

## CULTIVATE PT. 2: KINDNESS

February 18, 2018 | Pastor Randy Remington

A couple of weeks ago, we began a series called "Cultivate." Two weeks ago, it was patience. Today, we will be talking about cultivating "kindness." The goal is not that people receive us, but that people would receive Jesus through us, just as people receive God through Jesus. We should not sabotage the opportunity for other people to meet Jesus by being unkind to them. That makes following Jesus unattractive.

At times Jesus followers can sabotage the opportunity for others to meet Jesus by lacking patience or being unkind.

Stereotyping through Google examples:

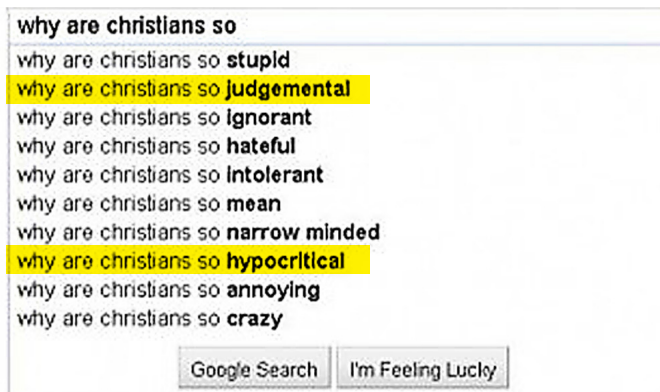
"Why are Muslims so..."



"Why are Jews so..."



"Why are Christians so judgmental and hypocritical"



This Christian stereotype seems unfair, but it is also sometimes well-earned.

Instead, can we have a firm center (firm conviction of who we are in Christ) with soft edges (kindness.)? Early Christians were sometimes referred to as “the kind ones.” They were known as not just followers of Jesus, but also known as the kind ones. Jesus even says that his yoke (his teachings and way of life) is “kind” (Matthew 11:30) “My yoke is kind” (there is no chaffing, there is no pressing down upon you).

We are not talking about passivity, but rather an inner disposition of kindness towards others.

Kindness does not erode the center (our firm convictions). They make the center more believable. Being kind is not wimpy. It is not just niceness (which is more worried about what people think of me). In the world, kindness often is diminished because it doesn’t advance your career or help you necessarily win an argument.

Kindness is a supernaturally generous orienting out hearts towards other people, even when they don’t deserve it.

*“But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. **Do to others as you would have them do to you.**”*

*If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, **because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.** Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.” (Luke 6:27-36)*

We ought to want to be known as children of the Most High, because he (the Most High) is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.

### Three thoughts from this:

**1. Kindness is rooted in grace, but revealed in Christ.** We cultivate kindness by recognizing the grace God has given to us even when we didn’t deserve it. See Ephesians. 2:9 and Titus 3:3-8.

**2. Kindness leads to repentance.** (Kindness is evangelistic). If we evangelize without kindness, we are doing a disservice. It is God’s kindness that leads to repentance. God’s kindness is not pampering. It brings repentance and transformation into our lives. We live the way we do so that the grace of God may be seen in us. Kindness is meant to point people to Jesus. We bear witness to who Jesus is. You can be a non-believer and be kind. But as Christians, we need to know that we are sabotaging the people from meeting Jesus when we are not kind.

**3. Kindness is simple, but it is not effortless.** See Colossians 3:12. Most opportunities for kindness will come from the ordinariness of our lives: “...so in everything, do to others as you would have them do to you.” Every religion in the world has a variation of the golden rule, but it is usually cast in the negative (“don’t do to others what you would not want others to do to you.”). But Jesus puts it into the positive (“do to others what you would have them do to you”). This gives it a more proactive form.

So, who today is God calling you to show kindness to? When we move towards people in kindness it doesn’t just change the relationship, but it changes us. Who should you be taking active steps to show kindness towards?

### Three simple things to do to show kindness towards others.

**1. Positivity** (most of us are more negative than we think we are) (In the OT, Hagar calls God “the God who sees.”) If what you are looking at is full of life, you will be changed from the inside out, and speak life.

**2. Praise and affirmation** (Speak life to others).

**3. Love in action** (Share grace with others.)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1) Christians are called to be people of firm centers (our convictions on who God is and our identity in Him) with soft edges. How would you describe your firm center? How does this firm center influence soft edges (kindness)?
- 2) What excuses do we often have for not showing kindness towards others (a proactive act of generosity towards someone, even if he or she does not deserve it)?
- 3) Name a few of the ways God has shown kindness towards you.
- 4) Talk about a time in which you were the recipient of an unexpected kindness.
- 5) Who in your life might the Holy Spirit be inviting you to show kindness towards?
- 6) What are some practical next steps you can take towards showing kindness to that individual (or group of individuals)?

