

The Three Words
That Change Everything

PLEASE

SORRY

THANKS



UNCORRECTED
PROOF

Mark Batterson

New York Times Bestselling Author

PLEASE SORRY THANKS

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That Change Everything*

MARK BATTERSON



MULTNOMAH

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To my mom and dad.

Thanks for teaching me to say please, sorry, and thanks!

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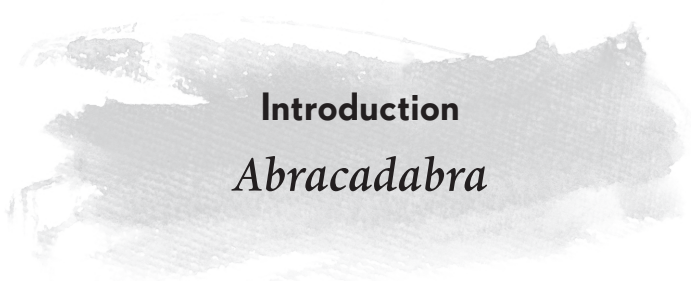
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Introduction

Abracadabra

In the beginning was the Word.

—JOHN 1:1

According to linguists, *abracadabra* is the most universally used word that doesn't need translation.¹ It's a word employed by magicians, but the etymology is more spiritual than magical. The ancient words *A'bra K'dabra* mean "As I speak, I shall create."² In other words, words create worlds! "Words," said the Jewish theologian Abraham Heschel, "are themselves sacred, God's tool for creating the universe, and our tools for bringing holiness—or evil—into the world."³

In a series of studies conducted at the University of Chicago, the recordings of thousands of counseling sessions were analyzed. Some sessions were successful, resulting in sustained change. Others were unsuccessful. The differentiating factor? It wasn't the therapist's technique. "The difference," said Dr. Eugene Gendlin, "is in *how* [the counselees] talk."⁴ Life is a grand game of Simon Says, and you're Simon!

If you want to change your life, you have to change your words!

Our words don't represent the world objectively. Rather, our words create the world subjectively! For better or for worse, our words can function as self-fulfilling prophecies. They have the power to bless or to curse, to heal or to hurt, to give life or to cause death. Scientific studies have found that negative words spoken to plants cause them to languish while positive words help them flourish.⁵ It's as true of people as it is of plants!

"The tongue," said Solomon, "has the power of life and death."⁶ The Jewish sage Akila the Translator "defined the tongue as a tool having a knife at one end and a spoon at the other"—death and life.⁷ The tongue is a two-edged sword. "With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father," said James, the half brother of Jesus, "and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness."⁸ He likened the tongue to the rudder of a ship, which determines its direction.⁹ Your destiny, to a large degree, is a derivative of your words.

"Out of the overflow of the heart," Jesus said, "the mouth speaks."¹⁰ Words are like X-rays, but they do more than reveal the condition of our hearts. Our words are both a diagnosis and a prognosis. Dr. John Gottman is famous for his ability to predict divorce with more than 90 percent accuracy. How? He examines language in thin slices and analyzes the way people argue. In doing so, Dr. Gottman identified negative communication patterns that he called "the four horsemen of the apocalypse"—criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling.¹¹

If you want to change your relationships, you have to change your words.

Can I make a confession? The political polarization of recent years has taken a toll on my life and leadership. Low levels of civility coupled with high levels of cynicism have created the

perfect storm.

It feels like no matter what you say, it's never enough and it's always too much. Or is that just me? You're damned if you do, damned if you don't. Positivity is one of my strengths, but I recently found myself in a funk. Here's a journal entry from one of those down days when I felt like I was emotionally flatlining:

I'm so spent.

I'm so tired.

It feels like I'm running on empty.

I'm just not bouncing back.

My head is foggy.

My heart is irritated.

Lord, help me.

I did a lot of self-examination during that season, and one revelation was that I was using negative words with a high degree of frequency. You know what I realized? I was speaking negativity into existence and giving it power. By emphasizing how hard leadership was during that season, I was making it harder than it had to be! My words became a self-fulfilling prophecy that reinforced a vicious cycle of negativity. The same thing happens when you complain about people behind their backs, which was a second revelation. Want to change that dynamic? You flip the script by catching people doing things right, then bragging about them behind their backs!

If you want to change your attitude, you have to change your words.

Your words are Occam's razor—simple words can solve seemingly impossible problems. Your words are Archimedes's

lever—small words can make a world of difference.

This book is about three small yet powerful words: *please*, *sorry*, and *thanks*. Often referred to as magic words, they can work wonders. Nothing opens doors like *please*. Nothing mends fences like *sorry*. Nothing builds bridges like *thanks*. These three words have the power to change your life. They have the power to change the lives of those who love you, those who hate you, and everyone in between.

In the pages that follow, we'll explore the psychology of *please*, the science of *sorry*, and the theology of *thanks*. Along the way, we'll learn the art of empathy. We'll cultivate emotional intelligence and contextual intelligence. And I'll cite stories and studies, along with some best practices, that will help you change your life by changing your words. But first, a word from our Sponsor, and I mean that literally. To understand the power of words, we must go back to the very beginning.

God said, "Let there be light."¹²

According to Leonard Bernstein, winner of seven Emmys and sixteen Grammys, a better translation than *said* is *sang*. "In the beginning was the note, and the note was with God," said the former conductor of the New York Philharmonic, "and whosoever can reach for that note, reach high, and bring it back to us on earth, to our earthly ears—he is a composer."¹³

On that note, pun intended, every atom in the universe sings a unique song. In more scientific terms, every atom emits and absorbs energy at a unique frequency. It's true of every element in the Periodic Table, it's true of you, and it's true of words. Life-giving words resonate with that original note. Destructive words do the opposite. They cause internal dissonance because

they are at odds with God's good, pleasing, and perfect will.

Few words resonate with more power than *please*, *sorry*, and *thanks*. They sing in three-part harmony. A pretty *please* opens hearts and minds and doors. A simple *sorry* can mend broken relationships. A heartfelt *thanks* is the flywheel of gratitude.

There is an art and science to all three words. We'll word-smith *please*, *sorry*, and *thanks*, approaching them as an art form. But let me start with science. Whether God *said* or *sang* those first words—"Let there be light"—we tend to think in terms of phonics. But sound is, first and foremost, a form of energy. So, really, we should think physics. Our words don't just exchange ideas; they exchange energy.

The human voice produces sound waves that travel through space at 1,125 feet per second. The average female speaks at a frequency of 170–220 hertz. The average male, after puberty, speaks at a lower pitch of 100–150 hertz. Mariah Carey is famous for her five-octave range, but the rest of us have a vocal range between roughly 55 and 880 hertz.

We also have a range of hearing between 20 and 20,000 hertz. Anything below 20 hertz is infrasonic. Anything above 20,000 hertz is ultrasonic. This is when and where and how sound does strange and mysterious things. Infrasound is how elephants predict changes in weather and how birds navigate as they migrate. Ultrasound can be used to track submarines, guide noninvasive surgery, clean jewelry, heal damaged tissue, break up kidney stones, and reveal the gender of a baby via sonogram.

Does God speak audibly? Absolutely! But that's a thin slice of His vocal range. His ability to speak is way beyond our ability to hear. God doesn't just use His voice to form words; He uses words to form worlds! Everything we *see* was once *said*.

Or, if you prefer, *sung*. God used His voice to create *ex nihilo*—*abracadabra*.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.¹⁴

The Doppler effect tells us that the universe is still expanding. In other words, the words God spoke in the beginning are still creating galaxies at the outer edge of the universe. The universe is God's way of saying, "Look at what I can do with four words!" Everything we *see* was once *said*.

Most people claim that they have never heard the voice of God. If you're referring to the audible voice of God, no argument here. But there is a reality that goes way beyond what we can taste, touch, see, smell, or hear. God uses His infrasonic and ultrasonic voice to heal and to reveal, to guide and to gift, to convict and to create.

I know what you're thinking: *I can't speak things into existence*. Not so fast. You may not be able to big bang the universe, but like the God in whose image you were created, your words create worlds.

When we enter the world, our primary means of communication is crying. Give it a few months, and babies start forming their first syllables. The average toddler has somewhere between fifty and one hundred words in their vocabulary. As toddlers, words are the way we make sense of the world. Words are also the way we get our way! The same holds true for adults. Our vocabulary expands exponentially, as does our ability to communicate with tone and body posture, but we use words

for the same reason.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* has an estimated 171,476 words in use in the English language, and there are an estimated 47,156 words that are now obsolete.¹⁵ “According to lexicographer and dictionary expert Susie Dent, ‘the average active vocabulary of an adult English speaker is around 20,000 words, while his passive vocabulary is around 40,000 words.’”¹⁶

I don’t know whether your vocabulary is above average or below average, but I have a theory. You only need to be good at three things to be successful at whatever you do. What are those three things? Three words—*please*, *sorry*, and *thanks*. All right, maybe you won’t succeed at Scrabble or the spelling bee. But you’ll succeed at everything else.

If you want to be a doctor, I advise med school. If you want to be a lawyer, go to law school. But your degree isn’t what will earn you promotions. Lots of people have PhDs. The best predictor of success in life, in love, and in leadership is your proficiency at *please*, *sorry*, and *thanks*.

“About 15 percent of one’s financial success is due to one’s technical knowledge,” said Dale Carnegie, “and about 85 percent is due to skill in human engineering.”¹⁷ When it comes to human engineering, the high-leverage points are *please*, *sorry*, and *thanks*! Those three words are the foundation of all healthy relationships. Those three words are the only ceiling on your spiritual, mental, and emotional health. Those three words will determine how happy you are and, I might add, how holy you are.

How do you cultivate intimate relationships?

How do you make amends for the mistakes you’ve made?

How do you overcome trauma?

How do you find true happiness?

How do you shift the atmosphere at home?

How do you change the culture at work?

How do you win friends and influence people?

You get really good at *please*, *sorry*, and *thanks*! Of course, you can't just parrot those words. You have to walk the talk. Those three words have to become a way of life, a rule of life. Please hear me when I say, you can change the world. How? With your words. Words create worlds!

A dark, textured, brushstroke-like background shape, possibly representing a piece of torn paper or a paint splatter, centered on the page. It has irregular, rough edges and a mottled grey-black interior.

Part 1

**THE PSYCHOLOGY
OF *PLEASE***

In 1879, Francis Galton invented the word-association

test, “a test in which the participant responds to a stimulus word with the first word that comes to mind.”¹ Carl Jung employed this test to survey the subconscious minds of his patients. Patients were prompted with one hundred stimulus words, and their responses revealed past trauma, subliminal fears, and internal conflicts. Jung paid particular attention to the words that caused a visceral reaction. There were trigger words that elicited negative emotions and painful memories, and there were words that did the exact opposite.² Like the balm of Gilead, words can have healing properties. Or words can ricochet around the mind with all the chaos of a pinball.

We each have a unique relationship with words. We hear them differently based on our experiences. When my son Josiah was a little boy, he thought the word *disciple* meant “storm.” My best guess is that I was reading him the story about the storm that hit the disciples on the Sea of Galilee. He must have conflated those meanings. When storm clouds would form in the sky, he used to say, “The disciples are coming.” Right or wrong, different words mean different things to different people.

If I say *blue*, what comes to mind? For many of us, the automatic association is sky. If your work or interest lies in politics, you think blue states and red states. If you graduated from

Michigan, you associate the word with Big Blue. Or maybe you grew up on *Blue's Clues* and now you're hearing the theme song in your head. Words conjure up age-old memories, evoke deep-seated emotions, put our defense mechanisms on red alert, and catalyze crazy ideas. And they do so without our conscious awareness.

For decades, a social psychologist named John Bargh has conducted studies on the way words affect behavior. In one such study, undergraduate students were given a scrambled-sentence test. One version of the test was sprinkled with rude words like *disturb*, *bother*, and *intrude*. Another version was sprinkled with polite words like *respect*, *considerate*, and *yield*. The subjects thought they were taking tests measuring language ability, but they were actually being subconsciously primed by those words.

Priming is a psychological phenomenon related to stimulus and response, and words are the lead actors. The word *nurse* is recognized more quickly if it's preceded by the word *doctor*. The same goes for *dog* and *wolf*. Why? These words are semantic primes that cause you to think in categories. If I say *Empire State Building*, it puts you in a New York state of mind. In the same sense, the word *please* is a politeness prime.

After taking the five-minute scrambled-sentence test, students were supposed to walk down the hall and talk to the person running the experiment about their next assignment. An actor was strategically engaged in conversation with the researcher when the students arrived. The goal? Bargh wanted to see whether the subjects who were primed with polite words would wait longer before interrupting than those who were primed with rude words. The result? Sixty-five percent of the group primed with rude words interrupted the conversation.

Those primed with polite words? Eighty-two percent of them never interrupted at all.³ If the test hadn't timed out at ten minutes, who knows how long they would have waited?

A few polite words. What difference do they make? In quantitative terms, they can make a 47 percent difference! Don't underestimate the power of polite words, especially the word *please*.

Please adds respect and urgency to a request. It's asking instead of demanding, but it's only as effective as it is authentic. If you try to use the word to manipulate, it will have the opposite effect. Our motives must match our words. You have to say what you mean and mean what you say!

For the love of Emily Post, we need a revival of politeness, and it starts with *please*. "It sets the tone for whatever follows and is one of the most important universal manners."⁴ Nothing primes the pump like *please*, especially if you put a *pretty* in front of it. How does it work? "It changes a command into a request."⁵ News flash: No one wants to be told what to do!

When Christian Herter was governor of Massachusetts, he stopped by a church barbecue after a long day on the campaign trail. As he made his way down the serving line, he asked whether he could have a second piece of chicken. The woman serving the chicken said, "Sorry. Only one to a customer." Governor Herter was a humble man, but he was also hungry. "Do you know who I am? I'm the governor of the state." Without skipping a beat, the woman replied, "Do you know who I am? I'm the lady in charge of the chicken. Move along, mister!"⁶

Demands come across as entitled, governor or not. A simple *please* levels the playing field. It will get you further than your title, your rank, or your credentials. Authenticity trumps authority, like a royal flush. The word *please* demonstrates a

posture of humility, and no one did it better than Jesus.

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or empty pride, but in humility consider others more important than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus:

*Who, existing in the form of God,
did not consider equality with God
something to be grasped,
but emptied Himself,
taking the form of a servant.⁷*

Theologians call this kenosis, Christ's emptying of Himself for others. And we are called to do the same. It's all about adding value to others. You can learn the subtle art of persuasion, and it may help you get what you want. But all too often, persuasion is abused for selfish purposes. It turns into a zero-sum game. There is a better way, the Jesus way. It's giving yourself away. It's looking out for the interests of others. The locus of focus is others.

Please is setting aside your preferences.

Please is relinquishing your rights.

Please is giving others the upper hand.

Please is putting the ball in someone else's court.

Please is honoring others above yourself.

When you put a *please* in front of a request, it has a ripple effect. It's called the law of reciprocity. When someone is nice

to you, you have an innate urge to be nice in return. The psychology of *please* isn't rocket science. It's as simple as the Golden Rule: "Treat people the same way you want them to treat you."⁸ And it starts with *please*!



1

There You Are

It's not about you.

—RICK WARREN, *The Purpose Driven Life*

Jennie Jerome, Winston Churchill's mother, once dined with two of Britain's prime ministers on back-to-back evenings. When asked her impression of each, she said of William Gladstone, "When I left the dining room after sitting next to Gladstone, I thought he was the cleverest man in England." After dining with Benjamin Disraeli? "I left feeling that I was the cleverest woman in England."¹

William Gladstone was good at projecting his charismatic personality, and there is nothing inherently wrong with that. We naturally want to put our best foot forward. Benjamin Disraeli was good at drawing water out of other people's wells. He brought the best out of others. The difference? Gladstone was self-focused, while Disraeli was others-focused. "Talk to people about themselves," said Disraeli, "and they will listen for hours."²

My spiritual father, Dick Foth, says there are two kinds of people in the world. The first kind of person walks into a room

and internally announces, *Here I am*. They are pretty impressed with themselves. Their ego barely fits through the door. It's all about me, myself, and I. The second kind of person? They walk into a room and internally announce, *There you are*. They check their ego at the door. It's all about everyone else. Their objective is adding value.

Which one are you?

Are you a *here I am* person?

Or are you a *there you are* person?

People who try to impress others are unimpressive. What's really impressive is someone who isn't trying to impress anyone at all. In the same vein, the most interesting people are those who take a genuine interest in others. They ask lots of questions, and they follow up with "Tell me more!"

The famous apologist Francis Schaeffer said, "If I have only an hour with someone, I will spend the first 55 minutes asking questions and finding out what is troubling their heart and mind, and then in the last 5 minutes I will share something of the truth."³ Schaeffer understood the virtue of listening. His wife, Edith, described him as having a ministry of conversation.⁴

Did you know that Teddy Roosevelt read, on average, a book a day? And that was while serving as president.⁵ How did he do it? For starters, he wasn't watching TV or surfing social media! There were far fewer distractions a century ago, but I don't think he'd read any less if he were alive today. Why? Roosevelt had a holy curiosity about all of God's creation, and reading was his way of researching. Roosevelt prepared for guests, prepared for conversations, by doing his homework. What if we approached relationships, approached conversations, that way? We'd talk about the weather a whole lot less!

Are you living at a conversational pace? And when you have a conversation, do you do more talking or listening? I've had people fly across the country to spend an hour with me, and I couldn't get a word in edgewise. Trust me—I love hearing people's stories. But I was left wondering why they wanted to talk to me. I guess they literally wanted to talk!

Here's a thought: God gave us two ears and one mouth—use them in that proportion! What does that have to do with *please*? *Please*, like listening, is others-focused. It's asking for permission, which empowers the other party. It puts them in the captain's chair.

Author and professor Adam Grant made a distinction between *givers* and *takers*.⁶ Takers have a scarcity mindset. They tend to be self-focused: *Here I am*. It's a dog-eat-dog world, and their primary interest is self-interest. Givers have an abundance mindset—what goes around comes around. Their objective is adding value to others: *There you are*.

Givers and takers have diametrically opposed metrics of success. For a taker, whoever has the most toys at the end of the game wins. It's all about getting what's theirs. A giver doesn't just love to give; they live to give. In the words of martyred missionary Jim Elliot, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose."⁷

My friend Brad Formsma wrote *I Like Giving*. It's the gold standard when it comes to generosity. It's all about inspiring people to be generous with their thoughts, words, money, time, attention, belongings, and influence. It was Brad who introduced me to Stanley Tam, the founder of the United States Plastic Corporation. When I met Stanley, he was well into his nineties and had given more than \$120 million to kingdom causes. Over dinner he said something I'll never forget: "God's

shovel is bigger than ours.” In other words, you can’t outgive God. Then he said something else that was simple yet profound: “God can’t reward Abraham yet, because his seed is still multiplying.”

What if we viewed words the way we view money?

What if we saw our words as gifts?

What if we were generous with life-giving words?

“Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine,” Jesus said, “you did for me.”⁸ This is the transitive property applied to generosity. You can’t bless others without blessing God. Life-giving words are the gift that keeps on giving.

How do you know whether you’re a giver or a taker? Your itemized deductions for charitable giving are a pretty good indicator, but the most significant clue may be pronouns. Yes, pronouns.

Pronouns—and other function words like articles and prepositions—“account for less than one-tenth of 1 percent of your vocabulary but make up almost 60 percent of the words you use.”⁹ Pronouns are little words, but they have subtle power. “Since takers tend to be self-absorbed,” said Adam Grant, “they’re more likely to use first-person singular pronouns like *I*, *me*, *mine*, *my*, and *myself*—versus first-person plural pronouns like *we*, *us*, *our*, *ours*, and *ourselves*.”¹⁰ In a study of CEOs who were extreme takers, 39 percent of their first-person pronouns were singular.¹¹

There is a fascinating branch of psychology that analyzes word usage to gain psychological insight. Professor James Pennebaker created a software program called Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count, and he has used it to analyze everything from song lyrics to terrorist correspondence. The FBI asked Pen-

nebaker to study al-Qaeda's communications—letters, videos, interviews. He discovered that Osama bin Laden's use of personal pronouns like *I*, *me*, and *mine* stayed close to baseline over time. But he saw a dramatic spike in the use of those words by bin Laden's second-in-command, Ayman al-Zawahiri. "This dramatic increase," said Pennebaker, "suggests greater insecurity, feelings of threat, and perhaps a shift in his relationship with bin Laden."¹²

In the world of politics, there are two primary ways to rally the troops. First, you can focus on a *common enemy* and demonize those who dare disagree with you. This approach is incredibly effective if your goal is inciting negative emotions such as fear, hate, and anger. It may win some votes, but it furthers divides us into *me versus you*. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks calls it pathological dualism—it prejudices people as "unimpeachably good" and "irredeemably bad."¹³ The reality? "The line dividing good and evil," said Alexander Solzhenitsyn, "cuts through the heart of every human being." The common enemy approach is a zero-sum game.

The second way is to celebrate our *common humanity*—the image of God in me greets the image of God in you. It levels the playing field by humanizing one another. Few people were more effective than Dr. Martin Luther King, who appealed to common values, common ideals, and common sense. "Hate cannot drive out hate," said Dr. King, "only love can do that." What is your bent—*common enemy* or *common identity*?

These two approaches lead to very different destinations, and pronouns are where the road divides. Instead of *me versus you*, a common-identity approach turns *me* into *we*.

As a leader, I pay close attention to pronouns. If I'm using a lot of first-person singular pronouns, it may indicate that I'm

leading from a place of insecurity. I'm too focused on protecting my ego. I want more credit than I deserve. We flip that script by using plural pronouns that make it about we, not me. "It is amazing what you can accomplish," said President Harry Truman, "if you don't care who gets the credit."

When testosterone levels go up, our use of social pronouns—*we, us, they, them*—goes down.¹⁴ Why? We become more task-oriented and less relationship-oriented, which often means that relationships are sacrificed for the sake of the goal. It's my way or the highway. Get on the bus or get run over by it.

Are you a *me* person?

Or are you a *we* person?

Self-centered leaders take the credit and shift the blame.

Others-focused leaders give the credit and take the blame.

King Saul is an excellent case study in insecurity. At the outset of his administration, he experienced a measure of success. His response? "Saul built an altar to the LORD."¹⁵ So far, so God. Saul was giving credit where credit was due. But less than one chapter later, it says, "Saul went to the town of Carmel to set up a monument to himself."¹⁶

Those two verses recount defining moments, and they reveal a tragic flaw in Saul's character. If you find your identity in Christ, you build altars to God. If you're trying to prove yourself to people, you build monuments to yourself. And the more insecure you are, the bigger those monuments have to be! Remember Nebuchadnezzar? He built a ninety-foot statue to himself and demanded that people bow down before it.¹⁷ Who does that? Someone who is compensating for an awful lot of insecurity!

Are you building altars to God?

Or are you building monuments to yourself?

During the days of King Saul, the Israelites sang a song that got Saul's goat: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands."¹⁸ Every time that song played on Spotify, it provoked a spirit of jealousy in Saul. "They credit David with ten thousands and me with only thousands," he said. "Next they'll be making him their king!"¹⁹ What did Saul do? "From that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David."²⁰

Jealousy is one of the seven deadly sins. According to one theologian, it's "sorrow for another's good."²¹ My favorite definition belongs to Robert Madu: "Jealousy is the trophy that mediocrity gives to excellence."²² The only way to overcome jealousy, in my experience, is to do the opposite of what you feel. If you feel jealousy toward someone, brag about them behind their back. Better yet, compliment them to their face. Slowly but surely, it will defuse the jealousy. Until you can celebrate someone else's success, you aren't ready to experience success yourself.

The irony of the story? David was actually Saul's greatest asset. He helped Saul save face against Goliath—and saved Saul's kingdom. The beginning of the end? Saul started playing the comparison game, and no one wins the comparison game. The outcome is pride or jealousy, so either way, you lose!

What does any of this have to do with *please*?

Please is a first-person plural approach to life. It turns *me* into *we*. It's a win-win approach to relationships. "Win/Win is a belief in the Third Alternative," said Stephen Covey. "It's not your way or my way; it's a *better* way, a *higher* way."²³ I might add, the Jesus way. I live by a simple maxim: *If it's not a win for you, it's not a win for me*. The greatest of all is the servant of all. Instead of calling shotgun and taking the seat of honor, take the lowest seat at the table. Even if you're entitled to something,

say please!

Even though I'm the lead pastor, I never use first-person singular pronouns when talking about National Community Church. Why? It's not *mine*. In some ways, NCC feels like a fourth child. We've invested a quarter century of blood, sweat, and tears, but I never call it *my* church. Why? Every pastor is an interim pastor. Every pastor is an undershepherd.

Jesus didn't say, "I will build *your* church." He didn't say, "*You* will build my church." He said, "I will build my church"—emphasis on *I* and *my*. It may seem like a small thing, but pronouns reveal whether leaders are self-focused or others-focused.

Pronouns reveal how sanctified or unsanctified our egos are.

Pronouns reveal whether we're givers or takers.

Pronouns reveal whether we're building altars to God or monuments to self.

Pronouns are the rudders that determine our destiny. They reveal where we find our identity. They reveal where we find our security. They even reveal idolatry!

The psychology of *please* starts with first-person plural pronouns. *We* is greater than *me*.

The power of *please* lives in the second person.

There *you* are!



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