

Learning to Be Kind Like a Mother Colossians 3:12.

Happy Mother's Day to our beautiful mothers! You're more beautiful today. I hope you're feeling relaxed today and your family hasn't given you any reason to be stressed yet since you woke up. Children, did you already say "I love you to your moms?" And guys, did you already say "I love you" to the mother of your children? Did you buy her a gift? I think they go hand in hand.

All this week I kept asking myself two questions. One, what is the hallmark of a great mother? And two, what's the greatest gift you could give a mother on Mother's Day? I kept coming up with the same answer. Kindness. It's the hallmark of a great mother and it's the greatest thing you can do for your mother. Be kind to her.

Our message this morning is entitled, "Learning to Be Kind Like a Mother". Colossians 3:12 says, "*Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.*" Now, we see a lot of good qualities here that the apostle Paul wants us to have. Qualities that if you think about it, all godly mothers possess. But I'd like to concentrate on kindness this morning.

What is kindness? Kindness is love in action. It's something that you do. Another version says, "...you should practice tenderhearted mercy and kindness to others." (TLB) Notice the word "practice." It's something you do.

My mother, frankly, is one of the kindest people I know. She's always helping somebody. That's what it is – love in action.

But kindness isn't just for mothers. And it doesn't benefit only the recipient of the kindness. The Bible says, "*Those who are kind benefit themselves.*" (Proverbs 11:17). Isn't that true? When you're kind, it makes you feel good.

It makes you feel like you've made a difference in the world. It refreshes you. That's why the Bible says, "Whoever refreshes others will be refreshed." (Prov. 11:25)

This morning, let me just give you five words to suggest how you can become a more kind person like a mother.

1. Be sensitive.

In other words, tune in. Become aware of the needs around you. *"Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."* (Phil. 2:4 ESV) Paul says "Be aware." If you care you'll be aware.

I want to say two things about this point. One, everybody's having a tough time, right? Since last year. Everybody sitting around you is having a tough time just in different areas. And number two, I would say that the number one cause that keeps us from being kind, the number one barrier to kindness, is busyness. When I get too busy I don't have time to be kind. I'm the least kind to my children, to my wife, to other people when I have my agenda, my goals, my desires, I've got to do what I've got to do, and I don't have time to be kind. If I were to ask you what are the three greatest emotional needs of the people closest to you this last week would you be able to answer?

Kindness starts with the way of looking. Be aware, be sensitive. If you care, you'll be aware.

2. Be supportive.

What I'm talking about here is being supportive in your speech, in the way you talk to people. *"The soothing tongue is a tree of life, but a perverse tongue crushes the spirit."* (Proverbs 15:4 NIV) The Hebrew word for soothing gives the idea of healing. So, a kind word is like a balm that refreshes or provides relief to someone who is hurting. We all need some encouragement, don't we?

When was the last time you lifted up someone with encouraging words. Or was it the opposite?

There was this Peanuts cartoon. A red-headed girl calls Charlie Brown on the phone, “Hey Chuck. Guess what. I’m running for Queen of the May at our school.” She didn’t realize Lucy was with Charlie, listening. Charlie Brown says to her, “That’s interesting. Lucy has already been chosen Queen of the May at our school.” Then, the little red-haired girl says “Your school has pretty low standards, huh, Chuck?” Charlie Brown turns around to Lucy and says, “She says ‘Congratulations.’”

That’s tact. That’s diplomacy. That’s kindness.

Do you remember how ruthless kids were on the playground when you went to school? Do you remember that? They’d exploit every weakness. They’d rub in every failure. They would go for the jugular. You’d be hurt. You’d go home and your mom would say “Sticks and stones may break my bones but words or names will never hurt me.” That’s just not true. As I’ve said before, a broken bone heals faster than a broken spirit. Your words have a great power to heal or to hurt.

How much do you support people with your words? Are you an encourager or are you a discourager? Do you lift people up or do you put them down? Do you give them strokes or pokes? Do you nag or do you brag on your children?

Let’s say God were to have a contest and saying, “I’m going to give you a dollar for every kind word you said this last year. I’m going to take away a dollar for every critical word or negative word you said this last year.” Would you be rich or poor? Would you have megabucks or nega-bucks?

Do you realize when you belittle people, when you put them down, when you *belittle* you are *being little*? To belittle means you are being little. To belittle is to be little.

Be sensitive, be supportive.

3. Be sympathetic.

Kind people share in the emotions of others. Romans 12:15 (TLB) “*When others are happy be happy with them. If they are sad, share their sorrows.*”

Do you know anyone like that? These are people with a listening ear. They don't pretend to listen, they really listen. Some people, when you talk to them, they don't look you in the eyes, their eyes are roaming around. Or they look at their watch. There was a commercial where this couple are having a dinner date in a restaurant and the girl was talking to her date and her date would look at her and then glance downward every now and then and sometimes would say “Yeah”. And the girl wondered because his “yeahs” were sometimes out of context. She found out that the guy was actually watching a basketball game on his phone which was on his lap. Some people are not just interested in what you're saying or how you're feeling.

You know what, Reagan was so popular as president. He knew how to express emotion. In the moments of national tragedy, when the shuttle was destroyed, when the American soldiers were killed in Lebanon, he cried openly. In a moment of patriotic fervor when they were rededicating the Statue of Liberty you could see a tear from his eye. Strong leaders are not afraid to express emotion.

On the other hand, weak leaders have to always be in control. They always have to control their emotions. I don't know why but most men are scared to death of their emotions. “I don't want to do that thing in church; I might cry. I wouldn't be macho.” The Bible even recorded the time Jesus shed tears. It's the shortest verse in the Bible. At the death of Lazarus, John 11:35 says, “*Jesus wept.*”

BTW, the best way to handle a funeral is to just weep with people. You say, “I feel so awkward when I go to a funeral. I don't know what to say.” You don't have to say anything. Just being there is being kind. You don't have to say anything. “I don't know what to say in a crisis.” Don't say anything.

The best thing you can do when somebody's grieving is cry with them. Weep with those who weep. That's what it means to be kind. And rejoice with those who rejoice.

Now, if you have a teenager, if you want to know the key to your teenager's heart – it's sympathy. In teenage years, everything is a big deal. Have you noticed that? Bel and I have started to notice that. Everything is a big deal. You get a pimple and it's a national crisis. They come to you and you say, "It's no big deal!" It's not to you, but it is to them. And it was to you. You just forgot how big a deal it was when you were a teenager. If your teenager comes home and they've been jilted by some boyfriend or girlfriend and if you say, "You'll get over it. The world hasn't ended." They think it has and you did when you were a teenager.

You know, the parents that I know that have the best relationships with their teenagers are those who treat as important the things that their teenagers consider important. They don't poo-poo them or down-play them and say, "That's no big deal. You'll get over it. It's a stage. You'll grow out of it."

Be sensitive, be supportive, be sympathetic.

4. Be straightforward.

Sometimes kindness means being candid and frank. It means leveling with people, telling them where they're blowing it, where they're making a mistake.

Proverbs 27:6 says, "*Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.*" Also, Psalm 141:5 says, "*Let a righteous man strike me-that is a kindness; let him rebuke me-that is oil on my head.*"

Ever seen that bumper sticker that says, "Real friends don't let friends drive drunk." That's true. A genuine friend will say, "You're blowing it! I'm not about to let you do this! You're making the biggest mistake of your life." A real friend does not say, "It's none of my business." If you're a friend, it is your business.

Sometimes the kindest thing you can do is level with the person and tell them exactly what they're doing wrong.

When you go to a doctor do you want him to lie to you or do you want him to be straightforward? Do you want him to say, "You've got to have surgery or you're going to die." Or do you want him to say, "It's no big deal. You might get well on your own. Relax. Think positive. It will go away."

Sometimes a surgeon has to cut you. Sometimes you have to hurt a person in order to heal a person. Sometimes the kindest thing you can do is just level with people and tell them the truth. It's far less kind to overlook a problem that you know is destroying somebody's life.

James Dobson wrote a book. I like the title Love Must be Tough. That's good. Sometimes love must be tough. Sometimes you have to say, "I'm not going to stand for it anymore! I'm not going to sit by in silence. I'm not going to let you destroy the marriage. I'm going to fight for this marriage."

You say, "How do I know when to confront and how do I know when to comfort?" I don't know. You have to evaluate each situation and figure out which is going to bring the most healing. Sometimes comfort will. Sometimes confrontation will. For Filipinos, this is really hard. Because we don't want to confront. We'll beat around the bush. We'll take it in as long as we can. But if you're a Filipino and a Christian, it's good we can come to God to ask for wisdom to deal with various situations. God says, "But if any of you lack wisdom, you should pray to God, who will give it to you; because God gives generously and graciously to all." But, of course, this applies to everyone, not only to Filipinos.

If you're going to be kind to your mother or to anyone for that matter, you need to be sensitive and you need to be supportive and you need to be sympathetic and you need to be straightforward.

5. Be spontaneous.

In other words, don't wait to do a kind act. When you've got time to do it, do it. Do it now.

Look at this verse in Galatians 6:10. *"As we have the opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."* In other words, when should I be kind? The issue of when should you be kind is obvious. Whenever you see a need.

We've all done this. Have you ever had somebody do something for you that was real nice and you think, "I need to write that person a thank you note. But you put it off and you put it off and you put it off. Finally, it's been so long since they did it that you're embarrassed to write it so you forget about it. You know what I'm talking about? You say, "I need to make that phone call and thank them... I need to take a casserole... We just moved into the neighborhood. I need to meet the neighbors right now as we've moved in (or they moved in)." Two years later you still haven't met the neighbors. Now you're embarrassed.

Opportunities to show kindness do not last. You must seize the moment. You must do it now as you have the opportunity. They pass quickly.

I guess what I'm saying is give roses while people can smell them. In other words, a single rose, listen to this husbands, given to your wife now is much more worthwhile than an entire elaborate bouquet at the funeral. It doesn't make much sense then. Give roses while people can smell them.

I like the phrase, *"Do your givin' while you're livin' then you'll be knowin' where it's goin'."* A lot of people say, "When I die I'm leaving it all to charity. I'm leaving it all to my church. I'm leaving it all to the Lord's work." Fine. But really do your givin' while you're livin', you get more credit for it then. And you get more joy out of it and you know where it's going.

When you have the opportunity be spontaneous in expressing kindness. When it comes to kindness, good intentions don't count. It's like golf.

Being so close to the hole doesn't count. "I've been meaning to do something kind for my children... I've been meaning to do something kind for my wife... or my husband... or to my parents or to that teacher or that worker or that employer, that boss, that secretary. I've been meaning to..." When are you going to do it? You say, "I'm aimin' to..." When are you going to pull the trigger? Do it now.

If you walk out of this service and you have the slightest inclination to reach out and touch someone, why not call your mother today, do it. Be spontaneous. As we have the opportunity.

The classic example of this in the Bible is the Good Samaritan. He saw a need. A man had been beaten and robbed and mugged and his clothes were taken. He was battered and he was lying on the side of the road. Two religious leaders had walked past him and didn't do anything. This guy saw a need and he immediately stopped. He met the need. He was spontaneous. He didn't think twice. He responded immediately. He picked up the guy and he bandaged him up. He took him down to the nearest Holiday Inn and gave them his American Express card and said, "I'll cover all bills for him. I'll be back later." Would you do that? Would you do that for a total stranger?

You contrast that with the two religious guys, they saw the guy in pain but they're calculating "Is this tax deductible? I'd like to do it if I can somehow count it on my income tax." You contrast the spontaneity of the Good Samaritan with the cold calculating attitude of the priests who said, "I did my duty at the temple. I gave at the office. I'm on my way home. I've got family priorities."

You say, "It's not my fault they got hurt!" It's not your fault. But you can help him out. You say, "I might get robbed, too. I might get hurt myself if I stop and help that guy." You might. Kindness could cost you something, by the way. There's a price tag to kindness.

The Good Samaritan paid the bill for this guy. A cost was involved. That's called sacrifice.

But as I said earlier, I believe that the number one enemy of kindness is busyness. We just get so busy we don't have time for anything but our own personal agenda. I hear people say all the time, "I'm too busy to serve. I'm too busy to have a ministry." Then you're too busy. You're out of God's will. You're out of balance. Life involves blessing yourself and blessing others. You're just too busy to be kind, to have a ministry.

Let's wrap this up. Who can you be kind to this week? You look all around you. There are people that are discouraged. There are people that are hurting and bleeding. You just need to open your eyes. How about at home? Is it possible that this week you could possibly, just possibly, be a little bit kinder to your wife, or to your husband or to your children? And do an act of kindness? Go out and play catch with them, spend some time with them.

I just wonder how many divorces could have been prevented by kindness. I know a lot of them could. Just common courtesy of being kind to people.

How about at work? How about that new worker at work who got no orientation and is lost, has no idea where they're going. If you're working from home, maybe you can Skype him or her and guide them. If you're in the office, maybe you can show them around, just observe safety protocols.

Or that guy who's unkind to you at work. You be kind to him. Do you realize that people are unkind to others simply because they've never experienced kindness?

How about at school? Do you think it's possible you could be kind to that person that nobody else likes? The nerd, the jerk, the outcast, the person that nobody likes to be around with. Is it just possible in the name of Jesus Christ you could be kind to that person this week? Then watch what happens.

Kindness transforms people. They come out of their cocoons and they blossom and they bloom. They grow with affirmation. Kindness changes personalities. You say I've got a difficult child. Be kind to them and watch what happens. I have a cantankerous mate. Be kind to them and watch what happens.

How about at church? Do you speak to people you don't know? If you see somebody who looks obviously lost – do you give them directions to try to help them out? Do you sit by somebody you've never known? Do you talk to them, give a handshake, a word of encouragement? Well, I'm talking about when things are back to normal when we can actually come into close contact with others. I just want you think about these things.

Now, how about that friend who doesn't know Jesus Christ? The kindest thing you can do for somebody is share the Lord with them. Make a friend for eternal life. Tell them that God loves them. That's the kindest thing you can do. You realize that you are the only Bible that some people will ever read? You say, "I have a Living Bible." You *are* a living Bible for many, many people.

Why am I talking about this, this morning? Because the Christian life is the life of kindness. It was exemplified to us by the Lord Jesus. If you're ever going to be like Jesus Christ you've got to learn to be kind. Mothers are kind. We can be kind, too.

Father, we thank You for Mother's Day and for mothers. The fact is none of us would be here if You hadn't used human instruments of mothers. Lord, we know that our mothers aren't perfect but they did the best they could and we thank You that you used each of them to bring each of us into the world. We thank You for their kindness. We ask You to help us to be kind to them and to others. Lord, we thank You for these families who made this commitment today of their family saying, We want to raise our family in a godly way. Thank You for these men who say, As for me and my house we will serve the Lord. We thank You for their public statement to say, We want to do what's right and raise our children in the right way in a world where there's so many wrong values. Lord, I pray that each of us would be like Jesus. That we would be kind this week, that that would be a living testimony. That we would be Living Bibles. That each person would find a place of service and ministry. We look at these young children and see how their lives are being shaped here. The future generation is waiting to be led and taught and molded. Help us to be like Jesus this week. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.