

Kindness - An Attribute of God

Purpose: To create in the students the desire to apply principles for living a life of kindness.

Objectives: By the end of the lesson the students will . . .

1. Be able to explain principles for living a life of kindness.
2. Be willing to apply these principles to their lives.

Key Verses: Titus 3:4; Colossians 3:12.

I. Introduction

(Begin this lesson with a story something like this. You can build this story up as you see fit.) Imagine that you have taken a vacation to the Bahamas or some other beautiful vacation area. Everything has been wonderful. On the last day of your time there, you take a walk down a secluded beach by yourself. What a joy! Then you hear some moaning. Wondering what it is that you hear, you go over to the bushes to investigate. You find a man who has been beaten up and robbed. You are concerned and begin taking care of him. Then, you realize this man is someone you have always been told to despise *(include here a real-to-life example, e.g. an ethnic group, a nation, a class of people, a wicked person, etc.)* How would you now respond to this person? He, (and his kind), is despised. What would you do?

As you can tell, this story is a play off the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37), looking at it through the eyes of the Samaritan. He acted kindly to the injured man, although Jews and Samaritans despised each other. Today, we will discuss what it means to be kind. Hopefully, this will motivate us to be kind to others.

II. Kindness in action

- A. Kindness means fit for use, able to be used, serviceable. It is interesting to note that the common slave name, *Chrestos*, comes from the Greek word for kindness. This helps us to understand the meaning of kindness. A slave serves others, freeing them to do other things, making them successful. A slave also takes care of his master's needs. A slave's actions are meant to build up the other person. So a person who acts with kindness is thinking how they can be of service to another, to meet needs that will free them up to be successful.
- B. God is the author of kindness. Remember Jesus' word, "I did not come to be served, but to serve." (Matthew 20:28) He came to do what was best for us, to set us free. It is interesting to note that the kindness of God in the Old Testament is many times mentioned with the justice of God. Let's look at three examples from the Minor Prophets. *Have three of the students look up the verses and read them to the group. Ask them what they see in these verses.*

"Therefore, return to your God, observe kindness and justice, and wait for your God

continually.” Hosea 12:6

“He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

Micah 6:8

“Thus has the LORD of hosts said, ‘Dispense true justice, and practice kindness and compassion each to his brother;’” Zechariah 7:9

We see that God ardently desires that we live lives full of justice **and** kindness. We usually don’t think of justice and kindness as going together. If you are just, you are stern and firm. You stick to what’s right and wrong. Kindness is sensitive and compassionate. God requires both from us because He is both just and kind. Kindness adds the personal to life. It finds useful ways to help in the pain that justice requires.

- C. The New Testament shows how justice and kindness work together. In both Ephesians 2:7 and Titus 3:4 the Apostle uses the word “kindness” to show this attribute of God as being necessary for our salvation. If God was not kind, no one would ever be saved. Yet God was kind toward us in the person of Jesus Christ who died for us, to meet the requirement of His justice, even though we didn’t deserve it.
- D. In Colossians 3:12 we are admonished to “Put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.” Who are we to put kindness on for? Those who require justice. “Bearing with one another, forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone. Just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.” (Colossians 3:13).

III. A Biblical Example of Kindness

Read or review the text of Luke 10:25-37

- A. As we know, the Samaritan had every reason to not stop and help the injured man. Samaritans despised the Jews. There was great danger for the Samaritan. He did not know the man. It would cost him time and money. It could cost him relationally with friends back home.
- B. The question for us is this: “Would I have stopped and helped the gravely injured man? If not, why not?” (*Take a couple of minutes to discuss this question.*)

Transition: All of us know the story of the good Samaritan. In everyday life we hear of individuals who perform acts of great kindness toward other people. Usually these great or small acts of kindness go unrewarded. But let’s look at one that did not go unnoticed. An article in the “Dominion Post” went like this:

“A cleaning woman who was never paid more than \$10,000 a year has donated \$93,000 to the West Virginia University College of Law.

Regina Jennings, 75, cleaned bathrooms and mopped floors at the school for 15 years before

retiring in 1989. She said she never forgot the kindness of faculty and students.

‘They always talked to me and asked me how I was doing,’ Jennings said. ‘They treated me extremely well through the years.’

John Fisher, dean of the College of Law, said he was ‘simply stunned’ by the gift, which will be used to overhaul a long-distance learning room to be named in her honor.”

IV. Application

A. Who are the people that need kindness?

- * People who have lost a dear one and need sympathy or just friendship.
- * The elderly and small children
- * Those who are sick or hurting
- * The downcast
- * The lowly
- * *(You could ask them to list others who need an act of kindness.)*
- * *(Ask them to think of ones in their community, church, school or other places that need a random act of kindness. Help them to remember that Jesus showed kindness toward us while we were rebelling against Him. Also the Samaritan helped someone that normally would have been despised. What will we do?)*

B. One good way to begin to express kindness more readily is to put yourself in the place of others who are in need. Remember God’s kindness toward us. We did not deserve His kindness. The same was true of the Jew helped by the Samaritan man. Let’s keep our eyes open toward others that are in need. The world will be a lot better off with more kindness.