

The Fruit of the Spirit

Week 5: Kindness, Goodness, and Gentleness

Introduction:

This week we looked at three spiritual flavors of the Fruit of the Spirit: Kindness, Goodness, and Gentleness. While these three are similar in attitude, they are still unique in application. **Kindness** is the outward expression of a heart of love and grace. It is shown in active charity towards others driven by *compassion*. **Goodness** is moral excellence and virtue in action. It's doing what's right for the benefit of others driven by *integrity*. **Gentleness** is strength under control. It's being considerate of others, showing care and tenderness without harshness, and it's driven by *humility*.

In this message, we will look at three ways to express these three flavors:

1. **We Show Kindness, Goodness, and Gentleness by our Deeds**
2. **We Share Kindness, Goodness, and Gentleness with our Words**
3. **We Sow Kindness, Goodness, and Gentleness from our Hearts**

Discussion Questions:

1. Share with the group one expression of kindness, goodness, or gentleness that someone in your life has shown to you that made a lasting impact? Why do you feel this one act made such a big difference?
2. Do you feel that we are seeing more of a lack of kindness, goodness, and gentleness in our society and culture today? If so, why is this, and what do you feel is the root of this lack? How can we as Christians cultivate a culture of kindness, goodness, and gentleness in our world?
3. Discuss some ways in which kindness, goodness, and gentleness are expressed in the character of God toward us? How can seeing these characteristics in God help us to grow in a deeper personal relationship with Him?
4. Read Proverbs 18:21. Discuss the power (and consequences) of our words, and give examples of how words can bring either hurt or healing. What steps can you take to better align your words with the heart of God, reflecting His kindness, goodness, and gentleness?
5. Gentleness is often misunderstood as weakness, but it's actually strength under control. In what areas of your life is God calling you to respond with gentleness rather than harshness or anger? How can we practice gentleness in situations where we feel provoked or misunderstood? In what ways does this flavor of gentleness challenge the cultural values of power and strength?
6. One of our main points is that these flavors are sown from our heart. What are some ways that we can allow the Holy Spirit to continue to cultivate this fruit in our heart, and how can we guard our heart from negative 'enemies' that would cause us to act contrary to these flavors?
7. Read Galatians 6:9 and discuss how it encourages us in our Christian walk. What does this verse teach us about the importance of perseverance in doing good, and what are some practical ways to stay motivated to do good even when it feels exhausting or unappreciated?
8. Read Colossians 3:12. What does it mean to "clothe yourself" with these virtues? How do these qualities change the way we relate to others, particularly in challenging relationships? Also, sometimes we struggle to show kindness, goodness, and gentleness toward ourselves. How can we cultivate these fruits not only in how we treat others but also in how we view and care for ourselves as God's beloved children?