

Kindness

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Preachers: Chris Oswald, Dov Cohen

[0 : 00] Welcome to the Providence Podcast.

My name is Chris Oswald, Senior Pastor of Providence Community Church. Today we are going to be talking about kindness. Talking about kindness today.

Dove Cohen is joining me. Hey, Providence. It's actually his idea. And we'll go ahead and jump right into a whole discussion on biblical kindness.

Hello, Dove. Hey, Chris. Kindness. Kindness. Kindness. Would you bless us with kindness with the hymn? Thank you. I will. I will give you the kindness of a hymn.

This one from Badon, The Justice and Goodness of God. Again, from the Gadsby hymnal. Great God, my maker and my king. Of thee I'll speak. Of thee I'll sing.

[1 : 05] Oh, thou hast done all thou hast done. Declare thee good. Proclaim thee just. The ancient thoughts. Thy ancient thoughts and firm decrees. Thy threatenings and thy promises.

The joys of heaven. The pains of hell. What angels taste. What devils feel. Thy terrors and thy acts of grace. Thy threatening rod and smiling face. Thy wounding and thy healing word.

A world undone. A world restored. While these excite my fear and joy. While these my tuneful lips employ. Accept, O Lord, the humble song.

A tribute. The tribute of. A rumbling tongue. A tribute. A tribute. That's beautiful. Yeah. I was thinking about on Sunday. How we were talking about. Jesus came into the world primarily to do this act of creation.

To make a new creation. But of course. Simeon tells Jesus. This is one who is destined for the rise and fall of many. And there is. The kindness and severity of God.

[2 : 10] There's the justice. And there's the mercy. And that Jesus was an instrument of both of them. Yeah. Yeah. So we'll be talking about kindness today. So that's a great lead into that.

But I just think kindness is such a virtue. It can be such a blessing to people. And ultimately. It's a reflection. For the Christians. It's a reflection of the kindness of God towards us.

And we'll be talking about all that stuff today. So I appreciate you letting us. Jump on and do a podcast about this. Because to start out. Chris. What is the kindest thing someone's ever done for you?

Or who is the kindest person you've ever met? The kindest thing someone's ever done for you? Or the kindest person you've ever met? You. I don't know, man.

You gave me this outline. And I have been thinking about that. I honestly think that. And see. I know what you're going to say. You're going to make me look bad.

[3 : 08] But. That's not hard to do. No. I'm just kidding. I think that I would say. That I just grew up around. I had a lot of people in my life.

That were very kind. And. I think that there was. A time when that was more of a. Culturally. Insisted kind of vibe. And I grew up in that world.

Where. There were a lot of kind. It would. It surprised me. When I would encounter someone. Who wasn't kind. And so. I can't think of just one.

The first person that came to my mind. Was just a Sunday school teacher. Who. I remember. He would. Seemed. To my little. Boy brain. To be enormous. You know. He kind of looked like Mr. Clean.

This is back in the. Late 70s. He wore like. You know. All denim. All the time. Right. You know. Like denim vests. I remember that. He was bald. Yeah. And. He would give.

[4 : 0 5] We give us kids. Like silver dollars. Things like that. But he would just. Kind of patrol the. The church. It's kind of a big church. Probably a thousand. And he would kind of control.

Patrol it. Looking just for ways to help. Be kind. And. So forth. And I remember when he died. I was still pretty young. When he died. But. I just remember. Everybody felt.

This huge sense of loss. There was this man. It's kind of. Was always taking care of people. Yeah. That's. There's my. Example. Dove.

Tell me yours. So. I'm gonna. I'm gonna go with Christine. Uh huh. And. Um. This. You could say it's cliché. You know. It's my wife. Cheap points. Um. But. But I. I really do mean it.

Um. I got three reasons why she's the kindest person I've ever met that I know. Uh. Number one. She's thoughtful. Number two. She's generous. Number three. She's loyal. Um. So. Story. Uh. On our second date.

[5 : 0 0] We're going to walk around Philadelphia. And we're living on the east coast at the time. It's our second date. Um. And. I had. Put all of these. Different. Places.

That we wanted to see in Philadelphia. Uh. In my Garmin. Or. You know. My. My. My GPS. I plugged it all in. Had the. The whole day planned. And I show up. And she's like. Dove. Like. You don't need that. Like. I know the whole.

The whole city. It's fine. And she. She didn't like. She didn't. You know. Make fun of me. It was. It was. It was funny. Um. But she was very kind about it. And then. She also admitted that. Um. She knew how much I appreciated history.

And that was the reason why she. She wanted to and agreed to go on a date. Walking around Philadelphia with me. Just to show me. And let me see all the historical sites of Philadelphia. So I appreciate how thoughtful she was there. Uh. She's also. She's generous. She loves to give gifts to people.

That they'll appreciate. She's very thoughtful. With that as well. And she's just loyal to people. Like you can really trust. If you say something to her. She's going to hold it. In confidence. She's. She's anti-gossip. Yeah. She's very loyal.

[5 : 5 6] So Christine would be the most. The kindest person that I've ever met. Very good. Very good. Cool. So. Why don't you define it? Yeah. What is kindness? What is kindness?

So going into. I've got. Again. I've got a long definition. And a short definition. So. Today we're talking about. Beyond. Niceness. We're not talking about niceness here. We're talking about kindness.

Which is. They're two. Quite different things. So. Long definition for kindness. It's more than politeness. Or friendliness. It's an active commitment. To love.

Mercy. And service. Born through. And cultivated. By God's kindness to us. It's an active commitment. To love. Mercy. And service. Born through. And cultivated. By God's.

Kindness to us. Short definition. It's a desire to help others. It's a desire to be a blessing. To others. So that's. My definitions of kindness. Anything you want to add there? No.

[6 : 5 1] I mean. I think that. One of the things that shines through. And compared to. Niceness. And a lot of other things. Is kindness kind of. Does something.

It's an action. Yes. Yes. It's not just a well. Not just. Yes. It's an active commitment. So. Some. Some. Some. Some. Word study. Background. In the Hebrew.

And the Greek. You've probably all heard. This word. Before. But. Chesed. From the Hebrew. Its meanings are. Mercy. And loving kindness. I think you mispronounced that. Chesed.

It's Chesed. Okay. Correct. I got. I got to correct the Hebrew. On his Hebrew. Chesed. It's. It's.

Chesed. No. It's. Chesed. Yes. Thank you. Yeah. So. What does it mean? So it means mercy. Loving kindness. Steadfast love. Compassion. Goodness. Loyalty.

[7 : 43] And faithfulness. So it's a really big. Three dimensional word. That we're going to. You know. We'll unpack Exodus 34. Six to seven. Real soon. About being part of God's nature.

But. Chesed. The. Just the mercy. And loving kindness. The steadfast love of God. And then. Can be acted out. On the human plane as well. And then we got the Greek. Christodes.

You can correct me if I got that. I got the Greek right. There's no gutter on that. Ironically. You got that one right. Nice. Nice. So. That just means. Good. Kind.

Gentle. And benevolent. And that is the. The most used Greek word. That I was able to find. Christodes. For kindness. In the New Testament. So. Chesed. In the Old Testament. Christodes.

In the New Testament. And like I said. This is in the very nature of God. Exodus 34. Six to seven. It says. The Lord passed before him. Him being Moses.

[8 : 38] And proclaimed. The Lord. The Lord. A God. Merciful. And gracious. Slow to anger. And abounding in steadfast love. That's chesed. That's the chesed. And faithfulness.

Keeping steadfast love for thousands. Forgiving iniquity. And transgression and sin. But who will know by means. Clear the guilty. Who is the iniquity of the fathers. On the children. And the children's children. To the third and fourth generation.

And really the focus there. Is just the steadfast love of God. When God passed before Moses. He said. I am a kind God. Yeah.

That's probably. Top five. Most important theological words. In the Old Testament. Sure. I mean it's. It's one of God's. Chosen. Premium words.

To describe himself. Yeah. It appears. All over the Old Testament. Yeah. Which is just. It's great to know. That we've got a God. Who is kind. Steadfast love.

[9 : 37] I was listening to a sermon today. Just about. How God is plotting good for us. You know. Think of Psalm 23. The Lord is my shepherd. God I want. His goodness and mercy shall follow me. All days of my life.

You know. That follow me. It's the pursuit of. The pursuit of us. With kindness. With goodness. With mercy. Yeah. Let's. Good stuff. Let me pause there for a second. Because. It's funny.

You know. We're in this moment. Where all the conspiracy theories. Turn out to be true. You know. And essentially. What's going on. Typically is. Behind a conspiracy. People are working in the background.

To accomplish something. Hmm. And. Yeah. It's like. We're just in this particular moment. Where you look around. And you just see. Evidences of. Things that.

Would have been called. Conspiracy theories. Three months ago. That are. That are true now. Sure. And. It is a real challenge. To be a. Socially. Or a.

[10 : 31] Socially. Politically aware. Online. Christian. You know. Ingesting all the stuff. That. We ingest. And. Remember. That. The conspiracy.

Is the divine conspiracy. Yeah. God. Our father. Of the universe. Is. Conspiring. Working behind the scenes.

For our good. Yeah. Yeah. In. In a. A union. Of his sovereign power. And his kind intention. He is working.

For our good. So. It's just important. I'm glad you brought up that idea. Of. Working. In the background. Is. We're kind of being exposed to. A bunch of black pill.

Hmm. Information. I think a lot of it is true. Of course. Not all of it. True. But. Fine. Fine and good. We. We have a. Pattern for that.

[11 : 26] Psalm 2. Why do the nations rage? Why do the kings of the earth. Conspire. And plot together. We have a bible. We have a. Verse for that. But. That same verse. Tells us that God.

Was. Using their conspiracies. To accomplish his own conspiracy. Yeah. Which was to bring his son into the world. Have his son killed for our sins. And so on and so forth. So. I think it's just a moment.

To remind ourselves. You know. Yeah. There's lots of conspiracies out there. The big one is. Is that the God of the universe. Took on flesh. Dwelt among us. Lived a perfect life. Died for our sins. And rose again.

Now reigns at the right hand of the father. And is working all things. For the good of those that love him. That's kind of the. Important. Most important conspiracy. That's. That's very good. So.

All right. So. Now that we've kind of defined kindness. And discussed kindness a little bit. Let's. Let's talk. Why should we be kind. So. Let's. Let's talk about ourselves for a second. Why should we be kind.

[12 : 19] As Christians. As blood bought. Followers of Christ. So first. It's the command of God. Second. There are promises related to it. And third. It would be the kindness of God to us.

In the gospel. So. Command of God. One of my favorites. Micah 6. 8. He has told you. O man. What is good. And what does the Lord require of you. But to do justice.

And to love. Kindness. And to walk humbly. With your God. So. Not just to do kindness. But to love kindness. And to walk humbly with God. That's the command.

Then we've got some promises. Proverbs 11. 17. A man who is kind benefits himself. But a cruel man hurts himself. Thousand percent. Thousand percent true. Yeah.

Sorry. Yeah. No. It's good. And then Proverbs 21. 21. Whoever pursues righteousness and kindness will find life. Righteousness and honor. Going back to the Proverbs 11.

[13 : 13] 17. The man who is kind benefits himself. That reminds me of. Ephesians 5. Where we're told to love our wives as we love our own flesh. And he who loves his wife loves himself.

Yeah. It's. It's that same deal man. Like there's just. Like there's this way that if you commit to being kind and loving people. It's ultimately. It's an act of self.

Care. In some respects. You're. You're doing good for yourself. When you go out of your way to be kind. Yeah. Yeah. Absolutely. Uh. And then. The kindness of God to us in the gospel.

Which. Chris has already kind of talked about a little bit. Um. Ephesians 4. 32. Be kind to one another. Tender hearted. Forgiving one another. As God in Christ. Forgave you.

So. In the same way that God has forgiven us. Uh. And been kind to us. Uh. We. Should and we can be kind. Uh. To one another. So. Any thoughts there? No.

[14 : 10] No. All right. Good. All right. Then let's move on. Let's. Um. Illustrate some kindness from the Bible. Uh. So I got three stories. Uh. That I want us to run through. Uh. We'll run through the stories quickly.

And talk about the components of kindness. That are exemplified in the stories. And we'll go from there. So. First one will be. Joseph. I see Joseph as. Um. Just an exemplary. Exemplary.

Kind. Person. Especially to his brothers. Uh. So background story for anyone who doesn't know this story. I know we covered it. Last spring. Uh. In the sermon series. But. Joseph has his dreams. That.

Um. That his family will. Essentially bow down and serve him. Uh. So his brothers. Get upset. And they sell him into slavery. Uh. He endures trial upon trial. In his life.

But then ends up ultimately being promoted to Egypt's second in command. And his brothers resurface when there's a famine in the land. Uh. So through the story. I see three components of kindness.

[15 : 03] Uh. Uh. That I wanted to just call out. First. That he's forgiving. Second. That he's humble. Third. That he's giving. So. First of all. That he's forgiving. Uh. Joseph was tender hearted. He wept. And forgave his brothers. When they came and they resurfaced. And he trusted in God's good sovereignty. Over his situation. Uh. Which allowed him to forgive. And I think.

One component of kindness is just being a forgiving person. Uh. Second would be humble. Uh. Joseph was humble. He did not embrace. Uh. Excessive self-importance. But he showed kindness to his brothers.

Because he knew. That he was not in the place of God. With the ability to condemn them. And so because he was humble. And he knew that he was not in the place of God. But a place of God. To condemn them.

He was able to show kindness. To his brothers. And third. He didn't just show kindness to his brothers. But he was giving in the sense that he pledged. Not just for. To forgive his brothers. But he pledged to provide for them.

[15 : 57] And their families. So generation to generation. He would make sure that his brothers. And their families were. Were okay. In the land of Egypt. When they came and so during there. Uh. During the famine.

So forgiving. Humble and giving. That was Joseph. Mm-hmm. It seems to me that. Once you have a few brushes with mortality. Maybe. Our accidents.

A cancer diagnosis. In Joseph's case. Multiple brushes with mortality. Mm-hmm. And you survive those. Or you have brushes with real poverty.

And you survive those. You know. I think it helps you to almost lose stuff. Because you're. You're reminded of like. I really would have just been. I really just would have died the other day.

In that car wreck. Or whatever. Mm-hmm. If God hadn't spared me. This. This idea that. My life is not my own. My stuff is not my own. My health is not my own. All of that.

[16 : 55] That. That seems to be. A foundational element for Joseph. Because. When it comes time to be kind. Which kindness really is just kind of giving. It's giving attention. Giving.

Uh. Care. Giving. You know. Giving your time. And so forth. Sure. You know. When it's time to be generous. You. You either. Are going to be. You're going to. That. Whatever generosity manifests itself.

At. In a particular moment. Is really an expression of. Who you believe. Gave you all this stuff. Mm. And. And. And. Because. If. If. If. If you believe it's all you.

And. And so on. And so forth. And it's really not. It's really not inconsistent. Then to say. Well. I earned it. I'm keeping it. Uh. And. Uh. Well. That person needs to go out.

And earn it too. And so on. And so forth. But. When you really have all these close calls. And you can see how just. You know. I was thinking about the assassination attempt.

[17 : 51] On Trump. The first one. You know. You have this moment. Where it's like centimeters. Yeah. And there's no. There's no clear explanation. Yeah. As to. You know.

Why one. Why it went one way. And not another. The. The. The reasonable thing to do. We'll see if. Old boy is reasonable with this. But the reason. The reasonable thing to do. Is to say.

God spared my life. Mm. And. Therefore. My life is not my own. And. And so on. So anyway. You know. But I think that Joseph's. Multiple brushes.

With his own mortality. And realizing that God had. Spared him. And sustained him. And elevated him. He never. His particular story.

Didn't include any period. Where he. Felt like he deserved it. Mm. It was. It was all. Quick enough. I think. A quick enough. Turn of events. They say it was quick.

[18 : 44] It wasn't. But at the same time. There were so many downturns. That. The only thing standing between him. And death was God. Mm. Yeah. And I think. I think. That kind of person.

Who has seen. The fragility. Of. Success. Mm. Is then able. To. To. Steward that success. Much better. Than someone.

Hasn't seen how. Easily it can come and go. Yeah. Yeah. It came from God. And. Now you can use it for. For God's glory. And the good of other people. Yeah. My sense is. Is that when we look at all these guys.

The Bible. That were kind. A massive amount. Of that. Is rooted in some. Understanding of God. Sovereign. Yes. Yes. Anyway. Yeah. Good. Good. All right. Second story.

Let's talk about Boaz. And Ruth. For a couple minutes. So. With. With. Ruth. So she was. With Naomi. And they were in Moab. And there was famine.

[19 : 39] And there was loss. In. In their time. And in their day. So Naomi. With Ruth. They return to Bethlehem. And Naomi. Instructs Ruth. To glean from Boaz's field.

And we. And I think we all. Probably know the story. About just. Boaz's kindness. Towards. Ruth. Boaz redeems Ruth. And really. Takes care of her. And sets his protection.

Over her. So some components. Of kindness. In this story. That. I think I want to. I think we want to. Pull out. Is. How protective. Boaz was. How generous. Boaz was.

And how generationally minded. Boaz was. So. Boaz. Was very protective. He kept Ruth. Leaning in his field. And charged the young men. Not to touch her.

Not to. Not to harm her in any way. So he was really very protective. Of Ruth. Through that. He was also very generous to Ruth. Boaz. Ensured that Ruth was provided well for. She ate until she was satisfied.

[20 : 35] And even had some left over. So he was very generous. Towards Ruth. And so that's another component of kindness. And then a third component of kindness. That we've been talking about. A province with the men. Quite significantly.

Has been generationally minded. So. Boaz was determined. To ensure the perpetuation. Of the name of the dead. He was not just focused on showing kindness. To himself. Or his generation. But also future generations.

So he made sure. That. That Ruth's. And that Ruth's lineage. And that Ruth's family's lineage. And I believe Ruth's. Ex-husband. You know.

Deceased husband's lineage. Lived on. Through what he was doing. And showing kindness towards Ruth. As well as Naomi. So. Any thoughts on. Boaz.

And Ruth. Well together. Let's combine. You know. You've got Joseph. And now Boaz. I think in both cases. One of the.

[21 : 32] One of the benefits. Of. Being a kind person. Is. Is that. There's moments where. Someone presents themselves. In a severity of weakness.

They're. They're. They're. Really. Super. Vulnerable. Sure. And you can either be. Cruel. Or you can be kind. Like. There's kind of this. That. That's just. To flip the script.

On the Joseph story. Or the Ruth story. And imagine them. Encountering. Imagine Joseph's brothers. Encountering someone. Who's not kind. But cruel. Right. Exploiting.

All of their vulnerabilities. In all sorts of. Terrible ways. And then. That really rings through. With the Boaz story. Yeah. You know. He. And he had. He really could have made a play there. That was.

Cruel. And hard. And. And so on and so forth. So I think like. We all. I don't think we're. We're completely clear. On how. Much our world.

[22 : 29] Is made better. By the fact. That there are so many people. Out in the world. That love Jesus. And or. You know. I mean. Tried to articulate. Some of that yesterday. But. You can go to places.

Today. Where. There is not. A culture of kindness. And then. You be vulnerable there. And see how that turns out. Right. Right. You need something in those environments.

Express. A weakness of some kind. In those. And see how that goes. Right. So. Yeah. I think like. Both of these I'm looking at. It's like. Boy. These stories would be very different.

If those men were not kind. Yeah. And look at what happened. Like with. With Boaz and Ruth. I mean. That led to. What. Obed. Then Jesse. And then David. Through.

Through Boaz's kindness. So. What a lineage. What a blessing. Mm-hmm. Great. All right. So. Third story. David and Mephibosheth. Did I get that right? Yes. Mephibosheth?

[23 : 24] Mephibosheth. Okay. Try saying that's not fast. Well. That's one of those. That one lends itself. Weirdly to. Southern Baptist. Draw. I remember. I've heard so many Mephibosheth.

And it's Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth. Okay. David went. To find Mephibosheth. Anyway. Go ahead. Do you want to. Do you want to tell this story? Sure.

Obviously there's antagonism. Between David and Saul. For quite some time. Saul's constantly trying. To pin David to the wall. David has an act.

An attitude of honor. Not so much towards Saul. But toward the Lord. Who has positioned Saul. Into that spot. And so David is careful. And trusting in the Lord.

And refuses to. Take vengeance. And by his own hand. Eventually the Lord. The Lord. David. Through a variety of providential means. Has Saul dead on the battlefield.

[24 : 21] Saul's really just been terrible to David. For all this time. But Saul's son Jonathan. Had been quite kind to David. And they had developed a close friendship. Anyway. Long story short.

David gets appointed to the throne. And it's really the kind of thing. In eastern. In the ancient eastern world. In particular. Middle eastern world.

Like. The thing you do when you become king. Is you consolidate power. By killing everybody else. In the competing household. And you definitely go on. Kind of a eunuching. Terror as well. Like you're really.

What you're trying to do. Is consolidate power. Build a. Build a power moat. As if. As it were. And. You certainly. Just. That's the. That's the move. So.

David. With kindness in his heart. Seeks out a relative. Of. Of Jonathan's. And he finds out. That there's this cripple. Named Mephibosheth. Do you remember his. Do you remember what it says.

[25 : 15] About his. Disability. I thought it was his feet. I think so. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. He couldn't walk. Anyway. So David finds out. Now. David's intending to be kind to him.

But Mephibosheth doesn't know this. He thinks he's. Essentially lined up for the. The slaughter. And. So he brings Mephibosheth to him. And David extends kindness to him. On behalf of.

His love for Jonathan. And. Essentially says. You'll always have a place at my table. Mm-hmm. In depth. Yeah. Excellent. So. Some components of kindness in the story. Three again.

Initiating. Merciful. And gracious. Initiating. Merciful. And gracious. Gracious. So. Initiating. David. Sought out someone. To be kind to.

From Jonathan and Saul's household. He. It didn't just come into his lap. He actually went out and sought. To be kind. To Jonathan's household. So it's initiating. Merciful.

[26 : 09] Saul was not good to David. As. You know. As you were talking about. Yet David is determined to show kindness to Saul's family. And to Jonathan's family. And gracious. In that. Mephibosheth.

Mephibosheth. He was lame. And he. Not lame. Like you know. Lame like. Maybe he was lame too. But he. He was. He was lame in the sense that he couldn't walk. Um. But he. But he could do nothing for David.

He was. David was gracious. Mephibosheth. He could do nothing for David. If David. Brought him to his table. Fed him. And took care of his. Took care of Mephibosheth. For. For a very long time.

Mm-hmm. So initiating merciful and gracious. Just more components of kindness. Mm-hmm. Yep. Very good. Now let's talk about. Like you. You mentioned it at the beginning.

Kindness is not niceness. Right. Let's differentiate there a little bit. Yeah. So. Um. Got three illustrations to show how. There's a hard side to kindness. Kindness is not always. Like niceness.

[27 : 03] Uh. So God's affliction. Can be a kindness. To us. Psalm 119. 75. Says. I know oh lord. That your rules are righteous. And then in faithfulness. You have afflicted me.

There are times when it seems like. God's not really being. Maybe nice to me. But he's always being. In Christ. He's always being kind to us. Uh. In that he's working good. Through what he's doing.

Uh. To us. And in our lives. So God's. Not. You know like. A nice. Not always a nice guy. Uh. He. But he's always being kind. Mm-hmm. Um. And so.

Sometimes he gives us affliction. As a kindness. To bring us back to him. To work good purposes in. In our hearts. Uh. To show us something of. Of him. Uh. So. Yeah. I mean. Yeah.

You know. Proverbs tells us that. You can actually hate your son. If you neglect the discipline. Right. Right. Right. Right. So. Sometimes. Niceness is actually. Uh. Niceness is actually.

[27 : 58] A bit of a. Cop out. To. To. To. To. Not treat a wound as serious. To say peace. When there is no peace. Right. Um. You know. To. To not help someone.

I was actually thinking. And. With your first question. Kind people in your life. I really think that. You know. Maybe one day in heaven. You will have perfect perspective.

And you will know. Like. Who was the kindest person. To me. Ever. Mm. Mm. Mm. And. And you won't have a wife then. So you won't have to suck up. To that. I'm kidding. I'm kidding.

No. I. You know. There might be one day. When you kind of. Anyway. I just was thinking about. How. Man. Has anybody been more kind to me. Than the. Preachers over the years. Who insisted.

Yeah. That I trust Christ. Right. Right. You know. And. Call out sin. Yeah. And just told me. You know. As you know. As a kid. And as a young man. Like. Yeah. Or I was thinking about. Like. Packer.

[28 : 53] Or someone like that. Who sits down. And writes a book. About God. So that this. Chris Oswald. Living in Jeff City. Missouri. You know. At 16. Knows what God is like.

Yeah. And. Yeah. You know. And. And there were hard things there. Part. Part of that was me. And my sin. And so on. But. Like. How. How kind. Of God. To. Tell me the truth.

Right. To correct my lie. You know. Correct my errors. Yeah. And so on. And so forth. Yeah. Yeah. Agreed. Which brings up. One of Paul's. I mean.

This is consistent. In Paul's ministry. Yeah. He does not pull punches. He. He attempts. By every means necessary. To be nice. I mean. He goes out of his way. In almost every. Uh.

Almost every epistle. To. Offer some affirmation. Yeah. You know. I'm praying for you. I love you. Right. Right. So on and so forth. But there are multiple. You know. Instances.

[29 : 46] Where he pulls no punches. Second. Or first Corinthians being one. And Galatians being. Probably the hottest. Right. And he really just says. Guys. You're. You're. You've got me really concerned.

That you have walked away. From. The very thing. That saved your soul. Mm-hmm. And yeah. He pulls no punches there at all. Yeah. Yeah. Is that the. Is that the only letter.

Where he doesn't start out with thankfulness? I think so. Uh. So. Yeah. He. Definitely can be a little rough with the Galatians. But. They needed to hear it. They needed to hear that we're saved by grace. Through faith. And. By Christ's merit.

Mm-hmm. And I think one of the. One of the really interesting things about. Being a jerk for Jesus. Because I've definitely. You know. I've been a jerk for me sometimes. But I've also been a jerk for Jesus sometimes.

Mm-hmm. But. In those moments when it's done right. And you're right in doing it. If you really look at what's happening there. That person is just. The person who's being mean. Quote unquote.

[30 : 43] They are really fighting for your freedom. Yep. Yep. Yeah. You know. What is Paul really wanting to get out of this? Right. He's wanting them to be freer than they want to be.

He's wanting. He's wanting them to. Have. Joy in Christ more than they want to have joy in Christ. Right. You know. Like he. He's being mean to them. But it's a godly mean.

Because it. And it's a kindness. Because he's like. I want you to. Not return to the bonds of slavery. That you were once in. Right. You know. Right. Which leads us to Proverbs 27.

Six. Faith for the wounds of a friend. Profuse are the kisses of an enemy. You know. Sometimes. A hard word needs to be said. Mm-hmm. And doesn't have to be said. I mean.

There's a place for admonishment. And for exhortation. But sometimes it can be said gently. But sometimes the hard word needs to be said. And faith for the wounds of a friend. Refuse are the kisses of an enemy. Yeah. And this is.

[31 : 36] I mean. We've talked a lot about this with our guys. Because. We are over correcting. We don't want to over correct. I guess I should say. From all of the niceness culture. That was predominant in evangelicalism.

And winsomeness always works. And so on and so forth. And we. You know. We really don't have. A group of men at Providence. That think that way. And act that way. Right. We have guys. That probably need to just. Continue to grow in gentleness.

So that they can be. They can say the hard word. Mm-hmm. At a proportionate level. Given. A bunch of other factors. Yeah.

So I think that. The thing that we're trying to grow in. As men at Providence. Is to be able to say the hard word. That's important. But then to learn how to say it. At a proportion.

At a level that is. The minimum necessary to get the job done. That's kind of the working definition we use for gentleness. Yep. And that. What really. What you'll find.

[32 : 33] Because we're talking about a fruit of the spirit here. What you'll find is. Is that all the fruits of the spirit have to work together. Like. Patience. Patience. Patience. Is an important aspect of kindness. Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Especially on the hard word side of things. If you're trying to just. Fire one shot. Change someone's whole perspective. In one conversation. So you can move on.

Right. You're probably not going to be gentle. Right. So the hard word. Yes. That can be a kindness. but it's also kind to think how, how can I be minimally violent in my care for this person?

Just like you would with a surgery. Yeah. Good. Good. All right. So now let's move on to how can we be kind? How can we cultivate kindness in our hearts, in our lives, in our, in our thoughts, words, actions?

So a few suggestions, a few thoughts would be first, meditate on and experience the kindness of God expressed in scripture. So meditate on and experience the kindness of God expressed in scripture.

[33 : 38] We've talked about this a bit. Ephesians 4, 32, he forgave us. We already mentioned this scripture already, but be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another as God in Christ forgave you.

So God was so kind to forgive us by sending his son to die for us. That just thinking about that can generate feelings of kindness and that we can then act upon and, and work within.

Uh, and then Romans 8, 32, he's actively providing everything we need right now to know him and to glorify him and to honor him and to love others. So, uh, Romans 8, 32, he, he did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all.

Probably not also with him graciously give us all things. Just thinking about how he didn't spare his own son and how he's now graciously giving us all things that are needful for us. That can spur on kindness.

That's a good moment to hit pause and say that people like to, I hear a lot of people quit on kindness at a certain point and they say, well, I've been kind enough to that person or I've already done X, Y, and Z that person.

[34 : 42] Sure. That's actually not how this works. Right. Um, you may need to change what you're doing. Right. You may need to say a hard word instead of a guess or whatever. Right. But you don't, you don't, if you're going to follow God down the road of kindness, there's no moment when that's done.

Exactly. Right. You know, uh, not at least not, not usually. I, maybe, maybe I could think of something, uh, some exception to that. But I do think people tend to think that they reward themselves.

They pat themselves on the back and say, well, I've been kind enough to so and so. And now I'm done. Like, well, I'm sure glad God doesn't do it that way. Right. He, right. He, he gave us his own son and freely gives us all things.

He continues to care for us. Right. Anyway, how many times should I forgive my brother? Yeah. Anytime seven, just, just keep on forgiving. Yeah. Um, but then also, like you said, the format of kindness may morph, may shift, may shift.

Yeah. I think maybe sometimes the people are saying, I need to be done with this because they've realized they're enabling bad behavior. Right. Right. Completely. There's a category for that. You may have to change how you experience.

[35 : 46] You may express kindness, but you don't ever get off of the need to show kindness. Right. All right. So meditating on God's kindness in scripture, he forgave us.

He's providing everything we need right now. And thinking about eternity, he's going to be eternally kind to us. We can look forward to that. So Ephesians two, four through seven says, but God being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us.

Even when we were dead in our trespasses, he made alive together with Christ by grace. You've been saved and raises up with him and seated us with him in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Now here, focus on this.

God is going to show the immeasurable riches of his grace in Christ Jesus. God is going to show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

That's just like, that's what mind blowing. You need the Holy spirit to illuminate that. That's just like almost unfathomable. Like God showing us lavish riches, immeasurable riches of his grace and kindness toward us. Well, I think that shows you in part that that is part of his nature.

[36 : 54] Cause he's, he's just, it's never going to stop. He's going to always be kind. Right. Uh, it's, it, it probably would be helpful to think of it more as this is who, this is so much of who God is.

That as long as I'm in his presence, which I will be forever, he will constantly be kind to me. Just as sure as he will constantly be holy, just as sure as he will constantly be glorious. He will constantly be kind to me.

And, uh, and then you need, you know, first Corinthians 15, for instance, our bodies, uh, resurrection comes and we receive new bodies prepared for eternal.

And one of the, one of the things I think is true. It sounds weird is that we actually need our hardware upgraded to endure the level of kindness that God is going to lavish on us for all of eternity.

Amazing. Like we actually have to get fortified and recreated as our bodies, our minds, everything to sit under the steady stream of God's kindness forever.

[38 : 06] And then the idea of the immeasurable riches of his grace and kindness, the idea of, of, of an infinite God that is infinitely kind spit, pouring out his kindness on you for all eternity.

I think the idea is like you, you need forever to get through the first page of God's kindness. And then you need another forever to get through page two and so forth.

And yeah, so this is, this is a deep part of God that he is going to be showing us for, for all eternity. Yeah. Just amazing. So, um, all right.

So we've meditated upon the kindness of God in scripture. A second way to grow in kindness, uh, is to meditate and experience God's kindness in your daily life. And just to be thinking about not like to think about, you know, chapter one of eternity and God's kindness is, is amazing and mind blowing.

And, but, but also to think about, you know, like I have a place to live. I have, I have clothing on my back and I've got, I've, um, I've got family and friends and church and relationships, uh, and God's given skills and opportunities and strength.

[39 : 21] Just all the common grace in our lives. Um, just God's kindness to us. Yeah. This reminds me of that quote we read last time we were talking, um, by that author who was studying the decay of European civilization.

He said that when a privilege is turned into a right, all courtesy and kindness is eliminated. And you, you want to not understand God's kindness.

The fast way to do that is to take everything for granted. And, uh, yeah. And that was, you know, like yesterday's sermon on the new nature, it was really intended just to, just to remind us of what is actually happened to us and what is happening to us.

It's very easy to take all that for granted. Yeah. Yeah. So thinking about common gracing about saving grace, we've already talked about a bunch, sustaining grace and all of this, um, rooted in Jesus's life, death and resurrection.

Uh, you know, apart from that, we are dead in our sin, uh, condemned and we have no hope. Um, but in Christ, um, God has made us new and is showing us kindness, uh, has showed us kindness is showing us kindness and will show us kindness forever and ever.

[40 : 36] Um, so some granular and practical ways to be kind. So we can think, and we can, you know, we can meditate all we'd like. And that's great. You need to do some stuff. You need to do some stuff. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So I've got a list here about 25 practical ways to be kind.

Um, before we run through all of them, uh, Chris, do any stand out to you that you'd want to, that you want to highlight that you resonate with you? I mean, yeah, these are not, some of them are very small.

Yeah. They're not, um, they're not on the same scale. Right. I would say like fundamentally, if you want to be kind to someone, pay attention to them, pay attention to them.

Notice when they are up, notice when they are down, notice what they like, notice what they don't like, you know, people, people feel loved when you know them and fundamentally God's kindness to us is rooted in his knowing as perfect.

Hmm. And so, yeah, you've got listening there. Um, one of the things I'd say is like, some people are naturally way better at noticing and picking up on vibes and so forth than others.

[41 : 49] And if you are not naturally good at that, that is not, that's not one of those places where you get to, um, stay the same.

You, you know, you need to become like Christ in this area. You need to be a noticer. If you're not naturally good at it, well, friends, I've got things I'm not naturally good at that I have to grow in, but this is not one of those sort of nature things.

Like if, if you are more inclined to miss people's body language, miss stuff, well, I'm sorry, work on it, you know?

Um, and, and I think a lot of that comes down to also when you're in environments where there are people that, especially people that you're called to care for, don't, don't be on your phone the whole time.

Don't play video games, like focus on the people that are there. You're just even, just even giving people your attention is an act of kindness.

[42 : 46] It's a small one. So I'd say the big thing here is pay attention. And then a lot of these things are kind of lined up with what you notice about people, uh, when you pay attention.

Yeah. What do they need? Yeah. Like offer childcare, right? A meal, which I feel also is very self-serving. Oh yeah. If anyone wants to be kind to me and Christine, they're happy to babysit for us.

We do have my mother-in-law in town right now. So we're good. But if they do that, will you do the last one and leave a generous tip? Sure. Sure. Anyway, you want to go through your list?

So I think, I think that's a great point. Just, just paying attention to what people need and being actively committed to their good and doing them good, either through a word or through an action. I mean, you know, we can talk about, um, offering to babysit for a busy parent, um, or making a meal for somebody.

Uh, and then you got, you know, little things like if you're, if you're out to eat, offering to pray for your waitress, uh, or, um, you know, always trying to be inclusive and invite anyone who's maybe on the fringe out, out to lunch or whatever you're doing.

[43 : 50] Yeah. Um, you know, bringing in coffee or snacks at work, you know, stuff like that, holding the door open for others, little things, little, little kindnesses that can share credit with others. Yeah. Really good one. If you've got on there, smile at people, I think is huge.

I think that one is like, could we just all revolutionize, uh, the culture and get back to all of us nodding at each other and smiling at each other.

It would be so nice. How about, um, just calling or texting someone out of the blue. Yep. Being like, Hey, I'm praying for you. Love you. You need anything kind of deal. Um, I think that's probably good.

Maybe even writing a note, a thank you note or a note of encouragement to somebody that can be a blessing to somebody. A lot of these have to do with slowing down. A lot of these have to do with not being that person who thinks that you are more important because you're busy.

You know, whether that's, you know, one of my most recent pet peeves is how someone will kind of block a whole, section of a parking lot.

[44 : 53] Cause they're waiting for a space to open. Hmm. Hmm. And they're just like sitting there like, well, no, this guy's going to pull out and I'm going to get this space. Like, meanwhile, all of us are just waiting for you to move.

And it's this, or people that will just do weird things on the road because they missed their exit or something. And what, what comes across a lot is people think their time is more valuable than, and, uh, I think that, that a lot of kind, uh, you cannot be a busy person and a kind person, you know, in, in a, in a busy kind of frenetic sense, right?

You, if you were going to be kind, you have to live a slower life than, than the people that, you know, the hustle and bustle of this world would have you believe kindness really is a kind of big margin demanding.

Yeah. And having a common other's orientation, noticing others, caring for others, doing things for others. Yeah. It's all, it's all kind of rooted in a slower life than what a lot of people are used to living.

Yeah. So this is a great Christmas message. Our podcast, because, you know, it's an opportunity, Christmas, an opportunity to obviously, first and foremost, thank God for the gift of Jesus, but then also slow down and take time to give gifts or do kindnesses for other people as well.

[46 : 15] Yeah. We had that, you know, terrible murder that happened in our neighborhood, I guess, more than a month ago now. And one of the things I've really appreciated about our neighborhood coming out of that is, and everybody is being really careful to be kind right now.

And people that would not wave at me before are waving at me now. And yeah, it, it really, everybody could see like, this is so, it was that beautiful kind of common grace version of, do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

You know, it was, but really what, what my neighborhood is a kind of peak kindness right now. People are being extra careful with one another, you know, delivering things to one another, everybody's stopping and talking and so on.

It wasn't like that a couple months ago. Yeah. It wasn't bad. It was, it was pretty good before, but it's way better now. And I think people just realize, man, this is like, I don't want to live in a world where cruelty wins and the way you fight that.

That's good. That's good. All right. So to wrap up our discussion, kindness is just a beautiful expression of God's truth. You know, we talk about truth and beauty in community.

[47 : 35] This is one attribute that I think we'd love for, I think Providence excels in even now, but just more and more. We want to show kindness to each other and kindness to people in the community, kindness to everyone we touch, just a beautiful expression of God's truth.

And there are many reasons to be kind in many ways that we can be kind. And really the best way to cultivate kindness is just to meditate on the kindness of God to us. And then actually we look for ways to show kindness to others.

And just to connect us all back to the gospel, like we talked about in the devotions podcast, we don't show kindness to others in order to be accepted by God or to earn his kindness towards us.

We show kindness to others because God has been so kind to us and we want others to experience his kindness as well. So we don't show kindness to be accepted by God, but because God has been so kind to us, we want others to experience his kindness as well.

Amen. Amen. The world is trying to teach us to be selfish and to, to be transactional with people, but it is such a sweeter world when we are, when we are kind to one another.

[48 : 46] Yeah, absolutely. Hey, I have had a heart today in particular. We've got just a few members that are not doing well health wise. And I thought, well, that's coming in here in a little bit.

Why don't we pray for these folks and we won't mention any names. This is the podcast that goes out all over the place. Right. It's the most popular podcast created in the six, six, two, one, five. No surprises in the world.

Yeah. But anyway, I was hoping we could just pray together real quick for some of our members who are doing well physically and we'll, we'll pray and then we'll just close out.

Father God, we are so grateful that in the midst of a, a, a busy season for people where folks are, you know, obviously moving toward taking care of their own families and homes and unique, special and good ways.

But Lord, I'm just mindful of people who they're just not physically healthy right now. And everything is hard. When you're not physically healthy.

[49 : 50] And Lord, as I, as I approach your throne with confidence, as that throne has been made accessible to me and to all of us through Christ, I just, as a child, ask that you would heal my friends of their diseases and their infirmities and that you would bring real healing to their bodies.

Father, that would be my preference. That would be what I would know to ask as the best thing. If you have better than that, then we pray that that better would be, uh, what is done.

But as best as I could see, I would just like these folks to be physically restored. So I pray God that you would heal them. And I pray God that you would help them to know that you are, they are loved.

That this season of physical calamity is not, uh, an expression of your disfavor in any kind of gospel way.

Uh, Lord, you are faithful to us and you allow us to experience both ups and downs as an expression of your kindness. And I pray that nobody would, nobody who's sick, who's struggling with their health would think for a second that God isn't kind to them.

[51 : 09] Lord, I am confident that what Paul says in second Corinthians is true, that these light and momentary afflictions are preparing for us an eternal weight of glory.

And that if you call a saint in this world to suffer, then you have a plan Lord that, uh, to lavish extra kindness on them in the next.

And so we, we ask that you would heal them. We ask God that you would help them not to feel alone, or singled out in any way through this. And we ask God that you would remind them that you are not so unjust as to overlook the season.

You're letting them walk through now, God, you will, you will shower them with your loving kindness in ways that demonstrate your justice and your mercy, your goodness.

So father, we just lift those folks up to you. We continue to pray for our friends in Pakistan. And we ask Lord that you would just give the leaders wisdom as they navigate this. It happens a lot there where a Christian gets accused of blasphemy in some respect or another.

[52 : 18] It often leads to a, um, it often leads to a murder. It often leads to a Christian losing their life by the, of a crowd, the hands of a crowd.

Uh, Lord, we pray against that. We pray that your angels would protect these saints. We pray that light would shine in Pakistan and that the whole nation would be a nation that honors and serves the Lord Jesus.

Lord, we ask that you would, uh, bless the various churches. It'll be meeting tomorrow night for Christmas Eve services. We pray you keep them safe and that you fill them with your spirit and that many people who don't know you would come to know you as they gather, uh, to celebrate the coming.

We love you, God. Thank you for this time. In Jesus name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen.