

## Day 9 *Kindness*

**Silence (2 minutes)** Take some time to be quiet, to calm down, and to listen. What has God been teaching you? What are the next steps He wants you to take? How is your spirit doing?

**Scripture** *“Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.”* 1 John 3:18

**Discussion** In 1 John 3:11-24, John writes about love. *“This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another”* (1 John 3:11). John states that loving brothers and sisters in Christ is a sign that we are saved. *“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us”* (1 John 3:16). John goes on to say we should lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters in Christ and gives the example of sharing our material possessions with Christians who are in need. It is at that point that John writes the above passage, that our love should be an action, not merely something we talk about. It has been said that kindness is hard to define, but we know it when we experience it. Let us repeatedly act in such ways that others know they have been treated with kindness. Often, people hide their needs; it may be embarrassing to reveal them. We need to take the initiative to meet people and intentionally converse at a deep enough level so that we hear the significant events in their lives; and to share our own. What rich fellowship this can be: brothers and sisters in Christ sharing our significant joys, sorrows, and needs as we walk through them acknowledging Jesus’ presence and love. For this to happen we need to be curious about others’ lives, not merely be preoccupied with our own, and willing to be vulnerable to share what is personal to us. And once we know, we need to be creative and take initiative to show kindness that fits the situation. Are there difficulties with transportation, food, housing, hearing, seeing, walking, illness, grief, loneliness, family conflict? What specific kindness fits? Is our own schedule so busy that we feel unable to respond to other’s needs? In her book, *The Gospel Comes with a House Key*, Rosaria Butterfield writes of building “margin time” into our schedules. “Practicing radically ordinary hospitality necessitates building margin time into the day, time where regular routines can be disrupted but not destroyed. This margin stays open for the Lord to fill – to take an older neighbor to the doctor, to babysit on the fly, to make room for a family displaced by a flood or a worldwide refugee crisis” (p. 12).

**Application** Before the end of the day, thank God for all the ways He has been kind to you today.

**Prayer** Jesus, thank You that You demonstrated Your love for me by dying for me. Jesus, You have commanded us to love each other, as You have loved us. Thank You for the blessing of these opportunities; that others are blessed by my kindness and I am blessed by showing kindness. I commit myself to obey You by loving others, and yet I know I need to mature much more in this area. I commit myself to listen and obey the prompting of Your Holy Spirit to show kindness; please change me so I listen and obey more. I praise You Father that You are kind. Amen.

**Silence (2 minutes)** Talk to God about what you are learning. What are your fears? Where are your hangups? Pray for direction.

**Scripture memory** for the week: *“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.”* Colossians 3:12

