

## Love is kind.

**Love is kind.** The Greek word for kind is *chr steuomai* which means goodness or graciousness. It means to “show one’s self mild”. Being kind is showing good to others. Kindness is active. The opposite of kindness is severity: lacking compassion and gentleness, being harsh or inconsiderate. “God is love” (1 John 4:19) so God is kind. God is kind to all. Luke 6:35 says, “But love your enemies and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.” God chooses to be kind to all. He “causes the sun to shine on the righteous and the unrighteous” (Matthew 5:45). Everyone experiences the kindness of God in some ways. Kindness is doing good to others for their benefit and well-being. It involves helping others, seeking to alleviate hardship or suffering, being useful or being sympathetic, and then actually doing something that helps someone in need<sup>6</sup>. Kindness seeks to make someone else’s experience more enjoyable and beneficial than it would be otherwise.

Kindness seeks the good of the other person. Ultimately, this means seeking to share the hope of the gospel with others (Matthew 28:20). It includes helping a fellow believer see the sin that they are caught in so they have the opportunity to repent (Galatians 6:1). Kindness includes encouraging others (1 Thessalonians 5:11), helping those who are afflicted (James 1:27), helping the weak, admonishing the idle, and encouraging the fainthearted (1 Thessalonians 5:13). Kindness speaks truth with love (Ephesians 4:15) and uses words that build others up and kindness works to benefit those who hear (Ephesians 4:29). Kindness helps with physical needs like water (Matthew 10:42) and care when a neighbor is hurt (Luke 10:25-37). Like the Good Samaritan, a kind person sees a need and goes to great length to meet that need.

Again, the world has a different definition of kindness. The world says that kindness shows tolerance of every opinion and viewpoint and will never disagree or disapprove of another’s choices. The world says we are unkind to call sin sin. According to the American culture, any type of stand against sin is ‘judgmental’ and ‘hatred’. We again must be careful to define kindness as God does.

As believers, we are God’s ambassadors. We represent Christ in our interactions with others. Kindness should permeate all our relationships and every encounter we have with others because God is kind. As we have experienced the kindness of God in forgiveness and being drawn into relationship with Him, we will reflect that kindness in

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<sup>6</sup> Maximum Impact by Wayne A. Mack

attitude, thought, word, and deed. Our actions and words must be filtered through God's example of kindness. What we say and do is just as important as what we don't say or do. To be kind we must consider our tone of voice, the body language we display, and the timing of our words. We will constantly evaluate all our responses based on what the other person needs at the moment.

Consider these common occurrences in life and opportunities to show kindness rather than severity:

1. When your children need correction
2. When your spouse has said something offensive or hurtful to you
3. When a friend makes a comment that hurts your feelings
4. When a checkout clerk ignores you
5. When you are tired and just want to put your feet up but someone needs help
6. When a friend is struggling with a besetting sin that you are aware of and she is not
7. When someone in your life group talks way too much and dominates your group time
8. When someone is in need of childcare and you have the evening free

How would kindness respond in these situations?

Do you correct your children with kind words and a kind tone even when it's the tenth time you are repeating yourself?

When your spouse is unkind to you, do you respond with gentleness and meekness?

When a friend hurts your feelings do you harbor bitterness for a while or do you gently explain how you are hurt and seek reconciliation?

When a clerk ignores you do you take it personally and get rude or do you consider that she may be having a really hard day and a smile from you would be beneficial to her?

Are you quick to give up your relaxing time to help others simply because someone else will benefit?

Do you remain silent about a friend's sin because it would jeopardize your friendship to point it out or do you kindly help her see how she is sinning and point her to Christ's forgiveness?

Are you willing to patiently endure someone who lacks social skills so they are comfortable with a new group or do you fume inside and gossip about her later?

Are you quick to give up your free time so someone else is blessed or do you focus on yourself and what you want?

Kindness looks to the good of others. As you read through the above examples, think about the opportunities you had this week to extend kindness to others. Where did you see the chance to do something that would benefit someone else? What did you do?

Scripture tells us that it is God's kindness that draws us to repentance; we are drawn to God by His character which is kind. He is "for us" (Romans 8:31); He desires our good which comes only from being in relationship to him. Romans 2 starts with asking questions about why we judge other people's sin when we are guilty of the same sins. The question Paul is asking is "Do you take God's kindness for granted and excuse your sin but expect others to be kind and loving to you?" Romans 2:4 says, "Or do you presume on the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?" God doesn't ignore sin, but He is kind to show us our sin and our need for a Savior because He is so loving He desires what is best for us.

Jesus was kind. We see his example over and over in the Gospels where he always was looking to the good of others. Even when he was tired and exhausted from a long day of ministry, Jesus had compassion on the crowds. He lamented that the people were like sheep without a shepherd and he wanted to serve them and guide them. Rather than take care of his own needs, Jesus consistently ministered to those around him. When rebuke was needed, he rebuked because kindness doesn't ignore sin. Sin has real consequences and love seeks to help others be restored to God. Love confronts sin with kindness and gentleness (Galatians 6:1).

Jesus showed His love in how He acted for the good of others with a gentleness and care for who the person was and what they were suffering. In Mark 1 we see several examples. Mark 1:31 shows Jesus taking Simon's mother-in-law by the hand and lifting her up physically as he also healed her fever. Later in that chapter, in verse 41, Jesus was "moved with pity" so he stretched out his hand and touched a leper. At risk to himself, for the good of the leper, Jesus touched someone that the rest of society wouldn't come near. Lepers in those days had to walk around announcing themselves as "unclean" in a loud voice so others could be sure to stay far away. Jesus did what was best for this man and allowed him to experience a loving touch after years without.

Sometimes being kind meant Jesus addressed sin head on. When the rich young ruler approached Jesus and asked about eternal life, Jesus could have shied away from correction when the young man said he had been obeying the commandments since birth (Mark 10). Kindness, desiring what was truly best for the young man, was demonstrated in Jesus pointing out that the man loved his possessions more than God. Jesus cared about this man's heart, his relationship with God, and his eternal destiny, so kindness meant confronting sin.

Even when Jesus was hanging on the cross in agony, he demonstrated kindness to his mother (John 19:26). Rather than being focused on himself and on what he needed, he acted on behalf of his mother and made sure she would be cared for by John after he was gone. Kindness looks to the interest of others. Kindness seeks to do what will be good for the other person. Kindness uses words and actions to make someone else's situation better.

Application:

1. Which concepts stand out the most to you about love being kind? Why?
2. Think through the principles above of seeking to do good for others in the way you think, speak, and act. How do you rate yourself in kindness on a scale of 1 - 10 (10 being as kind as Jesus) and why?
3. Look up the following verses and write down what you learn.

Galatians 5:22-23

Psalms 141:5

Acts 28:2

Ephesians 2:4-10

Titus 3:4-7

4. In what situations that you face on a regular basis is it difficult for you to act for the good of others even to the point that it inconveniences you?
5. What people are the most difficult for you to be kind to? Why?
6. Evaluate your week. Where did you show genuine kindness to others because you know God is kind to you and you want to show that kindness to others?
7. What are some specific ways that you need to change to be kind? Write out at least 3 new ways to show kindness.