

## Lesson 7

# WHAT IS KINDNESS?

The fruit of the Spirit is ... kindness  
(Galatians 5:22).

The fifth characteristic of *agape* love is kindness. Kindness is an attitude or action toward others that is gracious and merciful. It carries the idea of goodness, generosity, and compassion to all people—even to those who are ungrateful and wicked.

1. Write Romans 2:4.

The word *goodness* here is better translated “kindness.” It means “having a tender concern for another to be upright.” In His kindness, God is rich in goodness, holding back His judgment, giving people time to turn from their sin. His kindness is intended to lead people to repentance. Jesus is our great example to learn how to show kindness to others.

2. Write what Jesus says in Matthew 11:29-30.

Jesus is gentle and lowly in heart. His teaching is easy. This is why it’s necessary to understand that kindness is the fruit of God’s Holy Spirit, not a result of our best effort. When we acknowledge God’s grace, we show that grace to others. Since God is kind toward us, we should be compassionate toward others, caring about them more than ourselves.

3. Read Matthew 14:13-21. How did Jesus show kindness and how can you apply this to your own life?

Do I feed those around me who are hungry physically—and spiritually?

4. Read Matthew 19:13-15 and share the application.

Do I spend time encouraging children to follow Christ? Do I pray for them and with them?

5. Read Luke 18:35-43 and write what you learn.

Do I do what I can to help those who are physically disabled? Do I show kindness and compassion toward the spiritually blind?

6. Read John 4:5-26 and comment on what stands out to you.

Do I go out of my way to show kindness to the outcasts of society?

Kindness to others mimics God's kindness to us. A kind person is not occupied with himself. Kindness is the opposite of self-assertiveness and self-interest. Kindness is others-centered. If what we say injures or slanders another person, this is the opposite of kindness. Before the Spirit can help us to be kind, we must take off certain aspects of the flesh nature that are unkind to others.

7. Write Colossians 3:8-9.

8. Write Colossians 3:19.

We are being renewed in knowledge after the image of our creator.

9. Write 1 Corinthians 13:4.

A kind person carries a spirit of steady calmness, for he is not cast down by defeat or overly proud at his victory. A kind person does not react to every adversity that comes his way. On the other hand, he completely depends on God and commits his cause to Him.

Once we take off the old clothes of the flesh (Colossians 3:8), we can put on the new garments of kindness (Colossians 3:12).

10. Write Colossians 3:12.

11. Write Colossians 3:13-14.

Kindness is the resulting character of someone who is allowing the Holy Spirit to develop maturity in his or her life. When we exhibit the kindness of God, we are caring, tenderhearted, and useful to others. Every action, every word will have the flavor of grace in it. We become more like the image of Christ.

To maintain this attitude toward those we love is hard enough. To express kindness to an enemy, or to those who are against us, requires the work of God. That is why kindness is a fruit of the Spirit. Our best efforts cannot manufacture it.

Do you want to be fruitful and grow in the spirit of kindness? Then be upright toward others in your attitude and your actions. Be compassionate. Ask God to help you say the right thing at the right time or to help you keep your mouth closed.

Kindness is *agape* love. It is someone who acknowledges his/her grace from God and so acts upon that grace toward others.

12. 2 Peter 1:8.