



FRUIT(FULL) Kindness

#npfruitfull

Week 5
5 of 10

May 9, 2021

Bottom Line: Kindness is more than being polite. It is the active pursuit of people's good.

Icebreaker: Go back to your childhood memories. Who is a person you remember for their kindness, and why? Try to make it outside your family if you can.

Key Verse: *Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*
Ephesians 4:32 NIV

Kindness is the ability to serve others practically and vulnerably. It comes from a deep inner security. Its fake alternative is manipulative good deeds, being kind to others so I can congratulate myself and feel "good enough" for others or for God. If you are living a life of love, kindness plays a key role. Kindness is far more than being nice. It is the "in-the-moment" expression of LOVE, the definition of love in action. Jesus' story of the Good Samaritan illustrates the fact that people who claim to be God's people, who are to represent the kindness of God, often choose to "walk on the other side of the road." But our calling is to live so kindly that the word "kindness" is synonymous with the word "Christian." It is too often not so. But kindness is a fruit of the Spirit—God is seeking to shape us into people of unparalleled kindness. Kindness is "love in action"—a practical expression of love. It is visible and active, not just emotional. Kindness is to be CARING. You look for the need; you don't pretend you don't see. It is to be ENCOURAGING. We can destroy others with our words, but kindness looks to encourage and build up. Kindness is supportive and uplifting. Kindness is HONEST. Sometimes kindness means being candid, laying it on the line, telling the hard truth, leveling with people. It may be that honest kindness will require you to tell someone a hard truth. How do you know when to be tough rather than tender? Ask yourself first, am I really committed to this person's best interest? Second, am I making a "hit-and-run" comment, or do I plan to stick around and help my friend work out the change? Be PROACTIVE. Don't wait. Do it while you have the opportunity. Do it now. Be spontaneous. The opportunity may not last until you "get around to it." Scripture says that when you have the opportunity to be kind, you need to do it then. The questions I must ask myself are, "What is my excuse for not helping?" and "Why am I not a kind person? The number one enemy of kindness is busyness. Kindness starts with being aware. Open your eyes and look around you. Our world is filled with people who need kindness—right now. Kindness has the ability to change another's life, and also yours. If you're not thinking daily about how you're going to show kindness, then don't expect to respond naturally in kindness. Remember, you can't give what you don't have. So, the question is, have you received the kindness of Christ? Every one of us has been "beaten and left by the side of the road." Jesus, the most unexpected of rescuers, came in kindness to us. Receive it and give it.

THINK IT OVER >>>

What was the most significant part of Sunday's message to you?

How would you debunk the conception that being kind is simply being nice? While you can have an act of kindness without love, you cannot have love without kindness. Reflect and discuss.

A people known for their kindness and love could genuinely reshape culture. Jesus called His church to be that kind of irresistible. Why is this not generally happening?

When the need arises to display God's love and kindness, often the people who represent God are on the other side of the road. Just far enough to make "holy" excuses. "I can't be late to synagogue." "I will pray for that poor person. God will send someone to meet the need. I have to be at my event." "He probably put himself in a bad situation, and you reap what you sow." Dozens of excuses can be made, but bottom line—when they were needed most, the people who were supposed to represent the kindness of God walked on the other side of the road. Ouch. How have you seen this? What must change? How?

LOOK IT OVER <<<

How is kindness "in the moment" the expression of love in action?

In the story of the Good Samaritan, the only person to meet the need was also the most unexpected. How and why would our consistently kind responses shock the world?

What does the person who walks in kindness look like? Where is consistent kindness most difficult for you?

How would you advise someone (maybe yourself) to develop a caring and encouraging perspective?

What are some guidelines for the kindness of honesty when telling candid, sometimes hard truth?

The number one enemy of kindness is busyness. Discuss. How do we combat that?

How has this fresh look at the old story of the Good Samaritan impacted you? Share any personal insight you are taking to heart.

NEXT STEPS

1. Recall the story of the Good Samaritan. Consider which person in the story most consistently represents you.
2. Honestly evaluate where you are in spontaneous kindness and attracting people to Jesus through your level of kindness.
3. Commit to daily thinking about kindness and how to show the kindness that leads people to Jesus.

EVALUATION/ACTION

Realizing and reaching your full potential in Christ

Bottom Line: Kindness is more than being polite. It is the active pursuit of people's good.

Rate yourself from 1 to 10 1 (never), 10 (always)	1	2	3	4		6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating?										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
Do you know someone who demonstrates this bottom line well? What do you admire about that person?										
What specific action can you put into practice to raise your rating?										
At the end of this week, reflect - where did you see the bottom line show up in your actions throughout the week?										

PRAYER

List group members and their prayer requests for this week:

DAILY STUDY

Want to dig deeper? Check out **The Daily** this week at newpointe.org/daily:

Monday: Ephesians 4:31-32

Tuesday: Luke 6:35

Wednesday: Proverbs 11:17

Thursday: Titus 3:3-8

Friday: Galatians 6:9

Don't let the conversation stop here. Keep talking it over with others throughout the week.

(Don't forget to bring this paper to your next small group meeting)