

The Fruit of the Spirit: Kindness

Lesson Six

radiate

Settling In: About 10-20 minutes

- 1) Make a note to yourself who, if anyone, is missing from your home group this week:
- 2) Spend some time finding out how everyone is doing: make a note for prayer requests.
- 3) Introduce a time of conversational prayer. Make it clear that group members are not required to participate if they are not comfortable.
or
- 4) After a more brief time of prayer...
 - a) Ask each person to share one thing that makes him or her want to follow Jesus Christ.
 - b) Close with a conversational prayer giving thanks for each of these reasons to follow Jesus.

This is only for your information...don't make a big deal of who is missing to the members who are present.

Conversational prayer means each member taking turns praying for various concerns with reasonably short and to the point prayers.

Opener: About 10 minutes

- 1) Ask several people to share an occasion when someone was kind to them that made an impact on their lives.
- 2) Why do you think we are not more kind to one another more often?

You may not have time to ask every question in the study. Also, some of the discussion questions may not be appropriate depending on who is at the home group on a particular night. That's okay! We've intentionally given you more material than you can usually use.

Mini-teach: About 10 minutes

Kindness

- 1) Kindness unmistakably refers to an action...a deed of kindness.
 - a) Merely "thinking kind thoughts" is akin to "thinking helpful thoughts". Mere thinking is neither kind nor helpful.
 - b) Kindness is love expressed in specific actions.
 - c) "In a study of 37 cultures around the world, 16000 subjects were asked about their most desired traits in a mate. For both sexes, the first preference was kindness (the second was intelligence)." [Wikipedia](#)
- 2) Quotations related to kindness:
 - a) 'That best portion of a good man's life, His little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love.' *William Wordsworth*
 - b) Ask yourself: Have you been kind today? Make kindness your daily modus operandi and change your world. *Annie Lennox*
 - c) No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted. *Aesop*
 - d) Kindness has converted more sinners than zeal, eloquence or learning. *Frederick W. Faber*
 - e) Kindness is in our power, even when fondness is not. *Samuel Johnson*

[χρηστότης](#) chrestotes, kindness, usefulness; "as a direct out-working of agape it is always alive and active, breaking out spontaneously in the life of the man who is led by Christ." Beyreuther in Colin Brown, DNNT, vol 2, p 106.

Discussion 1: About 15 minutes

The Golden Rule

The Fruit of the Spirit: Kindness

Lesson Six

Mt 7:12 (also Luke 6:31)

- 1) "In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets." (Matt. 7:12, NRSV)
 - a) Read this verse in as many different translations as you have available. Which translation do you prefer and why?
 - b) What does "in everything..." indicate about the nature of this instruction?
- 2) Can you think of any exceptions to the Golden Rule?
 - a) *While the Golden Rule is a principle that applies to most situations in life, there are some occasions when we may need to realise that the good we wish for ourselves would not be a blessing to another person.*
 - b) *Kindness must be expressed in a way that it is a blessing to the other person. For example, what difference might there be in how men and women understand acts of kindness?*
 - c) *Also, there are negative examples: e.g. a criminal might wish to be left alone to continue their criminal activities.*
 - d) *However, as principle, the Golden Rule serves us in day-to-day life better than any another moral guide and is an excellent place to begin when considering kindness.*
- 3) It has been said by some that the Golden Rule exists in most world religions. The following two citations are most often given in evidence:
 - "What you do not wish upon yourself, extend not to others." — Confucius
 - "What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow man." — Hillel
 - a) Can you see any difference between what was said by Confucius and Hillel in contrast to Jesus' version?
 - b) What difference would it make in how we should understand kindness?
- 4) What role does *empathy* play in the application of the Golden Rule?
- 5) What role does *imagination* play in applying the Golden Rule?

"the law and the prophets": the most common term for the OT in Jesus' time; today we might say: "the whole Bible".

Confucius: "Master Kung," 551 BCE – 479 BCE) was an esteemed Chinese thinker and social philosopher, whose teachings and philosophy have deeply influenced Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese thought and life. *Wikipedia*

Hillel: a famous Jewish religious leader who lived in Jerusalem during the time of King Herod, Augustus, and probably Jesus; he is one of the most important figures in Jewish history. *Wikipedia*

empathy: "the ability to understand and share the feelings of another."

Discussion 2: About 15 minutes

David and Mephibosheth: A Case Study in Kindness

2 Sam 9

Story Summary:

King David had defeated his enemies and was secure in his throne. His mind now turned to ruling his kingdom. Eventually, he desired to show kindness to any survivors of the household of his enemy, Saul. David's servants discovered that the son of Jonathan (David's dear friend and Saul's son who had perished in the battle for the kingdom) still survived but had been severely crippled during the flight from David's soldiers (2 Sam 4.4). David ordered that Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth, be brought before him. Fearing the worst, Mephibosheth believes

This story extends over several chapters of the Bible. We've provided a summary of the story but suggest that you read 2 Sam 9 in your home group in order that your questions refer directly back to the text.

The Fruit of the Spirit: Kindness

Lesson Six

that David has finally caught up with him to eliminate him as the last of his enemies. One can only imagine Mephibosheth's attitude toward David, who was responsible for the destruction of his grandfather's dynasty, eliminating any hope of becoming king after his father Jonathan. David was also indirectly responsible for Mephibosheth's loss of the use of his legs.

To his amazement, David instead speaks kindly to Mephibosheth. He restores to him his grandfather's lands so that his material needs are taken care of for the rest of his life. He also invites this crippled former enemy to the great honour of dining at the king's own table being treated as one of the king's own sons.

Through this kindness, Mephibosheth is transformed from a miserable, bitter enemy to one of David's most loyal followers.

- 1) Read 2 Sam 4.4.
 - a) What do you think Mephibosheth's attitude toward David might have been?
 - b) What reasons would he have to hate David?
- 2) What do you think Mephibosheth was expecting when David summoned him? Why?
- 3) How many times does the word "kindness" appear in 2 Sam 9?
 - a) If this were the only passage of the Bible that we had, how would we define "kindness"?
 - b) Even though this story precedes the Golden Rule by about 1000 years, how does David demonstrate the spirit of the principle?
 - c) Do you think what David did was a good idea politically? Why or why not?
- 4) Read 2 Sam 16:1-4 and 2 Sam 19:24-30
 - a) Ask someone summarize the story.
 - b) Why does David give Ziba Mephibosheth's property?
 - c) Do you think it was fair how David settled the dispute? Why or why not?
 - d) How does Mephibosheth respond? Why?
 - e) What does this tell you about the power of kindness?

Closer:

Meditation and journal:

- Is there anyone that God would have me show kindness?
- What would I imagine they would like done for them?
- What would be my first step?

Have a suggestion to make this Home Group Guide better? Email us at: contact@radiate-uk.com