

THEME: WHO I AM IN CHRIST

TOPIC: BE KIND

TEXT: EPHESIANS 4:32; 1 JOHN 3:18; RUTH 2:20

INTRODUCTION

Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Ephesians 4:32

“Nature bids me do good to all mankind—whether slaves or freemen, freeborn or freedmen. . . . Wherever there is a human being, there is the opportunity for kindness.” (Seneca, *De Vita Beata*)

Dear children, let us stop just saying we love each other; let us really show it by our actions. **1 John 3:18.**

1. **Hesed** – The Hebrew word **hesed** (also spelled chesad, chesed or checed). It is God’s lovingkindness, translated as mercy, goodness, kindness, faithful love, and steadfast love covenant loyalty. God's identity is beyond what we could ever fully express in human words, but scripture uses one particular word to describe the distinctiveness of God's character:

When God wrote the Ten Commandments the second time on two tablets, and promised to drive Israel’s enemies out of the land of Canaan, He described himself with the word “**hesed**”:

Q: What do you understand by God’s loving kindness?

2. Examples of Hesed

The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in [hesed] steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands. Exodus 34:5–7.

- a. Moses repeated these words to God at Kadesh-Barnea (Numbers 14:17–19).
- b. Naomi, recognized Boaz's kindness toward Ruth, as an example of God's **chesed**: **Ruth 2:20**
- c. "May [Boaz] be blessed by the LORD, whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead!" (Ruth 2:20). "Kindness" in this verse is **chesed** in Hebrew.

3. Chased is usually connected to the idea of covenant.

The Hebrew people always viewed their God as a father exercising perfect chesed (tender mercy) toward his creation in general and toward his chosen people in particular. Much of Christianity has failed to grasp that imagery, often preferring to conceive of God as a distant, detached, vengeful ruler. ²

- a. **Chesed** is used to show God’s lovingkindness that is the source of the new covenant with Israel and Judah. In **Deuteronomy 7:9** Moses proclaimed, “*The LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps his covenant and **hesed** for a thousand generations with those who love him.*”

Q: What does the knowledge of God’s loving kindness do for us as believers?

- b. **Checed** was used when Abraham made a covenant with Abimelech. Abimelech said, "Now therefore, swear to me here by God that you will not deal falsely with me or with my descendants or with my posterity, but as I have dealt kindly (hesed) with you, so you will deal with me and with the land where you have sojourned" (**Genesis 21:23**). "And Abraham said, 'I will swear'" (**Genesis 21:24**). Abraham promised to show

lovingkindness and mercy to Abimelech and his descendants in return for the kindness and mercy Abimelech had shown him.

Rahab made a similar request to the spies in **Joshua 2:12–13**.

4. Showing Kindness as an Imitator of Christ – Ephesians 5:1

Our goal here on Earth is to develop Godly character (Christ like character). We develop Christ like character by planting the seed of God's Word in our hearts and allowing faith to grow. This is the starting point of the Christian character-development maturation process. God's Holy Spirit dwelling in us will affirm, lead and guide us in our alignment with God's ways.

Q: How do we show kindness in our everyday life?

5. Developing lovingkindness is a process

Paul's writings explained that Godly character comes through resisting evil influences and impulses and focusing on the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

Our flesh is selfish, so we must deny self. This is part of the spiritual battle; it is a life-long discipline. We surrender, and God's strength gives us perseverance for the journey and ultimately, victory.

Q: Why is loving kindness a process we need to follow through?

Conclusion

Kindness is something we can always choose. You have daily opportunities to choose kindness, with family, friends, and strangers. Simple small acts of kindness will lead to more kindness. Learn to put your phone away when you check out at the grocery store, and give people your full attention when you're with them. Share the gift of a smile with your love ones. Comment with gratitude or praise on social media. Think about the last time someone showed you kindness and what you can do to pass it on to others.