

# RIVERS CROSSING COMMUNITY CHURCH

## Community Group Discussion Guide – Trail Markers Week #5

Kindness / May 9, 2021 / Pastor Phil Poggi



### GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. Icebreaker Questions | This week's fruit of the Spirit is kindness. Think of a kind act you've witnessed or heard about. What was it about the act, the person who did it, or the way it was done that made it kind?
2. Pastor Phil shared that just as physical fruit needs time to grow, so too does the fruit of the Holy Spirit. When you think about the fruit we've covered so far – love, joy, peace, patience, and kindness – which one do you feel has grown the slowest in your life? What about the fastest? Why do you think that is?

### DIVING DEEPER

3. During Trail Markers, we've been reminded that each fruit is first and foremost an aspect of who God is and how He acts toward us. Read the following Scripture passages on God's kindness and then discuss the corresponding questions.

**Jeremiah 9:23-24 (NIV)** – <sup>23</sup>This is what the Lord says: “Let not the wise boast of their wisdom or the strong boast of their strength or the rich boast of their riches, <sup>24</sup>but let the one who boasts boast about this: that they have the understanding to know me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,” declares the Lord.

**Ephesians 2:6-8 (NIV)** – <sup>6</sup>And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup>in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup>For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—

**Psalms 117:1-2 (AMP)** – <sup>1</sup>But O praise the Lord, all you nations! Praise Him, all you people! <sup>2</sup>For His lovingkindness prevails over us [and we triumph and overcome through Him], And the truth of the Lord endures forever. Praise the Lord! (Hallelujah!)

- a) How have you experienced God's kindness toward you?
- b) When connecting privately with God, how often do you “take inventory” of the ways God's kindness is demonstrated in your life? If you do this, share about that practice. How has it impacted your relationship with God? If you don't, how could you begin?

4. In his teaching series titled *Developing Christian Character*<sup>1</sup>, Dr. R.C. Sproul taught that kindness is the manifestation of patience; it does not pick at everyday sins, nor is it petty over minor issues.

1. [https://www.ligonier.org/learn/series/developing\\_christian\\_character/](https://www.ligonier.org/learn/series/developing_christian_character/)

- a) When responding to others, are you quick to find fault or correct minor mistakes? If so, where do you sense this impulse comes from? Have you found this limits your capacity to show kindness?
- b) What are common examples of the sins (see 1 Peter 4:8) that lovingkindness calls you to overlook?

**1 Peter 4:8 (NIV)** – Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

5. Biblical kindness is deeper than being nice and polite. Pastor Phil defined true kindness as being selfless, compassionate, and merciful. He also taught that the greatest power of kindness is revealed in practice to our enemies and amongst the least of these.

a) What is most eye-opening or challenging to you about this picture of Biblical kindness?

b) In what areas of your life or in which relationships may you be settling for a form of “cheap kindness” (i.e., kindness that doesn’t ask you to make any personal or significant sacrifices).

**Ephesians 4:31-32 (NIV)** – <sup>31</sup>Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. <sup>32</sup>Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

**Luke 6:35 (NIV)** – But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.

## TAKING IT HOME

6. Read the Parable of the Good Samaritan together and discuss the corresponding questions.

**Luke 10:25-37 (NLT)** – <sup>25</sup>One day an expert in religious law stood up to test Jesus by asking him this question: “Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?” <sup>26</sup>Jesus replied, “What does the law of Moses say? How do you read it?” <sup>27</sup>The man answered, “‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.’ And, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” <sup>28</sup>“Right!” Jesus told him. “Do this and you will live!” <sup>29</sup>The man wanted to justify his actions, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” <sup>30</sup>Jesus replied with a story: “A Jewish man was traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road.

<sup>31</sup>“By chance a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by. <sup>32</sup>A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup>“Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt

compassion for him. <sup>34</sup>Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. <sup>35</sup>The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins, telling him, 'Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I'll pay you the next time I'm here.' <sup>36</sup>"Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?" Jesus asked. <sup>37</sup>The man replied, "The one who showed him mercy." Then Jesus said, "Yes, now go and do the same."

*ESV Study Bible Note on Luke 10:33: Culturally, it would have been unthinkable for a Samaritan to help a Jew (cf. John 4:9; 8:48; see note on John 4:4). Thus Jesus makes the additional point that to love one's neighbor involves showing care and compassion even to those with whom one would not normally have any relationship (cf. Jesus' command to "love your enemies"; Luke 6:27, 35).*

- a) What stands out to you about the kindness the Samaritan extended to the Jewish man?
- b) The kindness of Jesus we're called to imitate is to be shown not just to our friends or those who can return the favor, but too those who can offer nothing in return, the defenseless, complete strangers, those who others might look down upon us for associating with, and even our enemies.

Does your practice of kindness extend to people beyond your friends and those you're expecting to return the favor? If your answer is no, how can you move in that direction as you practice kindness?

- c) Pastor Phil shared that in the middle of our busy schedules, we can miss out on opportunities God is giving us to show kindness. Do you sense a need to "slow down" so that you can be more available to love, serve, and care for people? If so, what would that step look like?

## PRAYER REQUESTS

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## RIVERS CROSSING – THINGS TO KNOW

1. 2021 Men's Conference | There is a desire in all men to be better and do more, but an extraordinary life isn't found sitting on the sidelines. Men, hang out with us on Saturday June 12th at Men's Conference for a day of spiritual renewal, motivating messages from Mark Driscoll and yes, some manly fun. Lunch and dinner are provided with your ticket purchase. To learn more and purchase a ticket, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2021-mens-conference-tickets-143828790785?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>.
2. Baptisms – Sunday May 16th | We believe baptism is an integral part of your spiritual journey and necessary as you seek to become a fully engaged follower of Christ. If you've recently decided to follow Jesus or you've been a Christ follower for a while, now is the perfect time to take the next step and get baptized. Learn more and sign up at <https://riverscrossing.com/baptism/>.