Fruit of the Spirit

Lesson 5: KINDNESS

INTRODUCTION

χρηστότης is the Greek word we translate as "kindness." Its use in Greek, however, takes us beyond being thoughtful, considerate, and generous. Such a person is morally good, gracious, honest, decent, and, consequently, pleasant to be with. There's an "easy to wear" quality about kindness-filled people. They are like that favorite shirt that is always soft and comfortable, that slides on without difficulty, never bunches up, and always makes you look your best. The Spirit, of course, is kindness. By watching his love in action we learn best how this part of his gift to us will demonstrate itself.

STUDYING GOD'S WORD: The Source of Kindness

Titus 3:4-7 When the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, [5] he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, [6] whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, [7] so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

1.) How did God demonstrate his unsearchable kindness to us in Jesus?

2.) The kind person is good to be around. What did God do so we could be around him?

Ephesians 2:6-7 God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, [7] 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.

3.) How far does God's kindness go?

HIS WORD & MY LIFE

1.) A Bible scholar has written that χρηστότης is the "sympathetic kindliness or sweetness of temper which puts others at their ease and shrinks from giving pain." Identify some examples of such in Jesus' ministry.

2.) Not every Christian feels that their relationship with God is filled with "easy to wear" kindness. What gets in the way of our fully appreciating God's kindness?

3.) Agree or Disagree? Random acts of kindness best capture the kindness that the Spirit would have us exhibit in our lives.

STUDYING GOD'S WORD

Luke 6:34-35 "If you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' lend to 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full. 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."

1.) According to Jesus how does God's kindness show itself?

2.) How can we demonstrate this same brand of kindness in our lives?

3.) What is the connection among compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience? In other words how do these enhance our kindness?

> **Colossians 3:12** Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

4.) Think about each of these characteristics that Paul commands us to "get rid of." How will they ruin any demonstration of kindness?

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

5.) Look again at the previous verses (Col. 3:12 and Eph. 4:31-32). What are some reasons Christians will dress ourselves in kindness?

HIS WORD & MY LIFE

Expressing the Christlike kindness the Spirit brought with him when he moved into our lives requires a constant refocusing on the eternal treasures that kindness has provided us. God's kindness to us ungrateful and wicked people prompts our similar kindness to others.

1.) A Bible scholar has said that kindness "may be soft, but it is not weak; tender, but not feeble; sensitive, but not fragile." How does that balance help you as you think about living out the Spirit's kindness in one situation you know you will find yourself in this week?

2.) Jesus' kindness showed itself in his loving service. "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). What direction does that give you as you think about serving your family, your fellow church members, the people you work with?

3.) Kindness means we must be willing to get close to people—and when we get close to people, we risk being taken advantage of, rejected, and made to look the fool. Without mentioning names, describe a time when someone abused your kindness. After experiencing that, what challenges did you have in being kind? How did you overcome them?

4.) Kindness is usually experienced in small, simple deeds. Share how others were kind to you this past week when they listened to you, asked about your day, opened a car door, smiled, etc.

SUMMARY

When we experience God's kindness, we experience love in action. When we live out kindness, we speak gently to the obnoxious loud-mouth. We hug the prickly. We smile at the sullen and sassy. We speak a helpful word of direction to those who have lost their way. We strive to be kind, not just because we have the example of kindly Jesus serving us, but primarily because through Jesus' service our ransom is paid, our freedom is secured, our eternity is in heaven.

PRAYER