

Nine Secrets of Healthy Relationships

Kindness – Part Six

Galatians 5:22-23 (KJV) ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, ²³Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Galatians 5:22-23 (NLT) ²² But when the Holy Spirit controls our lives, he will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. Here there is no conflict with the law.

- Why are we talking about relationships? Remember the lawyer in Scripture who came to Jesus with a question? Jesus' answer to him summarized the essence of real Christianity ...
- **Matthew 22:36-39** ³⁶Master, which is the great commandment in the law? ³⁷ Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. ³⁸This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
- Jesus was saying that **nothing matters more than relationships** – your relationship to God and your relationships to other people. You can be successful in every other area of life, but you will never be truly happy unless you get this area in order!
- In relationships, there is a word for **love in action**, and it's called **KINDNESS**. It's not a feeling, it's something you do. When you're kind you take action, you move, you show love in a practical way.
- The KJV says "gentleness," but the Greek word is "CHRESTOS," which also means "goodness in action, sweetness of disposition, gentleness in dealing with others, benevolence, kindness, affability; the ability to act for the welfare of those taxing your patience." (Jack Hayford)
- Notice that the word "CHRESTOS" is only one letter different from the word "CHRISTOS," which is the Greek word for Christ. When the first church began 2000 years ago in the Roman Empire, they often confused **chrestos** with **Christos** and they thought Christians were just people who believed in kindness. They called Christianity "the kind religion." What a great thing to be confused with!

- The Bible teaches us that God taking on a body of flesh to come to earth and die so our sins could be forgiven was the ultimate act of KINDNESS!
- **Titus 3:3-7** ³For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. ⁴But after that the **kindness** and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, ⁵Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; ⁶Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; ⁷That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.
- If you want to know what kindness is, then just look at Jesus! He is the kindness of God. And He told us to do to others like He has done to us! (God never asks you to do anything for anybody else that He hasn't already done for you Himself.)
- **John 13:15** For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.
- Today, we want to talk about four ways that God shows His kindness to you. And once you understand how Jesus is kind to you, then you will know how to be kind to others that you are in relationship with. Whatever Jesus has done for you, you are to do for others!

HOW GOD IS KIND TO ME

1. HE UNDERSTANDS MY WEAKNESSES

- Understanding and kindness go together. The more understanding you are of a person, the kinder you're going to be to them. That is why it is easy for you to be unkind to strangers - you don't know anything about them. The more people who live in an area, the easier it is to be unkind, because you don't know everybody. When you understand somebody you're kind to them, because you know where they're coming from.
- **Hebrews 4:15-16 (CEV)** ¹⁵ Jesus understands every weakness of ours, because he was tempted in every way that we are. But he did not sin! ¹⁶ So whenever we are in need, we should come bravely before the throne of our merciful God. There we will be treated with undeserved kindness, and we will find help.

- Jesus isn't shocked when you are tempted, when you struggle or when you fall. He's not shocked, and He doesn't think less of you. Why? Because He's been there. When you go through a weakness or a problem you want to be with somebody who understands what you're going through. Jesus says, "I've been there. I understand perfectly well." He's KIND to us.
- It's not a sin to be tempted. It's a sin to GIVE IN to temptation. Jesus was tempted, but He never gave in. That's why He has the power to help us GET OUT of temptation.
- What does this have to say about how we should be kind to other people?
- **Galatians 6:1-2 (NLT)** Dear brothers and sisters, if another Christian is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. ² Share each other's troubles and problems, and in this way obey the law of Christ.
- The first way to be kind is: BE GENTLE, NOT JUDGMENTAL! When people are having a tough time, dealing with issues, having problems, being overcome with weaknesses, or being tempted, be gentle with them. Why? Because God is gentle and kind with you. He understands your weaknesses and you're to be understanding of the weaknesses of others. That's kindness.

2. HE TELLS ME THE TRUTH

- Jesus loves you just the way you are, but He loves you too much to let you stay that way. So, He tells you the truth! Why? Because it is the truth that sets you free!
- **John 8:32** And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.
- We don't like to hear the truth about ourselves. Jamie Buckingham once wrote a book called, "**The Truth Will Set You Free, But First It Will Make You Miserable.**" We would prefer to hear just the good stuff about ourselves, but because Jesus is kind, He levels with us and tells us the truth about how we think, how we act, where we go, who we associate with, how we talk, how we dress, how we live!

- The Bible never glosses over the weaknesses of its heroes! Sometimes the kindest thing you can do for somebody is tell them the truth. Progress and growth come as a result of feedback. Since none of us is perfect we all need to be corrected. We all need somebody who'll level with us.
- Jesus tells us the truth in kindness and He wants you to tell other people the truth in kindness. The way you can be kind is by caring enough to confront, to tell the truth.
- **Ephesians 4:15a (AMP)** Rather, let our lives lovingly express truth [in all things, speaking truly, dealing truly, living truly].
- One survey in California discovered that the number one thing people want in a friend is HONESTY. Almost all "friendship surveys" put honesty in the top five! And the Bible agrees!
- **Proverbs 24:26 (CEV)** Giving an honest answer is a sign of true friendship.
- A real friend tells you when you're making a mistake. A real friend tells you when you've got something in your teeth! A real friend says, "I'm not going to stand by in silence and watch you make the stupidest decision of your life."
- That's why your Pastor is the best friend you have – he loves you so much that he tells you the TRUTH!

3. HE FORGIVES MY SIN

- God is forgiving and gracious toward us because of His kindness!
- A lot of people have a wrong concept of God, like the man who was going out to his cabin by the lake. As he was driving he ran out of gas. He got out of his car to push it off the road and as he got out another car came behind him and hit his car, pushed it off an embankment and drove off. He decided he'd just walk to his cabin, but it started pouring rain. He got totally drenched and caught a cold. Then, just as he rounded the bend to his cabin he noticed that lightning had struck it and it had burned down. He went over and started beating his head against a tree saying, "Why me God? Why me God?" The heavens opened, the clouds parted, and a voice said, "Because some people just tick me off!"

- Some people think that's what God is really like. They think that God is out to get them. When something goes wrong in your life, do you think, "God's getting even with me"? Have you ever thought that maybe some of your ideas about God aren't true?
- One of the things the Bible teaches is that **God doesn't carry a grudge**. He is not the God of shame. He forgives my sins. Why? Because I deserve it? No, because of His grace!
- One pastor had a lady coming to him every single week saying, "Pastor, God convicted me of this sin." Every week, kind of like a "sin of the week." Finally the pastor said, "Does God ever say anything nice to you?"
- Maybe you were raised by parents who could never be pleased and you've taken that image and switched it over to God. That's not right. He is a forgiving God. He is KIND!
- **Isaiah 54:8** In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer.
- What does God's forgiveness have to do with the way I'm supposed to treat other people?
- **Ephesians 4:32** And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.
- If you have a tough time being forgiving it's probably because you don't feel forgiven. Graced people are gracious people. People who have received God's mercy are able to be merciful to others. People who understand how much they've been forgiven find it easy to forgive others. That's kindness!

4. HE AFFIRMS MY WORTH

- Deep inside all of us is a deep desire to feel worthwhile. We all want to feel significant. We all want to feel that we matter. We all want to feel that if we were to die, somebody would miss us.
- You spend much of your life being motivated to do things that you hope will answer the question, "Does my life matter?" That's why you compete, volunteer, work, give, etc.
- In a magazine interview, Madonna said, "I have an iron will and all of my will has always been devoted to conquering some horrible feeling of inadequacy. I'm always struggling with that fear. I push past one spell of it and discover myself as a special human being and then I get to another stage and I think I'm mediocre and uninteresting. I find a way to get myself out of that again and again. My drive in life is from this horrible fear of being inadequate and mediocre. It is always pushing me and pushing me. Because even though I've become somebody I still have to prove that I am SOMEBODY. My struggle has never ended and it probably never will." Madonna set herself up for the ultimate frustration because every star's popularity eventually fades!
- The truth is that nothing else matters until you've established a relationship with Jesus Christ and begin to discover how much you matter to Him and base your self worth on that. Nothing else is going to satisfy you.
- **Psalms 139:16-17 (LB)** You saw me before I was born and scheduled each day of my life before I began to breathe. Every day was recorded in your Book! How precious it is, Lord, to realize that you are thinking about me constantly!
- **Isaiah 49:16a** Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands;
- Psychologists say that your self worth is based on **what you think the most important person in your life thinks about you**. I suggest that you make Jesus Christ the most important person in your life, because nobody is ever going to love you more than He does. If you base your self worth on what other people think of you, then you're going to collapse when you're criticized, rejected, or ignored. But if you build your self worth on the fact that God made you, loves you, thinks about you constantly, loves you unconditionally and forgives you, then it doesn't matter what anybody else says about you because they can't take away that relationship with Christ.
- When Jesus Christ becomes the most important person in your life, your self worth soars. And as a result, you affirm the worth of others.
- **Romans 15:7 (NLT)** So accept each other just as Christ has accepted you; then God will be glorified.

- **Hebrews 10:24 (LB)** In response to all he has done for us, let us outdo each other in being helpful and kind to each other and in doing good.
- If you have trouble affirming the worth of others, if you have trouble forgiving others, if you have trouble being kind to others, then look at your relationship with God! **You need the Holy Ghost to grow the Fruit of the Spirit in your life!**
- By the way, the kindness of God is just getting started ... it is good now, but it gets even better in eternity!
- **Ephesians 2:7** That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.