



Lesson Title: Kindness



Key Concept: We are motivated to pursue our mission of ALL making disciples of ALL by our core values. They are our why. This lesson examines Kindness as demonstrated by the gentle, patient, sincere speech and action for the care and safety of ALL.



Scriptures:

²²But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

(Galatians 5:22–23 *New Living Translation*)

When you're kind to others, you help yourself; when you're cruel to others, you hurt yourself.

(Proverbs 11:17 *The Message*)

Context Scriptures: John 13:35; Luke 6:32; Galatians 5:22–23; 1 Corinthians 13:4; Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:35, 10:25–37; Proverbs 11:17; Ephesians 4:32



Lesson Thoughts:

Kindness has become trendy. We see phrases like “kindness matters” and “spread kindness” plastered on everything from artistic city murals to t-shirts to stylish home décor. Even neighborhoods are decorated with yard signs saying “be kind.” Quotes, images, and videos about kindness circulate on social media. Everywhere you look there are constant reminders to be kind. Their prevalence provokes the question: Why does kindness matter?

When Jesus' was asked, “Which is the greatest commandment?” his response was “love your neighbor as yourself.” This demonstrated the value that he places on love and kindness. Sinners can love others, but the problem is that they are selective with their love (Luke 6:32). Disciples of Jesus, however, love ALL. The

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ALL identifies whose we are and whom we love. We show love or else we are not his (John 13:35).

But can love truly exist without kindness? The Apostle Paul lists kindness as a descriptor of love (Galatians 5:22-23; 1 Corinthians 13:4). Kindness really does matter for Christians. Like love, a disciple of Jesus cannot be selective with their kindness. Everyone can be kind, even sinners, but it is the kindness to ALL that identifies us as one of his.

Showing kindness to ALL is as easy and natural to us as Jesus' mandate to "love your enemy" – it's not! (Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:35). The story of the Good Samaritan is a perfect example of ALL showing kindness to ALL. Jesus made clear that it was the regular guy, not the religious leaders, who selflessly showed kindness to a man in need. The religious leaders had already passed him by and deemed him undeserving of their kindness based on their own biases and opinions of him (Luke 10:25-37). Kindness requires the setting aside of self for the benefit of another, even when it is undeserved. That is challenging! But Proverbs tells us that when we show kindness to others, it also benefits us (Proverbs 11:17).

The popular adage says, "choose kindness." Unfortunately, in practice, this often looks like, "choose whom you show kindness to." There is no shortage of opportunities to extend kindness to ALL in a world that continues to struggle with racial, social and economic injustice. As Jesus' disciples, let us use these opportunities to show the love of Christ with a commitment to kindness in our speech and actions to ALL (Ephesians 4:32).

**Discussion Questions:**

- 1) Why do you think Kindness was chosen as one of our core values?
- 2) The message "be kind" is everywhere in our culture. How is it practiced?
How do you practice being kind?
- 3) Share a time in your life when either you were kind to someone, or someone was kind to you. What was most meaningful about that experience? How did it benefit you?

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- 4) Why is it difficult to show kindness to someone who (we think) is undeserving of it?

Next Lesson: Service

Notes and Reflections

- 1) Read the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37 with kindness in mind. How are you challenged by this story? How are you encouraged by this story?
- 2) Kindness produces kindness. Do a random act of kindness for someone. Then try to show kindness to someone who doesn't deserve it.
- 3) As Christians, we are called to be kind to all. But could you receive kindness from someone you didn't like? Why is it hard?

Notes and Reflections, cont.