

An Attitude of Grace

by Travis Dean

November 2012

The sun was quickly dropping in the western sky and I still wanted to get our lawn mowed. The only problem was that I didn't have any gasoline for the mower. So my son, Elijah, and I jumped in the van and raced off to a nearby gas station. Just as we pulled in the station, I suddenly remembered that I had left the gas can at home. I apologized to Elijah for forgetting the gas can and told him that we would have to run back to the house to get it. He remained calm and was not at all upset by my forgetfulness. My anxiety, however, was increased just a bit as I sped back out onto Main Street. As soon as the wheels of the van stopped in our driveway, I jumped out and ran into the garage, grabbing the gas can. I peeped my head in the house and sheepishly told my wife that I was headed back out again, with the gas can this time.

I decided to try a different gas station in order to avoid traffic congestion. Upon reaching the station Elijah and I quickly unloaded. Since I was paying cash, we had to go in and pay first. After waiting in line for a bit longer than my liking, we walked hurriedly back out to the van. I grabbed the pump handle and shoved it into the van's gas tank, with the gas can still in the van. Just then I heard Elijah's calm voice – "Dad, why are we putting the gas in the van?" I was instantly humbled by and grateful for Elijah's levelheadedness. I once again apologized to him and, moving more slowly, retrieved the gas can out of the van. After pumping the needed gas, we got back in the van and headed for home.

The Lord used Elijah in this situation to illustrate an attitude of grace. Elijah was not trying to be a backseat driver, nor was he critical of my hasty actions. He remained a team player throughout the ordeal (hence his use of 'we' instead of 'you').

Elijah's attitude reflects that of a notable woman in the Bible, named Abigail. (Incidentally, we chose to name our daughter after her.) She was able to intervene between two very strong-willed men. One was her husband, Nabal. The other was David. Nabal had unfairly insulted David, who was on a rampage to kill all of the men in Nabal's family. Notice Abigail's gracious words to David as she intercepted his armed forces:

On me, my lord, on me let this iniquity be! And please let your maidservant speak in your ears, and hear the words of your maidservant.... Please forgive the trespass of your maidservant. For the LORD will certainly make for my lord an enduring house, because my lord fights the battles of the LORD, and evil is not found in you throughout your days. (1 Samuel 25:24, 28)

David was instantly calmed and disarmed by these kind words. Not a man in Nabal's family perished that day. How much conflict we might dissolve in our own lives by following Elijah and Abigail's examples! Truly they are but a reflection of our Lord who so described Himself to Moses in Exodus 34:6, 7. The extensive list of adjectives in the passage begins with the words, "merciful and gracious".

(By the way, the yard did get done.)