

The Fruit of the Spirit is Kindness

(Galatians 5:22-23)

Introduction

How many *kind* thoughts have you had today? Have you had any *mean* thoughts? My mother used to tell me that if you didn't have anything good to say about someone, not to say anything at all.

What would it be like if you never had a *mean* thought and you only thought good things about people and the situations you go through every day? What kind of a world would we live in?

That's the kind of world God wants this to be. And, it could be if we always walked in the power of the Holy Spirit. Someday, when we are in heaven it will be like that, too.

Opening Prayer

Father, it will be a glorious day when we are all living in heaven with You. There will be no more sorrow or tears, no anger or meanness. I pray that You will fill us with the power of the Holy Spirit so that we might learn how to live like that now. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Memory Verse

A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone, be able to teach, and be patient with difficult people. (2 Timothy 2:24 NLT)

Lesson

We have been learning about the fruit of the Spirit which is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

The first fruit is **love**. Love is not just a feeling, it's an action word. And, if we truly have the fruit of the Spirit, we choose to love people with God's kind of love, even when they don't deserve it or even when it's inconvenient to us.

The second fruit is **joy**. True joy comes from having Jesus in your life and knowing that you will live forever with him in heaven. True joy comes from the inside out; not from something that happens *to* us.

The third fruit is **peace**. Because Jesus paid for our sins on the cross, we have peace with God. Now it is our responsibility to do all we can to live in peace with everyone; we're to be peacemakers.

The fourth fruit is **patience**. Patience is trusting that God has a difficult situation under control and being willing to wait for Him to solve the problem. It's being willing to forgive others when they do things that bug us because you know that God has forgiven you for so much. Patience is not something that you are born with; you have to develop it. It takes great courage and faith to wait upon God's timing and for His purposes in your life to be fulfilled.

Today, we'll learn about **kindness**. When has someone been kind to you? What did that person do? Why do you think that person chose to be kind?

When have you been kind to another person? What happened as a result of your kindness?

We often meet people who are thoughtless and unkind, don't we? Sometimes, if we're honest, we are unkind to others. But God wants us to be kind to others, even if they are grouchy or unkind.

Many time people are kind to others because they want something in return. It's a way to get your way with them. That's manipulation; that isn't kindness. For example, someone may be especially kind to someone else in hopes that they will like them and be their friend. But that is definitely NOT God's kind of *kindness*.

We often think that kindness is just being polite. We think we're pretty good people because we:

- don't cut in front of others in line
- put our trash in cans rather than just throwing it on the street
- say "Thank you" and "Please"

But those are just ways of being polite. Being polite doesn't scratch the surface of what kindness is really all about.

God calls us to be compassionate towards those in need, even toward those we may not particularly like. "Compassion" means to care about another person's needs and to want to help that person even when it costs us time or money.

Jesus told a story about the Good Samaritan to teach His disciples what real kindness is. We call the stories that Jesus used as lessons, *parables*. A parable is a life-like story, using examples from every day experiences.

Luke 10:30-31

Jesus replied with a story: "A Jewish man was traveling on a trip from Jerusalem 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. (31) 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.

Surely a priest, who served God and lead others in the worship of God would care about this poor injured man. But he didn't. He glanced at him and passed by, choosing not to dirty himself.

Luke 10:32

A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side.

The Levites helped the priests in the work at the temple. They spent their lives teaching people about God's law. Surely this Temple assistant would have known God and wanted to please Him. But he, too, refused to help this injured man. He stopped and looked at him and then passed by.

Luke 10:33-34

Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. (34) 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.

The Jews and the Samaritans had been bitter enemies for years. The Jews hated Samaritans. And the feeling was mutual. A Samaritan would normally never stop to help a Jew. Yet it was a Samaritan, who showed true kindness to the wounded Jew!

Luke 10:35

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.'

The Samaritan paid all costs, left money, and promised more! He never expected anyone to thank him or even to pay him back. He just did it because he had compassion for the injured man and it was the right thing to do.

When we are kind to someone without expecting anything in return, we are showing compassion. God's kind of *kindness* is when you do something kind for someone else when you don't have to and when you don't expect to get anything in return.

Just like love, joy, peace, and patience; kindness is not just a feeling, it's an action word. God's kind of *kindness* is self-sacrificing; it's having compassion on others and being willing to share with them, even if it means giving all you have.

What are some ways you can show kindness to people in need?

- Sharing what you have with others shows your love for God and brings kindness to other people. Even though we may not always feel like sharing, it's not only a way to show kindness, but it is also a way to show our love for God.
- Speaking kind words to others can change a person's heart and make that person also want to be kind.

We can show kindness with our words, our thoughts, and our actions. This may not always be an easy job. We may be in a grouchy mood and really have to work at being kind. Or we may meet someone else who is grouchy, and it's often hard to be kind to someone who is especially rude or mean.

When is it easy to show kindness to others? (When others have been kind to us.) When might it be hard? (When we're angry.)

What can we do when we don't feel like being kind? (Ask God's help. Remember God's kindness to us.)

It's easy to be kind to people that are kind to you. It's a lot harder to be kind to someone who is mean to you. But that's exactly what God wants us to do.

1 Thessalonians 5:15

See that no one pays back evil for evil, but always try to do good to each other and to all people.

God wants us to be kind to everyone all the time. By knowing Jesus and keeping him in our hearts, we can show kindness all the time.

How do you feel when people are unkind to you? How do you think people feel when you're unkind to them?

Sometimes it isn't easy to be kind without expecting anything back.

What are some ways to show kindness to others without expecting anything in return? (Help a younger brother or sister. Donate items to a homeless shelter. Help someone who's hurt. Give someone more than is asked for. Do extra chores.)

Kindness is the spiritual fruit that helps others in practical, thoughtful, caring ways with no thought of getting something in return.

When we have Jesus in our lives, we want to show kindness all the time. That's how we grow the fruit of God's Holy Spirit.

Closing Prayer

Father, please help us to show love to You by showing kindness to others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Let the children make bookmarks with the fruit of the Spirit on them.

Snack

Pears

Game Center

Let's do some skits to act out situations in a kind manner and in a mean manner to decide which way is more Christ-like.

<p>One child is playing a hand-held video game. His brother (or sister) walks in and says, "<i>Hey, that's my game!</i>"</p>	<p>Two children are playing at the park. Another child sits alone with no one to play with.</p>
<p>Two children from the same family decided to eat a snack. Both children want a pear to eat; but only one pear is left.</p>	<p>Two children are watching a favorite television show. Mom asks the children to clean their rooms because one of her friends is on her way over for a visit.</p>

Dad is busy collecting trash for the garbage pickup. Three children are playing Frisbee in the yard when Dad comes by with an armload of trash bags.

A poor family lives down the street from you. They don't have enough money to give their little 5-year-old daughter a Birthday Party.

Can you tell me about a time something like this may have happened to you?

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