

Fil-Am Community Church  
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15 Sept 2016

## **DEVELOPING KINDNESS IN OUR LIVES**

### **The Cookie Thief Video**

Kindness is something that each of us want to receive but it seems hard for each of us to give. Just imagine, if everyone in the world is kind, then you have paradise. But we live in an imperfect world where you don't know how people will treat you. We cannot control how people will treat us, but we can control ourselves. Some people have more control than others.

This is the 3rd part of a 10-part series we're calling "Building Great Relationships." Some of you may be saying, "This series is long. Longer than the World Series." Folks, you must understand that there are no shortcuts to building great relationships, no easy routes to character development. It took 40 years for God to shape and mold Moses so he could use him. Even then, God wasn't still finished with him. So, say to your neighbor, "Hang on! Be kind to the pastor." Thanks for encouraging me.

1 Corinthians 13:4 says, "Love is kind."

What does it mean to be kind? What is kindness? The Greek term for kindness as used in this verse implies benevolence. Meaning, doing good or gracious acts toward someone. It means having or showing a tender, considerate, and helping nature. Kindness therefore is love in action. It is expressing your love to someone through your deeds. Someone said it is love in workclothes.

You see, you can say that you love someone, that you're concerned about someone but unless that is translated into action, who would really believe you? Like this man who was courting a woman and everytime they met he would say, "I love you so much that I'll die for you." And the woman said, "You always say that but you never do it."

The point is, there's no point uttering words of caring and compassion if there's no tangible follow-up. So, husbands, take note. James says in James 2:15-16, "*Suppose you see a brother or sister who needs food or clothing, and you say, 'Well, good-bye and God bless you; stay warm and eat well'--but then you don't give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do?*"

Now, kindness is also expressed through words. If you say good things about someone instead of spreading gossip, then you're being kind to that person. If your words are encouraging and help to build up someone instead of putting someone down, then you're a kind person. By and large, however, kindness is expressed through the actions we do.

Now, let's get a clearer picture of kindness. This way, we can be motivated to develop this quality in our lives. What does it mean to be kind? First,

#### 1. BEING KIND IS TO OBEY GOD'S COMMAND.

Ephesians 4:32 says, "*Be kind and compassionate to one another.*"

This is a command that God has given us through the apostle Paul. God wants us to be caring toward others. The word Kind is related to the words kin and kindred. The root word is the same. And we know what they mean, right? Family, tribe, clan. The implication is that we should treat others like they are part of our family.

We must admit that this is a tough challenge. Because sometimes we can't even be kind to our own family. But it is a command not a suggestion. It is what God wants us to do. He expects us to act with kindness toward others. To your family members and to those outside your family.

It means being kind even to people you don't like, even to your enemies.

1 Thessalonians 5:15 says, *"Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else."*

This applies to everyone: the neighbor that causes you problems, the people at work that are just "hard to love", the people that cause you nothing but endless grief. So, those who deserve your retaliation, need your kindness the most. You see, when we "strike back" at others we hurt our ability to share God's grace with them and we hurt the heart of God.

Note that Paul links the words kind and compassionate together. He's saying you can't be kind without being compassionate. They are closely tied together. Being compassionate means being aware of a person's needs, hurts, sufferings, and problems. Compassion is the first step to being kind.

So, being kind is a command.

## 2. BEING KIND IS ALSO A COMMITMENT TO OTHERS.

It means to keep on being kind. It means constantly thinking of others, thinking of ways how we can be of help to them. You're doing it not because of obligation but because of genuine concern for others. Hebrews 10:24 says, *"Let us be concerned about one another in order to promote love and good works."*

Another verse in Hebrews says, *"Don't forget to do good and to share what you have with those in need, for such sacrifices are very pleasing to God."*

Paul says it's very pleasing to God. Indeed it is because Jesus says that if you are being kind to others, you are being kind to Jesus himself. In Matthew 25 he says, *"I'm telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me--you did it to me."* What are these things? In verses 35-36 he says, *"I was hungry and you fed me, I was thirsty and you gave me a drink, I was homeless and you gave me a room, I was shivering and you gave me clothes, I was sick and you stopped to visit, I was in prison and you came to me."*

I think that's good motivation enough. To think that whenever we do good to someone, it's like we're doing good to Jesus.

Being kind is a command of God, a commitment to others, and a

### 3. CONFIRMATION OF OUR FAITH.

Jesus says in Luke 6, *"I tell you, love your enemies. Help and give without expecting a return. You'll never--I promise--regret it. Live out this God-created identity the way our Father lives toward us, generously and graciously, even when we're at our worst. Our Father is kind; you be kind."*

Jesus is saying, "If you're truly my disciple, then live it out. If you're really a believer, then show your kindness to others." To be a child of God is the greatest privilege you can ever have. But it also carries with it great responsibilities. If you're not serious about your responsibilities, you neglect them, you ignore them, then you're not being serious about being a child of God.

When you're kind then that confirms that you're a child of God. Because God your heavenly Father is kind. Like father, like son... or daughter. And the good thing is, people around you will also confirm that you're a child of God if you are doing good deeds toward others. They will see you as a reflection of Christ and that brings glory to God. Jesus says in

Matthew 5, *“Let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.”*

So, that’s the picture of kindness. Yet, it is something that’s hard to develop if we really think about it just like the quality of patience that Pastor Dave talked about last week. There are hindrances or problems. Let me give to you just two of them.

First, we find it hard to be kind when

#### 1. WE’RE THINKING ONLY OF OURSELVES.

Many people are so busy. They do this and that. They go here and there. They get involved in all different types of things with the primary purpose of... helping themselves. So that they can have more money. So that they can climb up the corporate ladder faster than anyone else. So that they can be well-known or famous. And the result is, they don’t have time for anyone anymore.

We also find it hard to be kind when

#### 2. WE HAVE AN UNFORGIVING HEART

This one is a biggie. Unforgiveness paralyzes your heart. Unforgiveness makes your heart turn cold. Unforgiveness makes your heart callous.

All of us have been hurt in the past. Like you have been molested when you were a child. Or your father physically abused you. Your spouse has been unfaithful to you. A friend betrayed you. A teacher demeaned you. Name it! Everyone has a hurt. It doesn’t matter how big it is. Or how small it is. And for some of us, even after years have passed, up to this time you have not forgiven the person who has hurt you. You keep replaying the past.

When you’re in that situation, it’s hard to be kind. It’s hard to be kind especially to the person who has hurt you. The unkindness even affects

other people. Ever heard of a mother being rude to her child? You might wonder, “How can a mother not be kind to her child?” It’s natural to be kind to your son or daughter. A mother usually is proud of her child however the child turns out to be that’s why we hear comments like, “that child has a face that only his or her mother could love!”

But it’s true, some mothers can be harsh to their children. When you get to the root of it, this woman has been hurt by the father of this child! And her anger has been directed to the child. See, the result of an unforgiving heart extends even to an innocent child.

Folks, this is a serious matter. If we’re holding grudges, if we have bitterness, no amount of kindness toward other people will ever please our heavenly Father. That’s why Jesus says in Matthew 5:23, *“If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.”*

The point is, God wants you to let go of that bitterness and hurts and woundedness. He wants you to be free of that. This way, he can use you to bless others.

Third, we find it hard to be kind when

### 3. WE’RE AFRAID OF BEING REJECTED.

Some are just really sensitive. They easily get hurt when someone refuses the offer of kindness. They take it personally. And after a particular disappointing experience they don’t want to do it anymore. They give up. But the Bible says that if we suffer because of doing good, then that is commendable. 1 Peter 2:23 says, *“...If you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.”* Our model is the Lord Jesus

Christ. He kept on doing good toward others despite the insults, the persecutions, the sufferings, the mocking and what-have-you.

Ralph Neighbor is a pastor in Houston. He tells the story of his encounter with Jack. This is his story:

“Jack had been president of a large corporation, and when he got cancer, they ruthlessly dumped him.

He went through his insurance, used his life savings, and had practically nothing left. I visited him with one of my deacons, who said, ‘Jack, you speak so openly about the brief life you have left. I wonder if you’ve prepared for your life after death.’

“Jack stood up, livid with rage. ‘You (blip) Christians. All you ever think about is what’s going to happen to me after I die. If your God is so great, why doesn’t He do something about the real problems of life?’ He went on to tell us he was leaving his wife penniless and his daughter without money for college. Then he ordered us out.

“Later my deacon insisted we go back. We did. ‘Jack, I know I offended you,’ he said. ‘I humbly apologize. But I want you to know I’ve been working since then. Your fist problem is where your family will live after you die. A realtor in our church has agreed to sell your house and give your wife his commission. I guarantee you that, if you’ll permit us, some other men and I will make the house payments until it’s sold. Then, I’ve contacted the owner of an apartment house down the street. He’s offered your wife a three bedroom apartment plus free utilities and an \$850-a-month salary in return for her collecting rents and supervising plumbing and electrical repairs. The income from your house should pay for your daughter’s college. I just wanted you to know your family will be cared for.’

“Jack cried like a baby. He died shortly thereafter, so wrapped in pain he never accepted Christ. But he experienced God’s love even while rejecting Him. And his widow, touched by the caring Christians, responded to the Gospel message”

The Bible says in Galatians 6:9 *“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”*

So, those are the main problems. But we can overcome them. By the help of these three practical steps I’d like for you to list down. This is God’s plan. This is how to develop kindness in our lives.

First,

#### 1. RECOGNIZE GOD’S KINDNESS TO YOU.

Kindness is a wonderful character of God. God tells us to show kindness to others because he has shown exceeding kindness to us. He is full of loving kindness toward us. How did he show his kindness to us? By saving us! The Bible tells us in Titus 3, *“But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared,<sup>5</sup> he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.”* Notice it says that he saved us not because we deserved it—He saved us because of his mercy.

God didn’t just tell us He loves us, He proved it. Romans 5:8 says, *“God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”* Do you realize that? Jesus died for you on the cross because of God’s love and kindness. In short, he expressed this kindness to you by sacrificing his own son for you. So, it’s not enough for us to say we love others; we must show it. You don’t perform acts of kindness to earn God’s mercy and forgiveness or to show others how good you are; you perform good deeds because you have been forgiven.

When God saved you, He began to change you. You no longer want to live like those people who don't know God. When you show kindness to a stranger, they are surprised. Why? Because that's not normal behavior. Out there, it is every man for himself. It's a dog-eat-dog world. It's a hard-knock life. But for those of us who know Jesus, we live by a higher standard. We show kindness and compassion to others.

The world tends to give people what they deserve. But God is full of grace and mercy. Grace is God blessing you with that which you do not deserve. Mercy is God withholding the punishment you do deserve. The more you understand and appreciate God's grace and mercy, the more you will want to show kindness to others. Kindness becomes a part of our conduct because our character is rooted in God. The kind heart most resembles God.

Second,

## 2. HAVE A SERVANT'S HEART.

This is a tough challenge. All of us since we were little children just wanted to be served. When a baby cries it's because the baby wants to be served. Now that we're grown ups, we don't cry anymore but deep inside we're acting like babies when all we want is for others to wait on us.

But Jesus says we have to turn this attitude around. From a self-centered attitude to an others-centered attitude. Jesus had this attitude that's why the Bible tells us to follow his example. It says in Philippians 2:5, *"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who... made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself..."*

Jesus who was God became a servant. Imagine the creator, the maker of heaven and earth, a servant? But that is because humility is a wonderful

character of Jesus. In fact, he says in Mark 10:45, “*The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve.*”

And finally,

### 3. BE INTENTIONAL

It takes some training to be a servant. It doesn't come overnight. That's why you must do it on purpose.

Whenever there's an opportunity, do good without being asked. Galatians 6:10 tells us, “*As we have opportunity, let us **do good** to all people.*” The Boy Scouts have “Do a Good Turn Daily.” Basically, it's looking for opportunities to do good to others.

Folks, kindness has a direct effect on people. It makes them feel loved, important, and they are encouraged. But most importantly, when we show kindness we are reflecting the kindness of Jesus. When we are kind, people see Jesus in us. When we are kind, we make a difference in people's lives.

John Wesley said: “Do all the good you can. By all the means you can. In all the ways you can. In all the places you can. At all the times you can. To all the people you can. As long as ever you can.”

I read the story of a pastor who narrated an incident that involved his father. He said, “My Daddy traveled a lot buying shoes for the shoe store he and mother owned and operated. On some of his overnight trips he would take someone with him for company. Sometimes it was one of us children. Sometimes it was a black man named Willie.

On one overnight trip Daddy pulled into a motel to stay the night. Daddy and Willie walked to the front desk and requested a room for the two of them. Looking at Daddy the desk clerk said, “I can give you a room, but I will not give one to him (pointing toward Willie).”

“If he can't stay then I won't stay,” answered my father.

They walked out.

Out in the parking lot Willie said, “Mr. Hollis, you can stay in that room and I’ll sleep here in the van. I’ll be all right.”

“No,” replied Daddy. “If they won’t let you stay in that motel then I won’t stay either.”

They both slept in the van that night.

At my Daddy’s funeral, Willie related this story to me. He said that my Daddy’s words changed his life.”

Notice his daddy just didn’t say it, he followed it up with action. Can we think of someone today who we need to say encouraging words to and even follow it up with action?