeat everything over and over to you. That would be nicer for you, too, wouldn't it?

If you can learn to listen the first time you're told something, it will make everyone happier. It's not always easy, but Jesus can help you if you ask Him!

When a friend or brother or sister want to tell you something interesting that happened to them, or something that they'd like you to know, it's nice to give them your full attention.

Try to stop what you are doing for a moment to quietly listen and try to understand what they'd like to express.



Photo by Chariane Quille

Lots of times different things that cause people to get bothered or upset, could be avoided if people were able to explain their side of things to others, and if those they are talking to would stop to carefully listen to what is being said.

When someone doesn't hear things correctly, or misunderstands or misinterprets what someone said, this can cause sad or difficult feelings.

If you aren't sure you heard someone right, it's good to ask questions and make sure you got it right. People want to know that they have been properly heard, and that others care about what they have to say.

When you give to others the gift of being a good listener, they will feel loved and want to be your friend.



Photo by Jon Berg

20.) Smile

Remembering to smile at people really makes them happy. When people see you smile, it makes them feel that someone noticed them and cares, and that cheers them up. It also shows that you are happy.

Smiling and showing joy makes others feel some of that gladness beam into their heart too, like a ray of light!

However, if you wear a glum expression or look at people with a blank look, they will wonder what's wrong. Maybe they'll think you are grumpy or mad at them. Maybe you're fine and happy on the inside but people won't know that if they can't see it on the outside.



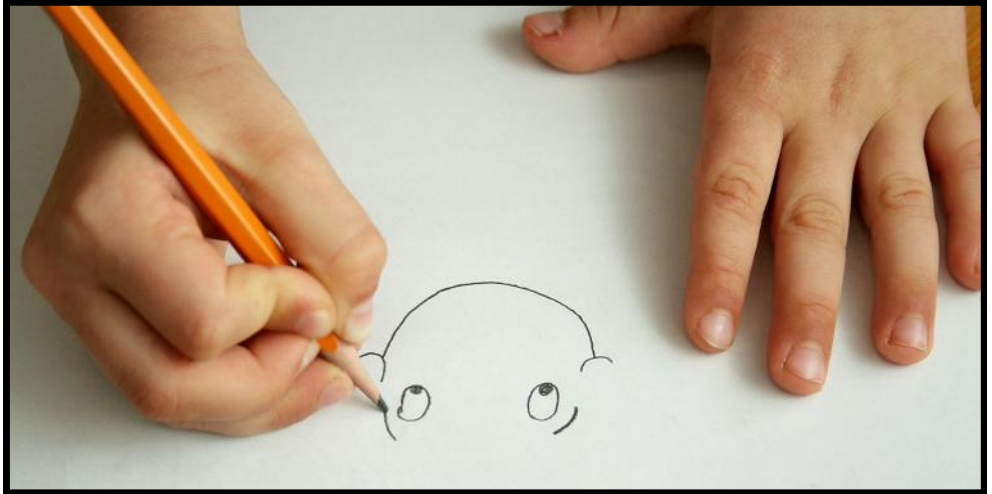
Photo by Chariane Quille

A smile lets people know that you want them to feel happy, it makes them relax and feel accepted as a friend. It helps them to know that Jesus loves them and cares about them. Smiling is a way of showing God's love to people.

It may not always work out to stop and talk to someone about Jesus as we pass them by, but we can always give them a smile.

People will remember that you smiled at them and it will make their day. It'll also help them remember that God loves them.

Giving a smile is also a good way to make friends. And who doesn't like having friends?



21.) Hurried and Worried

Maybe you've heard someone say to you, "take it easy, slow down, and don't be in such a hurry."

It's easy to get excited when Mum or Dad tells you to get ready for a special outing. Perhaps you then start to run around real quick and just stuff things in a bag and then try to rush out to be the first one in the car.

But if you are going too fast, that can cause an accident. Or maybe you'll forget some really important things to pack, like a sweater or the snacks that Mummy prepared to take along.

The best thing is to go slow; that way, the Lord can remind you about anything you might be forgetting.



Photo by Chariane Quille

We don't want to go so v-e-r-y s-l-o-w-l-y while we prepare for an outing, or get washed and dressed for the day, or clean up something, that it then wastes some of the time we could have been having fun playing or doing other activities; or it might make us late for something and keep people waiting.

However, if we try to go too fast because we either are worried about something, or are fretting about being late, or we want to get done real fast, then we might make a mistake, or miss something important, or even get hurt.



Photo by Curtis Peter van Gorder

When that happens, it might end up taking us even longer than if we had slowed down just a bit, which would have given us time to think, pray and notice things as we did what we needed to do.

Being careful and prayerful while trusting the Lord as you go along is the best way to get somewhere or get things done.



Photo by Curtis Peter van Gorder

22.) Unselfishness

Unselfishness is the opposite of being selfish. Being selfish is being rude and not thinking about others. It means that you're only thinking about yourself and what you want and what you think you need to be happy.

The problem with being selfish is that selfish people never have enough. They always want more and they're always unhappy.

However, unselfish people are thinking about others and how to make them happy. And when people try to make others glad, they find themselves becoming happier too!



Photo by Jon Berg

You can try it sometime. Maybe you have a little brother or sister. Try to do what they want to do, or play the game they want to play—just to make them happy. See how much fun you both end up having!

That's something amazing about unselfishness. –The more you give to show unselfishness to others it seems you also receive in return!

Everyone likes to feel that they are loved and that someone cares about them. However, when someone seems to only be thinking about themselves, and wishes for everyone else to do the caring and sharing with them, and always give them the best things, and to always be allowed to be first, then it's hard for people to be their friend.



Photo by Chariane Quille

To have a fun friendship, people need to feel that they can receive some love and care too, not only having to give and give to someone who is selfish and wants to take all the best things, or only talks about themselves.

To be a friend is to show kindness and concern towards someone else, to take time to listen to them, to share special things with them, to save a seat for them, and to give them preference in something or in some area.

Friends appreciate kindness shown back to them, in return for their kind deeds. It will encourage them and fill them with joy, and will make them happy to keep giving to others again.



Photo by M. McNally

It's like a shopkeeper that needs to restock the shelves again so there are plenty of supplies for all those who need them.

When you show kindness and act in unselfish ways to others it fills their heart with more love, and makes them feel like they want to keep giving and sharing with others.

When you go along your day today and see someone who needs help, why not go and help them! Or if someone looks sad, try to cheer them up. That's thinking more about others than yourself. And that's the way to be truly happy!



Photo by Curtis Peter van Gorder

23.) Temper

Another way to describe anger is “getting mad easily”. Maybe somebody said or did something and it’s like a match striking the matchbox, instantly you feel a spark of anger inside and you feel like answering back roughly or reacting unkindly. But we can really hurt others by our thoughtless words or actions.

It can make them feel sad and upset. It makes it hard for them to act friendly toward you and others too. It takes away from the fun and happiness and friendships that you could be having.

Getting angry or mad and doing things that are wrong as a result of those feelings is like placing a big minus or subtraction sign in your life.



Photo by M. McNally

Anger ends up taking things away from you—things that you really want—like fun times, laughter, the willingness of others to help you, people trusting you and wanting to be friends with you.

The Bible says that it's not wise to be friends with someone who is always getting upset about things.

So allowing your rough and ill-temper to take control can end up shooing away others who love you and who want to do nice things for you, and can cause all kinds of sadness and trouble.

People would rather be around someone who can react patiently and politely, and who can talk about their feelings in calm ways, to find solutions and work things out.



Photo by M. McNally

Angry words can hurt someone's feelings or make them cry. It takes people a long time to get over angry words.

If you ever start to feel anger welling up inside, the best thing to do is to wait until you've calmed down.

You can talk to your mum or dad or another helpful adult about it, and they can listen to you and perhaps come up with some ideas and solutions to fix the situation that was so upsetting.

Best of all, you can talk to Jesus and He can show you how to be loving and patient with others. He can tell you some secrets and give you new understanding about the person or situation that you are upset about.



Photo by Chariane Quille

Perhaps there are some things you didn't realise and there is something you misunderstood, or maybe what they did was a complete accident. Jesus can help to explain things to you that will help you find peace and give your heart joy again.

The Bible also says, "A soft answer turns away anger", and that is a tip to help you if someone else is upset with you and acting angrily. Gentle words and kind reactions just might help to calm them down.

Perhaps you can say that you are sorry for whatever it is that upset them, offer to help them fix the situation, or tell them that you love them and you wish you could be nice friends together.

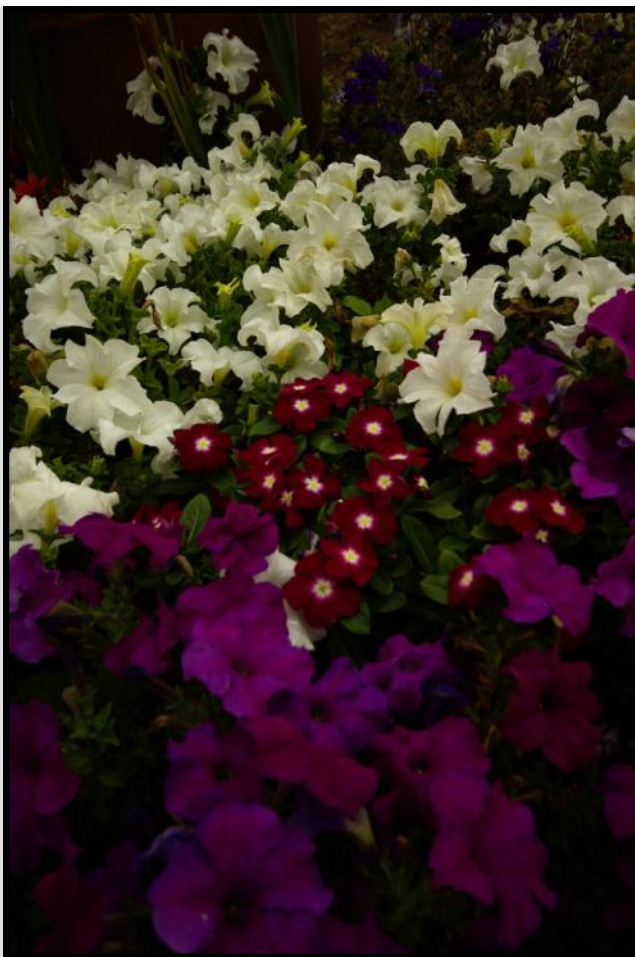


Photo by Curtis Peter van Gorder

If you only react in the same angry way that they talked to you, it will be like playing tennis and the ball of unkind words will just keep being hit back to you again.

However, if you don't return the ball of unkind words, then it helps the person who is upset to calm down more quickly and then you can get on to a different and happier game of words and actions.

Try practicing using kind and loving words with people and see how much better things will go.