

The Gracious Life, Part 2 | be kind

I. Kindness is Required to Live Graciously.

- Luke 7:40-43; Matthew 18:21-35
- Grace is giving people that which they do not deserve. Just like we don't deserve God's provision, love, care, and salvation, so too the people in our lives don't deserve kindness. But that's exactly why we give it to them, because we're gracious as God is gracious.
- Mercy is not giving people what they deserve, and grace is giving them what they don't deserve. Mercy would have been for the forgiven slave to *not* throw the other slave into prison, and grace would have been to *forgive* them man just as he had been forgiven.
- Therefore, if you are not a kind individual, you are not a gracious individual. If you're not a gracious individual, you're not a Christ-honoring individual.

II. Kindness is an Action Not a Demeanor.

- Merriam-Webster defines kindness as "of a sympathetic or helpful nature, of a forbearing nature, and arising from or characterized by sympathy or forbearance, to give pleasure or relief."
- Notice that these definitions are all about what is being *done*, not *how* it's being done. According to these definitions, a kind act is one that is sympathetic, helpful, and forbearing.
- However, it seems the church is filled with people who define kindness by two very different criteria.
 - In their eyes, kindness *looks* a certain way and *sounds* a certain way. It's identified by smiles and nice words and uplifting tones of voice. Unfortunately, this poor definition reduces kindness to nothing more than superficial observations.
 - And it's very closely tied to the other misunderstanding of kindness that basically says that any way you treat me that I like is kind, and any way you treat me that I don't like is unkind. And since we'd all prefer to be smiled at and hear encouraging words from syrupy voices, that becomes our expectation for kindness.
- The biggest issue with these faulty definitions is that there is nothing inherently kind about doing what someone wants you to do or doing something with a smile! A person can smile and say nice things with big eyes and soft words and be sinning in the process! Those superficial things are often used to veil manipulation or encourage people to do things that don't please the Lord. But sometimes the most loving thing we need is to be reprovved, corrected, rebuked, admonished, and warned. And sometimes those confrontations require hard words, a lack of verbal syrup, and even difficult consequences. Proverbs 27:6; Proverbs 20:30; Psalm 141:5; Ecclesiastes 7:5
- Kindness is what we *do*, but more importantly, *why* we do it. Kindness is everything and anything that's in a person's best interest. The question that has to be answered is this: "What is in God's best interest for this person?" And then we need to do that thing for God's glory and their good . . . whether they like it or not.

III. True Kindness is Defined by God.

- Most of the uses of kindness in the New Testament refers to that which is good and useful.
 - Kindness is always righteousness.** Titus 2:5; Matthew 20:15; Matthew 7:11, 17-18, 12:34-35
 - Kindness is useful.** Romans 3:12
 - Kindness leads people to repentance.** Romans 2:4
 - Kindness is Gospel-saturated.** Romans 11:22; Ephesians 2:4-7; Titus 3:4-7
 - Kindness is serving.** II Corinthians 6:1-10

- **Kindness is loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, good, faithful, gentle, and self-controlled.** Colossians 5:22-23
- **Kindness is speaking truth, being unified in Christ, holiness, compassionate, humble, gentle, patient, long-suffering, forgiving, and loving.** Colossians 3:10-14
- **Kindness is not conditional.** Luke 6:35-36
- **Kindness is not bitter, wrathful, angry, clamorous, slanderous, malicious, hypocritical, and envious. Instead, it's good, tender-hearted, and forgiving just like we learn in the pure milk of God's Word.** Ephesians 4:31-32; I Peter 2:1-3
- **Kindness is love.** I Corinthians 13:4; II Peter 1:5-7

IV. Conclusion

- God commands us to be gracious, but we will never be gracious if we're not kind.
- And kindness is actions not a demeanor. And since kindness is defined by God in His Word, we have to accept that it is righteous, useful, evangelistical, discipling, Gospel-saturated, and serving.
- And — more specifically — it's loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, good, faithful, gentle, self-controlled, honest, Christ-honoring, holy, compassionate, humble, long-suffering, good, tender-hearted, and forgiving.
- It's also completely unconditional.

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