

Will You Be My Friend?

Be Kind to One Another – Ephesians 4:32

Did your parents ever tell you that you have to be a good friend to have a good friend?

My wife tells of a story from grade school. Her family had just moved to a new state and therefore had to go to a new school. The thought of making all new friends was horrifying, but it could not be avoided. She asked her mom for some help in finding a friend. Her mom gave her some powerful advice. She said, "Go up to someone and ask if they will be your friend."

She made her way to school and, of course, was seen as the new girl. She was able to find another girl and asked if they could be friends. That friendship proved to be one of my wife's deeper friendships through those years. Even after my wife's family moved away they still kept in touch and that same friend was a part of our wedding.

How would you describe a friend?

Friends are easy to find. It is good friends that are scarce.

I am reminded of the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10. It is a short story. Jesus is replying to a question about who our neighbors are. Jesus explains that a man came upon robbers who left him for dead. A priest and a Levite walked by him and ignored him, but it was a Samaritan who felt compassion and tended to this man's needs. A lesson to be taken from this story is that we need to show kindness and compassion towards all.

Interesting side note: Nowhere in the passage is the Samaritan called good. It was something we have added. Makes me wonder if it is not in there because his actions are what is expected.

This Samaritan was kind to a total stranger. He did not regard his background, race, or status as something to be considered. He was simply showing kindness. His kindness flowed out of his character.

1 Thessalonians 5:15 tells us to seek after what is good for each other. We are not to seek revenge for wrongs made to us. How many of us have been guilty of that?

Describe a time when you wanted to get revenge for a wrong done to you?

The car is one of the worst places for me. When someone pulls out in front of me or cuts me off, I get this huge desire to speed ahead and show him how it feels. Maybe some of you have felt that way about different things. I hope you have, so that way, I know I am not alone.

"Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."
Ephesians 4:32

"See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people."
1 Thessalonians 5:15

“Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life.”

Proverbs 4:23

Paul calls us to be kind to one another, to seek after things that are good for each other. The word “kind” carries with it an idea of having a courteous, polite attitude. We are called to be polite to each other. Sometimes in church or out and about people will be polite by asking, “How are you today?” Sometimes they wait to listen and hear your response, but other times they continue about their business. That is not the “polite” we are talking about here. Paul explains the quality of kindness in both passages. In a verse in Ephesians, we are called to let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander, and malice be kicked out of us. In 1 Thessalonians he talks about seeking after what is good.

Let me put it another way. Politeness or kindness is not a surface-level action. It is something that comes from the heart. We can do a good job of putting up a front of kindness for a little while, but that front will eventually fail us. Proverbs says, “Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life” (Proverbs 4:23). What is in our hearts will come out.

Describe a time when you could tell someone was being polite, but not genuine about it.

It hurts when we realize that someone is not genuine. We do not think of them as polite and kind as we once did. Now, have there been times where you were not genuine in your kindness? We are all guilty of it. Maybe that is why Paul reminds us to be kind to one another.

How can you show kindness to those around you?

Remember, it starts in the heart and flows from there. If our hearts are not centered on God, then neither will our motivations and kindness be. It all comes back to those two greatest commandments.

Love God.
Love Others.

Let’s remember to check our attitudes when being kind to make sure we are being genuine, and I’ll remember to drive more safely.

What do you need to do in response to this lesson?
