

Kindness: “Be Kind and Compassionate to One Another”
2 Samuel 9; Ephesians 2:4-7

Definitions:

Kindness, Kind, Kindly—serviceable, good, pleasant, gracious, goodness of heart, the quality of being friendly, generous, or considerate.

Let’s review. We have discussed the following:

1. **Spirit Life:** “Let Us Keep in Step with the Spirit”
2. **Love:** “Love Each Other as I Have Loved You”
3. **Joy:** “In Him Our Hearts Rejoice”
4. **Peace:** “The Peace of God...Will Guard Your Hearts”
5. **Patience:** “Bear with Each Other”

This lesson deals with the fifth trait of the fruit of the Spirit, kindness. Kindness is not looked upon favorably by everyone. There are those who feel that kindness carries a cost they are not prepared to pay. It is too time consuming, too demanding, too likely to interfere with their own plans.

Spirit life, however, insists that kindness is not an inconvenience to be avoided, but a characteristic to be embraced. After all, God has lavished His lovingkindness on us through Christ. As we study David’s example of kindness, we’ll see that it involves treating others with *sympathy, benevolence, and generosity*. All of these attitudes are essentially practical; none is less than costly.

Think about it, what are some results of kindness that you’ve seen in your life or in someone else’s?

1. Read 2 Samuel 9

This passage of Scripture has David as the King over both Judah and Israel, seeking to see if there is anyone left of the family of Saul that he may show kindness to for Jonathan’s sake. Jonathan was King Saul’s son who had made a covenant with David that knitted their hearts in love. This happened despite Saul seeking to kill David.

Saul tried to kill David by throwing a javelin at him, tricking David to fight the Philistines, commanding his servants to kill David, by throwing a javelin at David again, by sending his messengers to kill David, and by commanding Jonathan, his son, to bring David to be killed.

Now we see David seeking to show kindness to Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan and grandson of Saul.

- It was important for David to show kindness to Saul’s family because his dear friend, Jonathan, asked him to. In **1 Samuel 20:14-15** Jonathan asked David not only to show kindness “of the Lord” while he lived, but also not to cut off the kindness from his house (family) forever.

- Keeping in mind that Saul had been David's mortal enemy, David had reasons for not being kind to Saul's family. During the times of the David and Saul, a conquering king generally killed all the descendants of the previous king. This was to prevent uprisings from the previous king's family. Saul, as previously mentioned, had tried to have David killed several times. Saul even had David on the run, away from his family, living in the wilderness, in caves, and even among the enemy, the Philistines.
 - a. After all he had suffered at the hands of Saul, it would have been understandable if David had conveniently forgotten his promise to Jonathan. But it was one of David's strengths that he did not forget what he had undertaken, even though many years had passed since that covenant had been made.
- The action of David showing kindness and compassion to Mephibosheth reveals that he is a man of integrity and keeps his word. David showed kindness to someone he had never met.
- David was more than just dutifully fulfilling his covenant with Jonathan. We see this evident by the extent of his kindness to Mephibosheth. He went above just sparing the life of Jonathan's son.
- David may have had mixed emotions when he saw Jonathan's son. He may have had fond memories of Jonathan as he thought about Mephibosheth's father and not so fond memories as he thought about who Mephibosheth's grandfather.
- Because of the custom of killing the descendants of the previous king, Mephibosheth had reason to be afraid of King David. David (**2 Samuel 9:7**) told Mephibosheth not to be afraid, promising to show kindness for Jonathan's sake.
- David's kindness led to him: 1) restoring all the land that Saul had owned back to the family and 2) having Mephibosheth to always eat at the king's table.
- David's acts of kindness humbled Mephibosheth. He bowed himself before King David and said, "What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?" (**2 Samuel 9:8**)
- We can glean from this story that kindness can bring about peace among parties, it can remove fears, bring about comfort to others and demonstrate the actual conditions of one's heart.

2. Read Ephesians 2:4-7

- God has shown His kindness toward us by: 1) Choosing us to be His children (**Eph. 1:3-6**); 2) Redeeming us by His Son (**Eph. 1:7-12**); 3) Sealing us by the Spirit (**Eph. 1:13-14**); 4) making us alive together with Christ, and causing us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (**Eph. 2:6**). God did all of these things because of His love for us.
 - a. God's kindness to us should motivate us to be kind to others.

- This “sitting together in heavenly places” combines the ideas of the knowing that because of the resurrection of Christ we too will also be raised from the dead (**1 Cor. 15:2-23**) and that we have been given the power to live as Christians now (**Eph. 1:19**). Paul’s reference to “heavenly places” both in **verses 1:3 and 2:6**, refers to things that are heavenly, the spiritual experience of a believer and eternal things, verses those things which are earthly, natural, and temporal.
- Grace and kindness are intertwined in that grace—the undeserved favor and mercy and favor of God—is often expressed in kindness toward us. And as we look at the kindness through His actions we realize it’s because of His grace toward us. Each leads to the other and they work together.
- In closing, let’s look at **Ephesians 4:32**. Is there a current situation in which you are struggling to be kind? What makes it hard for you to be compassionate in this situation?

As Christians we too have been showered with blessings from the King. Spend some time today basking in the kindness God has shown you.

Now or Later

Make a list of the kindness (great or small) people have bestowed on you in the past days or weeks. How, very practically, can you encourage these people?

Homework: Read **Psalm 100, Romans 7:18-20; 12:9, 21**

Topic: Goodness: “The Lord Is Good”