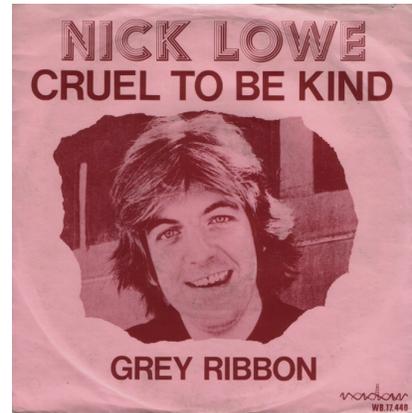


Fruit Of The Spirit — Kindness

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, **kindness**, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ self-control; against such things there is no law.

Galatians 5:22-23 (ESV)

Read to the Group: In 1979 Nick Lowe recorded and released the single “Cruel to be Kind,” borrowing the song’s hook from William Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. If you have never heard the song (or just want to listen to some really good rock and roll check it out here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b0I3QWUXVho>). The song was a hit, rising to number twelve on the charts.



Why might a song that equates cruelty and kindness have been such a big hit?

Possible Answers: The two concepts being in opposition, sometimes people try to act kind but are actually being cruel, others act in ways that look kind but are cruel.

I must be cruel, only to be kind; Thus bad begins, and worse remains behind.
--William Shakespeare

? What are some ways that we might equate kindness and cruelty?

Possible Answers: Telling someone the truth even though it will hurt in the short term so that they can grow and improve in the long term. Telling someone a lie (e.g. no, that dress doesn't make you look weird) to make things easy on yourself only to make life harder for them down the road.

Key Term: Kind

Adjective

(Kind, Kinder, Kindest)

: Having or showing a friendly, generous, and considerate nature. e.g "she was a good, kind woman"

synonyms: kindly, good-natured, kindhearted, warmhearted, caring, affectionate, loving, warm

antonyms: inconsiderate, mean

Today we will look at the idea of kindness—first as it relates to God and then to us.

The Kindness of God

Read the following two passages out loud and then answer the questions below:

⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,⁷ so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 2:4-7 (ESV)

³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Ephesians 4:31-32 (ESV)

? How does God model kindness in these passages?

Possible Answer: God models kindness in this passage by making us alive in Christ Jesus and promising us eternal life in Christ.

? If God were cruel, how would these passages be different?

Possible Answer: If God were cruel, He would not have provided a way for us to be saved.

? How can God's actions empower us to be kind?

Possible Answers: By forgiving us He has shown how we can forgive others and act in kind ways toward them. God's making us alive in Christ allows us to act out of this new reality in our lives and allows us to treat others in ways we would not be able to without this new reality (e.g. we can be truly kind to others because we now understand what kindness truly is and we are secure in Christ to live out that reality.).

Our Kindness

Read the following passages:

A man who is kind benefits himself,
but a cruel man hurts himself.

Proverbs 11:17 (ESV)

Whoever pursues righteousness and kindness
will find life, righteousness, and honor.

Proverbs 21:21 (ESV)

? Kindness is often thought of as something we do for others. How can an act of kindness you perform benefit you?

Possible Answers: Giving you a positive feeling because you have done something good, righting a relationship, giving others a reason to do something kind for you.

? How can kindness produce “life, righteousness and honor”?

Possible Answers: It can produce honor in us in that those that see us performing kind acts may praise us. It can give honor to those to whom these acts are performed by acknowledging their dignity and people. It can give righteousness (right living or right actions) because it comes from seeking out righteousness. It can give life to those who give it because, as we saw in Ephesians, it comes out of a right relationship with God. It can give both temporal life because it can preserve those in need, and eternal life, because it points them to God.

Consider the following quote:

No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.

--Aesop

? Do you agree or disagree with this quote? Why or why not?

Leader’s Note: Answers to this question will depend on the perspective of the individual. It is intended to get them to think more than to result in a right or wrong answer.

? How can God’s act of kindness be wasted?

Possible Answers: God’s kindness could be wasted by people not responding to Him. His kindness is not wasted because He has saved us in Christ.

? How can an act of our kindness be wasted?

Possible Answers: If we do it for God, no act of kindness is ever wasted.

Application

? How can you allow the truths we have explored about kindness change how you act toward others?

? How could walking in the Spirit lead to increased kindness in your life?

? What is our community application from this study?