

Fruits of the Holy Spirit – Session 6

Kindness **Galatians 5**

Timing: 30-45 minutes, then leading into ministry

Buzz groups: Suggestions are boxed, pairs or groups of 3-4 will work best

Illustrations: Suggestions are noted, but your own ideas and stories are preferable

Focus: Major on the one or two points most relevant to your group

Icebreaker: Which Christian, living or historical, known personally to you or not, do you most admire and why?

Introduction

Key Point: Our lives get better and better as we give our lives over to the Holy Spirit

Key Verse: “*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control*” (Galatians 5: 22-23).

Introduce this week on *kindness*

Key Point: God draws us to Himself in loving-kindness

Key Verses: “*the fruit of the Spirit is...kindness*” (Gal 5:22); Jeremiah 31:3

Buzzgroups: How do you define kindness? Why do you think that kindness is important? How do you benefit when someone is kind to you?

Invite feedback.

Look up dictionary definition of kindness

- God’s kindness is the root of our faith (Titus 3:3-5)
- kindness is an attribute of love (1 Cor 13:4)
- being kind doesn’t mean that you have to lack ‘backbone’ (Romans 11:22)

1. Kindness improves relationships

The Point: Being kind in a way that others will hear and receive

Summarise ‘The Five Love Languages’ by Gary Chapman (words of affirmation, gifts, acts of service, quality time, and physical touch).

- it is an act of kindness to think through what would mean a lot to another person
- in particular, the final chapter encourages us to love the unlovely

Illustration: Ask a couple / friends to give an illustration of how being kind to one another has helped them to feel loved and enhanced their relationship / friendship.

Application: Make a list of ways in which people have been kind to you in the last week. How can you encourage those people? Make a second list of all the people you can be kind to next week.

2. Kindness enacts forgiveness

The Point: Kindness can also be forgiveness with legs on – actively walking it out beyond a mere feeling. (Colossians 3:11-13)

→ Forgiveness is primarily not a feeling, but an attitude that drives new behaviour, the attribute of kindness

→ Lord's Prayer "Give us today our daily bread; forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us." i.e. we ask God for daily bread and to forgive us. So our forgiveness of others is also linked to us giving them some daily bread! Kindness.

Read 2 Samuel 9: King David swore by his love to Jonathan, son of David's enemy Saul, that as long as both their houses existed, he would show kindness to Jonathan's descendants.

→ don't delay in being kind and forgiving (v5)

→ kindness is often effective when it's unwarranted and unexpected (v6-8)

Application: Note on a piece of paper what, if anything, prevents you from knowing that God delights in you as His child? How does this affect the way you respond to Him and others?

Buzzgroups: Who do we need to forgive? How can we practically show them kindness even when we don't feel like it? If appropriate, be really specific and those whom you're talking about.

3. Kindness is evangelism

The Point: Kindness towards others is a great way to show others what the good news about Jesus is all about.

Verse: Luke 4:16-19 (esp v 19b Jesus comes "to proclaim the Lord's favour" ie kindness)

The smallest acts of kindness can make the biggest difference by showing interest in other people's lives, helping them where we can, demonstrating we recognise their value because God made them and died for them.

→ kindness opens doors (Acts 4:8-10)

→ pointing out God's kindness to us reverses the question of "why if God is loving does so much bad stuff happen?" towards "why, if God has so much apparent reason to write us all off as failures, does so much good stuff happen?" (Acts 14:17)

→ the kindness of others to us can show us who to talk to about God, for example, in our lives (Acts 28:2)

Illustration: Ask someone who has done the Alpha course to describe how they felt on Alpha evenings. Hopefully they will have felt loved, increasingly at home, heard, cared for (and well fed!)

Buzzgroups: What opportunities are we aware of in our own lives where we can show kindness to people as a form of evangelism?

Ideas for Ministry

- Spend time remembering and thanking the King of Kings for his blessings, and the "favour" He has shown to us in coming to rescue us.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to us the state of our hearts, illuminating any way we need to ask God for His forgiveness, and anyone who has hurt and offended us who we need to forgive.
- In 3's commit our plans to show kindness to others in prayer – asking God to make us "courageously kind".