

BE KIND, COMPASSIONATE, AND FORGIVING – Part 1 **Ephesians 4:29-32**

When I was a kid in Sunday School, we learned memory verses each week. Something about that made it seem like it was for kids. I can remember Ephesians 4:28 (KJV) "*Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*"

*29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. 32 **Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.** (Ephesians 4:29-32 NIV)*

What a shock to realize that this is for grownups! Let's have a look.

I. Be kind.

- **Kindness focuses on how people feel.**
Caring, thoughtful, sensitive, concerned about how others feel.

*Love is patient, love is **kind**. (1 Corinthians 13:4 NIV)*

*Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to **be kind** to each other and to everyone else. (1 Thessalonians 5:15 NIV)*

- **The Opposite of Kindness = Self-centeredness or insensitivity.** You notice how people feel, you care about how they feel, you do something about how they feel.
- Some people... you know they're going to brighten your day, make you feel better, lift you. Some people... you want to run the other way when you see them coming.
- Look at this instruction from Ephesians 4:29:

29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. (Ephesians 4:29 NIV)

- We are admonished to exercise control over what comes out of our mouths. Many people make a big issue of what goes into your mouth, but take no care over what comes out! Jesus says we are defiled by wrong speech out, not wrong food in!
- Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths – Ever say something harsh or critical or vulgar and then immediately think, "Where did that come from!?"

- Out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks. It's in there!! Don't let it come out.
- ***And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (Ephesians 4:30 NIV)***
 - We often think of Grieving the Holy Spirit as not giving a prophecy, or cutting the worship service short, or something of that nature. Grieving the Holy Spirit is not associated with some failure to exercise a prophetic gift, but with the things that damage our relationships with others – those for whom Jesus prayed, “That they all may be one...”
 - What grieves the Holy Spirit?
 - *“...bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.” (Ephesians 4:31 NIV)*
 - What gives joy to the Holy Spirit?
 - ***Be kind and compassionate to one another*** (Ephesians 4:32 NIV)
- Let me talk to you about the first and most important place to practice kindness – at home.
 - You've heard “Charity begins at home” -- Kindness also begins at home.
 - Kindness at home includes:
 - Courtesy.
 - Politeness.
 - Acknowledging the other person.
 - Acts of service.
 - Speak when you enter a room. Acknowledge the other people or person in the room.
 - Eye contact when speaking.
 - Please and thank you at meals.
 - Always – always leave on good terms. Goodbye. See you later.
- “Sticks and stones can break my bones, but words can never hurt me!”
 - Words have more power for good or evil than a whole truckload of sticks and stones.
- Proverbs 14:1 says “ A wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down.”
 - You create much of the world you live in by the words that you speak to the people who live in that world with you.

- Only let words come out of your mouth – **(Ephesians 4:29)**
 - that are helpful
 - that build up
 - that meet needs
 - that benefit the hearers

Then deal with what's in there – conviction, confession, repentance, forgiveness, cleansing. (See 1 John 1:8-10)

II. **Be compassionate** (KJV Tenderhearted)

- Compassion focuses on people's **physical and material** needs.
- Kindness focuses on how people feel and how I can make them feel better. Compassion focuses on much more tangible needs. The needs are perhaps of a more physical nature and compassion requires a different level of response.
- Compassion is **deep awareness** of the suffering or needs of another coupled with the wish to bring relief.

The Story of the Good Samaritan. (Luke 10:25-36)

- Priest: A Holy Man. Dedicated to God. Represents God to man and man to God. Who did he represent to whom?
- Levite: Temple official. Dedicated to religious service. Denominational official. Totally religious person.
- Samaritan: Foreigner, unbeliever, someone you wouldn't associate with.

Jesus saw the crowds helpless, like sheep without a shepherd and **was moved with compassion.**

- Both Matthew and Mark tell of incidents in which Jesus saw the needs of people and had compassion on them.
 - Jesus, moved with compassion – taught the people.
 - Jesus, moved with compassion – fed the people by multiplying bread and fish.
 - Jesus, moved with compassion – healed the sick and cast out demons.
 - Jesus was moved with compassion according to the need of the person – the need of the moment. Because the need was different, the action was different.

Compassion moves you. The Word and Spirit must guide you.

Compassion has a price tag. It costs more than kindness. It costs Effort, Involvement, Inconvenience, Investment.

The Opposite of Compassion = **Hard-Heartedness**

Danger of hard-heartedness. See needs, suffering, not moved by it. Not willing to do anything about it. Compassion fatigue.

Danger of hard-heartedness towards our family members. We so easily become self-centered.

III. Be kind and compassionate.

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (Ephesians 4:32 NIV)

- **Kindness:** Being sensitive to others' feelings and willing to do something to make them feel better.
- **Compassion:** Being aware of others' needs and willing to do something to alleviate suffering, to right the wrongs, to meet the needs.

Application

What's your kindness quotient? On a scale of 1 to 10 with ten being top, where do you usually function?

With your spouse, your kids? At work? With waitresses and waiters at restaurants?

What's your compassion capacity? What moves you? What causes you to be stirred to do something to help, to spend money, to invest time?

Do the needs of others actually move you? Move you to action, to investment, to even make sacrifice?

Lord, we would be kind and compassionate.