

VIRTUE 22

GRACE AND MERCY

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

—Ephesians 4:31-32

Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

—Colossians 3:13-14

A true knight needs to live his or her life with both *grace and* mercy. What is the difference between them? Put simply, grace is getting what you *do not* deserve (e.g., a blessing or a reward), while mercy is *not* getting what you deserve (e.g., a punishment).

GRACE

God's grace, for example, is not earned. His grace is offered to us through Christ's sacrifice, even though we do not deserve it: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from

yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9). We extend grace to others when we treat them with reward or acceptance *even though they might not deserve it.*

Through the process of managing and/or owning a few businesses during my professional career, I have forged several relationships with friends and colleagues. As businesses change and develop in various ways, so do people. New interests emerge and different career tracks are sometimes taken by these friends and colleagues.

Sometimes these departures are cordial, mutually beneficial, and done honorably by each person involved. But sometimes they are not—professional and ethical lines are crossed, feelings are hurt, and trust can be broken on both sides of the departure. When these situations happen, sometimes they cannot be resolved by discussions over the facts, which are oftentimes seen from two very different perspectives.

In such situations, grace might be to extend forgiveness for the person’s actions and how he or she has wronged you but not to necessarily continue a relationship. You know that grace has had its way in your heart if you can reflect back on the person or situation and no longer have that bitter sting or pain over the situation. Forgiveness and healing (two of grace’s good friends) have removed these.

MERCY

Famous French knight Joan of Arc tried to extend mercy to the English who had invaded her country. Before engaging in battle against the invading English, she wrote them three letters that warned them to retreat or that God’s judgment would come through Joan and her French army. Her third and final letter warned,

You, men of England, who have no right in this kingdom of France, the King of Heaven orders and commands you by me, Joan of Arc, that you quit your strong places, and return to your own country;

if you do not I will cause you such an overthrow as shall be remembered for all time. I write to you for the third and last time, and shall write to you no more.⁵⁵

Joan had this letter fastened to an arrow and shot into the English camp. The leaders of the English forces read it and boastfully yelled back, “It is news sent to us from the whore of the French!” Joan’s response to this was amazing. She cried—not out of her feelings being hurt by being called a whore (Joan was a virgin, so this insult was deliberate) but out of remorse for the lives of the English, for she believed that God’s judgment had come against them.

The next day, Joan awoke to the entire English force still present and ready for battle. She rose very early, went to confession, sang Mass before all her followers, and then led the attack against the English. The battle lasted all day. The fort was taken, and every single Englishman died.

Joan was wounded in a battle days after this victory by a crossbow bolt that punched right through her armor just above her breast. After applying olive oil and lard to her wound, she returned to the battlefield crying, “Yield thee to the King of Heaven! You called me a harlot but I have great pity for your soul, and for your people.”⁵⁶

At this moment, Clasdas (a leader of the English forces), fully armed from head to foot, fell into the moat and drowned. Joan was “moved to pity at this sight” and began to weep for the soul of Clasdas and for all the others who, in great number, were drowned at the same time. On this same day, all the English who were on the other side of the bridge were taken and killed.⁵⁷ Even in the midst of battle, she had mercy and a heart of pity for those who opposed what she believed to be God’s will.

Biblical examples of mercy abound. One example comes from 1 Samuel 26 where King Saul was chasing David, hoping to kill him. Growing tired of hiding out in caves, David decides to sneak up on King Saul when he is sleeping one night and steal Saul’s water jug and

