

1 How Not to Shorten Your Life:

2 Bad News for Rude People

- Beware jocks and mean girls.
- You may be more popular in high school, but according to a new academic study, it is the smart kids and conscientious glee-club types who will live longer.
- Not only that, they will suffer fewer diseases before they die.
- While some say, “the good die young,” the real truth is that jerks and rude people die younger.

3 Effect One’s Health

- In other words, not only do rude, socially challenged, thoughtless, boorish, offensive, vulgar, bad-mannered, uncouth, vile and foul people make life less enjoyable for others, according to one scientific study, being a bad mannered person is actually a detriment to one's own health.
- So then, if you chew with your mouth open, talk back to your supervisor or run around the freeway like a NASCAR driver, it may just hinder your health and keep you from living longer tomorrow.

4 Academic Findings

- The paper, which was published recently in the journal Psychological Science in the Public Interest, summarizes data from millions of people studied in dozens of academic articles.
- The bottom line is that people who are smarter and more conscientious acquire fewer illnesses and die later than those who have the opposite traits.

5 Academic Findings

- In the study, heart patients with Type D personalities -- people who lack confidence and are prone to irritability -- are at a substantially greater risk of a heart-related death.
- By contrast, people who are open to new experiences, exhibit more flexibility in their temperament and can more easily "go with the flow" are at a lower risk.

6 Jerk-Free

- So the next time your brother-in-law rolls his eyes at a dinner party and gives everyone his opinion on everything under the sun, remember that as followers of Jesus, we need to practice self-control.
- In other words, if someone is being a jerk, it doesn't mean we have to act like them.
- In fact, in 1 Thessalonians, chapter 5, Paul gives us three truths about our life in Christ that should be more than enough to keep us kind and jerk-free.

7 The Grand Perspective

- First, Paul reminds us that followers of Jesus Christ have been given the gift of a grand perspective.

- According to experts, rude and inconsiderate behavior grows from a narrow view of the world.
- In other words, annoying habits grow out of a lack of social awareness -- that is, one's view of the world fails to include the sensitivities of others.
- Likewise, anger and frustration spewed at others over small things shows ignorance or a lack of appreciation for what constitutes a truly big issue.

8 The Grand Perspective

- The Apostle Paul writes,
 - You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, (1 Th 5:5-6 NIV)
 - In other words, while the rest of the world lives in panic and worry over inconsequential things -- and will be truly caught off guard when the only important thing arrives, namely the coming of the Son of God in glory -- we have the light of truth shining upon us.

9 The Grand Perspective

- By faith we grasp that the death of Christ has paid for our sins, the resurrection of Christ has crushed our enemy, called "death," and the return of Christ will usher in unending peace.
- Such clarity allows us to live with the "lights on," seeing things as they truly are:
 - annoying problems are inconsequential,
 - painful troubles are not permanent,
 - difficult circumstances do not determine our destiny.

10 The Grand Perspective

- This is one reason why a life that's regularly engaging God's Word and interacts with Christian community is so essential.
 - Doing such things allows for the light of reality to shine on our situation and keeps things in perspective.
 - Apart from it, the victory of Christ gets smaller, our problems seem bigger and the likelihood of acting like a fool gets higher.

11 Able to Stand

- Second, not only do followers of Christ have the gift of living in the light, of a grand perspective, but when the realities of this broken world come crashing in on us we have the confidence of knowing we are armed and equipped to be overcomers.
- As the Apostle Paul says,
 - But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. (1 Th 5:8 NIV)

12 Able to Stand

- Perhaps you know this already, but much of what drives one to bad mannered or jerk-like behavior is fear.
- From the nasty words we throw at a waitress to the cold shoulder we give a coworker, if we dig deep enough, we'll often discover that its origin is fear—fear that we'll be neglected, abused or considered unworthy.
- In response, our sinfulness takes up what it believes to be the most protective shield: self-centered and rude attitudes and behavior.

13 Able to Stand

- What if next time, rather than sitting and stewing over the thousand things you could say to the person who cut in front of you at Starbucks, you silently pray a blessing for that individual, or recite the Lord's Prayer or Psalm 23, under your breath, until your attitude changes?
- To the one who is ignorant of Kingdom principles this may sound trivial or trite, but to those who know their God it is:
 - an exercise of their faith that is consistent with God's Word,
 - showing self-control, which is actually a form of spiritual warfare, and
 - an action that shows they have their minds on the big picture.

14 Remember our Destiny

- Thirdly, Paul tells us that we not only have
 - the light of truth to grant us a greater perspective and
 - an effective armor protecting us from lasting harm,
 - but followers of Jesus have the unshakable truth that we're destined for salvation, shaping our perception of every moment.
- This, according to Paul, should be an incredible source of encouragement.

15 Remember Your Destiny

- The destruction of all our enemies.
- Resurrection and glorification of our bodies.
- Reunited with our loved ones who died in Christ.
- Rule and reign with Christ forever.
- See God face to face.
- Indescribable Joy and Peace.

16 Remember our Destiny

- When the rest of the world is going crazy -- remember your destiny.
- When everyone else has a short temper -- remember your destiny.

- When everything from minor details are being missed, to major tragedies occurring, remember your destiny.
- Why? In the end,—which is all that ultimately matters—we will live with Him.
- He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. (1 Th 5:10 NIV)

17 The End Result

- The end result of living in the light of truth, embracing your armor and resting in salvation is a people who are less prone to tearing one another down over petty issues and more concerned with building one another up.
- In fact, having outlined these things Paul closes out his letter to the Thessalonians with a series of imperatives that are as far from jerk-like living as one can possibly get.
- He says, "Respect [others] Be at peace admonish ... encourage ... help ... be patient Rejoice ... pray ... give thanks hold fast to what is good" (5:12–21).

18 The End Result

- It's a daunting list. But the implications are clear.
- If being a jerk can shorten your life, God's people are called to be the exact opposite.
- We're to be so overwhelmed with the work of Christ that we respond with actions and attitudes that add blessings to this life and the life to come.

19 Conclusion

- In case you haven't noticed, jerks are everywhere.
- What really matters is that we are walking as children of the light—being alert and self-controlled in all circumstances—not letting the rude, bad mannered, or thoughtless people of this world bring us down.
- As the Apostle Paul writes, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. (1 Th 5:6 NIV)
- As the Apostle Peter also writes, Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. (1 Pet 1:13 NIV)

20 Conclusion

- If you haven't noticed, things in this world seem to be looking very bleak.
 - Economic anxiety and trouble is everywhere and is increasing.
 - The muslim nations of the middle east are becoming more and more radical and uniting under a flag of hatred of Israel, world domination and jihad.
 - One could only wonder, if these muslim nations will unite and form a new caliphate—prophetically fulfilling the last major enemy of Israel—the Beast.

- With all of this in view, shouldn't we as children of the light, be busy putting our armor on and making the most of out of every circumstance, so that when that day of evil comes, we will be found standing on the rock and not sinking sand.