

# The Grace of Being Obliging

by J.R. Miller

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*Obligingness is a Christian grace that involves being ready to do a good turn, to be of service, to be accommodating, and to be helpful to others, making us more useful and helping others.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 7:12, Matthew 25:40, Luke 6:31, Romans 15:1, Galatians 5:13, Ephesians 4:32, Philippians 2:4, Colossians 3:12-14, 1 Peter 4:10, 1 John 3:18

**Topics:** "Christian Love", "Obligingness"

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## Description

J.R. Miller emphasizes the Christian grace of obligingness, contrasting those who readily help others with those who are self-centered. He explains that obligingness is a manifestation of love and an essential quality for a beautiful life, urging Christians to cultivate this grace from the beginning of their faith journey. Miller highlights that true love seeks to serve and that selfishness is unlovely and un-Christlike. He encourages believers to look out for the interests of others, offering practical help and kindness in everyday situations. Ultimately, he asserts that developing an obliging spirit not only benefits others but also enriches our own lives, making us more like Christ.

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## Transcript

There is a great difference in people in the matter of obligingness. Some are always ready to do a good turn, to be of service, to be accommodating. Others are always lacking in this grace. They never show a relish to confer a favor, to do a kindness, or to go out of their way in the slightest degree to be helpful to anyone.

Obligingness is a Christian grace. It is one of the manifestations of love. It belongs, therefore, among the essential qualities of a beautiful life. Perhaps one may be a Christian, and be disobliging; just as one may be disagreeable or discontented or fretful or ungentle -- and yet be a Christian. We may not say at how many points one may be lacking in beauty of character, and yet be a Christian. Christ sets a very high standard for his followers -- but he is very patient with beginners, in the stumbling of their early steps. A disciple is a pupil, and a pupil may enter school at the lowest grade. They are pupils when they first enter, though it may be years before they have completed their course.

Hence one may lack altogether the quality of obligingness when one begins the Christian life -- but this is one of the lessons that must be taken up at once, one of the graces in which we must grow from the first. Love cannot be disobliging. Love is kind. Love seeks not its own. The very central quality in love, is the desire to serve. If we have the love of Christ in our heart, we will wish to be helpful to every human being

we meet or see -- this will be our attitude toward all. This feeling will lead us to accept every opportunity to be useful, not only in cases of great need, when large service may be required -- but also when only some simple, common kindness is called for.

The training of one's self in obligingness is, therefore, an important part of Christian culture. It is easy to allow selfishness to hold back the hand from kindness. "Every man for himself" is one of the world's maxims, and it is easy to become so absorbed in thinking of one's self, and one's own affairs -- that the heart shall grow cold toward all others.

But selfishness is always most unlovely and most un-Christlike. The only beautiful life, is one which love inspires and controls. The Christian rule is, "Each of you should look not only to your own interests -- but also to the interests of others." Philippians 2:4

This does not mean that we shall meddle in other people's affairs. There is another spiritual injunction which puts the meddler in other men's matters, in the same black list with the murderer, the thief, and the evil-doer. One of the last things a Christian should consent to be, is a busybody. The way Christians are to look at the things of others -- is in interest, sympathy, and helpfulness, ready always to lend a hand, to do anything in their power to lighten a burden or help along.

Obligingness is a good word. When we say that a man is of an obliging disposition, we mean that he is always ready to do what he can to assist others. If we are in some trouble -- he comes with his kindly help. If we are carrying a heavy load -- he offers to share it. If we need assistance, in any way -- he is eager to give it.

There is a great deal of this obliging spirit among the poor. The rich are more independent of each other, for they have in themselves nearly all they need, so that there is not the same necessity for mutual help that there is among the poor. Consequently, even when the relations are entirely friendly, there is less opportunity among the wealthy for rendering helpful services. But the poor, having fewer resources of their own, need more the kindly aid of each other, and the need draws out the practical ministry. In many instances, the relations between neighbors among the poor, are very beautiful indeed. They share with each other, what they have of conveniences and comforts. When there is sickness in a home, all the families near by make the troubles their own. The women help each other in nursing. When there is sorrow, the whole little community sympathizes not in a sentimental way, merely -- but in most practical ways. If disaster comes to one household, all the others contribute their part in seeking to repair the loss.

We all have it in our power to do a great deal for the comfort of others, simply by striving always to be obliging. It usually does not require much self-denial, nor involve the giving of large gifts -- what is needed is only the warmth of heart that will make us quick to see needs and ways of helping, and then the readiness to do the little services, to show the common kindnesses. It may be to give a classmate help with his lessons, when he cannot quite master them himself; or to lend a boy or girl the book you have greatly enjoyed; or to help a friend with his work when you have leisure and he is a little behind.

The ways of being obliging are numberless. If only we have the spirit and are ready to put ourselves out a little or to give up some comfort or ease to help another -- we shall find plenty of opportunities. The lesson is worth learning, too. It makes us far more useful. An obliging person brightens the way for many others. He makes life easier for every one he meets. It is a great thing to have a genius for helping others. When we begin to get this beautiful grace into our life -- we have begun to be like the Master!

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