

**Galatians: Learning to Live in the Freedom of Christ**  
**Growing in Kindness**  
**Galatians 5:22-23**  
**Brian Miller**

[1]

Intro: 10 Min

MAIN BODY

[2]

Gal 5:22-26

I hope by now you are coming to grasp in some small way with the incredible freedom that Christ has called us to and made possible for us by His death and resurrection.

We have been called to this freedom **not** to be self serving, (pause) but to **serve** others. And ultimately be conformed and shaped into the image of christ.

For as Paul has stated earlier

[3]

**“For you were called to freedom brothers; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, BUT through love serve one another, For the whole law is fulfilled in one word You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” 5:13-14**

**How do we even begin to do this?**

to Love someone else as we love our self?

Do we even love our self well?

I wish i had time to go into all of this, but we would be here...well the rest of our lives!

But lets look at this small and yet so incredibly huge concept of Kindness, the act of loving others as we have been loved.

You see this concept of **our actions** towards others is **central** to us understanding the heart of God and in turn this concept of kindness.

Because Kindness **IS** the expression of Gods love.

Kindness or “*Chrestotes*” as it is in greek is an act. Its an generic word that has a wide rang of use and meaning in greek.

In the sense that Paul commends “kindness” to christians in this passage and other lists of virtues in his epistles;

he is expressing the great experience that God’s love revealed to us **IN** Christ spread to our hearts by his spirit; Works its self out as “chrestotes” Kindness towards our neighbours.

(Repeat this 2x)

(It is important to observe that **the fruit** here described is not produced by a believer, but by **the Holy Spirit** working through a Christian who is in vital union with Christ (cf. John 15:1–8). The word “fruit” is singular, indicating that these qualities constitute a unity, all of which should be found in a believer who lives under the control of the Spirit. In an ultimate sense this “fruit” is simply the life of Christ lived out in a Christian.)

[4]

I like how Paul illustrates this further in Romans 5:6  
where he paints an amazing picture of what exactly God's Kindness looks like.

**“While we were still weak” (or as the NASB) puts it Helpless, “at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.”**

This is the ultimate kindness of God  
that out of his love  
he acted in kindness towards us  
and did what we had no hope of doing.  
He saved us,  
he set us free

and in turn **it is this very love** that is out of which the fruit of the Spirit are born.

**This**

is the outworking of Christ's love seated in our hearts.  
To be kind to others as God has been and continues to be with us.

[5]

As Paul writes in a later in Ephesians **“God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) and raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” Eph 2:4-7**

**You see**, God's love transforms us to be like God,

to treat people as **HE** treated us.  
To be kind to others as He has been kind to us.

**This** is what Paul wants us to grasp when he tells us that we have been set free to walk in the Spirit.

To no longer live under a law that says “an eye for an eye”

**but**

to love our neighbour as we love our self.

You see far too often we come to these list of “gifts” or “fruit” and look at them as a spiritual check list of things we need to do,

to get better at,  
or examine other people in light of.

Part of this is a misunderstanding of the intention of these gifts given in a list form,  
but another aspect of this i think is that We live in a culture that is obsessed with information.

we love lists, we love information, we are an instant culture.

I must confess i am a wikipedia junkie, i love all things random trivia. I think that deep down my wife wants to introduce me to people as “my husband the guy who loves to blurt out random facts.”

—(continue on this if we have time) the concept of Insta info and knowing lots and nothing at the same time...—

The thing is What we are talking about today is not a complicated concept.

It is so easy to just look at this list and go “yup, mmhmm, yup do this, that ok got it” and then move on to the next thing.

In our “learn things and move on to the next culture” it is so easy to pass over this as just another item in a list of good things christians are supposed to do.

We add this list to our “knowledge of God” **but rarely** do we let this concept sink deep into our spirit.

We love knowledge,

we love to know things,

we love to be right.

Often our knowledge about God becomes (slowly) ***Nothing more than sharpened stone that we throw at people to win arguments.***

And here in lies some of the struggle **we** have, some of the struggles **i** have with kindness,

***It is hard to be kind when you know you are right, or think you are right.***

**I have a hard time** being kind when i “know” I'm right (or think I'm right).

Without Love as a basis for our kindness it becomes something skin deep, we go from kindness to niceness,

and when christians are only superficially “nice” people we can become dangerously unkind people,

who love the truth about God more than the people God cares about.

—Its so easy to paint things with a black and white brush.

To construct our house of theology nail the door shut and never open it again.

In doing this we hamper our ability to grow in christ and ultimately to grow in the gifts of the sprit

because we close our self off to the reality that we imperfectly see, understand, and apply this (hold up bible).

We become scared that revisiting what we believe is somehow doubting our faith, or questioning God and that somehow he will be mad at us for wrestling with His word.

(i dont know about you but i had my whole theological life figured out at 18, and then 22, and then 25, and now I'm 30 and i give up... laugh...)

Life happens

things happen around us,

or to us

and instead of allowing the bible to inform us and transform us

we use the bible as a sword to hack at people or ideas,

we use it to insulate our self from the world instead of engage it.

like a door to a fortress where we lock our selves away from people and things that make us uncomfortable,

and when question arise of what we hold as true we lash out like someone is attacking us.

because we have based our selves not in who christ is and how he has loved us but legalistic and often hypocritical way of thinking. — —

You see often Knowledge improperly applied moves us from

**kindness to condescending.**

Honestly, we can say some of the most hurtful things that anyone can hear because of how we think,

**or**

what we think the bible has to say on topics that are deeply sensitive to people.

In my life this has come in several areas but the one that was the most difficult for me to understand how people could talk the way they did was in regards to divorce.

Which unfortunately is something i have experienced in my life.

**This** is a deeply sensitive topic,

as are a vast array of other issues that people go through or struggle with.

But the thing to keep in mind in all this

is that real people are attached to this,  
with deep pain,  
and often great loss.

When kindness is **not** central in **our** actions towards others really terrible things can happen  
or be said  
intentionally or unintentionally.

with divorcee everything that makes you you is tore apart going through this process.

People caught in the middle of this are deeply fragile people  
broken inside  
and desperately searching for peace amidst a storm that is unlike anything you can possibly im-  
agine.

I felt like a **failure**, everything i had struggled for, fought for, worked for **gone**, and this is of-  
ten what i heard from people i knew in the church.

“you can never be married again, you will be an adulterer for the rest of your life”

“if you dont pursue her for the rest of your life you have no place in my church”

“you should never teach or preach again”

“you can never be in leadership again”

“as the head of your house you are ultimately responsible for all of this”

basically brian everything that you are, all the gifts God has given you are useless, God cannot  
use you any more you are broken.

Sigh...

I do my best to understand where people are coming from. To try and hear peoples point of  
view, to listen to what they are saying so that i can have good discussions about topics or is-  
sues that are important. I like to think that I'm a fairly reasonable person, I was on the debate  
team in university, i used to regularly help the seminary students by arguing the opposite side of  
an argument to help them prepare for topics about abortion, Bio-ethics, right to die, historicity of  
scripture, evolution. Nothing could have prepared me for trying to look at someone telling me  
these things.

Think about it like this.

Its like someone who is standing on the edge of a bridge ready to jump to their death and you  
walk up to them and say (slow down and get quiter as you go)

**“jump”** (Yell??)

We give so little weight to what comes out of our mouth,  
Things we say in passing,  
or with out thinking  
can stay with people a life time.

(Let this sink in for a few seconds)

There was a woman caught in adultery that was brought to Jesus in John chapter 8.

A crowd of scribes and Pharisees dragged this terrified woman to Jesus and threw her before him and said

“Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?”

Of all the people there at that moment who would have been able to pass judgement on this woman, to pick up a rock and crush her body Jesus could have.

I love what Jesus does here,

JESUS the one who Isaiah says “A bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench, he will faithfully bring forth justice.” Isaiah 42:3 (Slide 5)

Can you imagine this terrified woman thrown into the middle of a group of men staring at a man who literally holds her life in his hands. waiting for him to say something.

Jesus in his wisdom, love and grace passes no judgment on her, rebukes those who have dragged her before Him to trap him. Tells her to go and sin no more.

Later on Paul says this in chapter Galatians 6 “Brothers if anyone is caught in any transgressions, **you who are spiritual** should restore him in a spirit of Gentleness.”

It is so easy to throw stones,

to be unkind,

to not love one another.

we so easily lose track of the fact that we often don't know how to love our neighbour as our self because we don't truly love our self very well.

We are not the Holy police,

we have not been given the knowledge about the way God has called us to live so that we can throw stones at people,

who here can say “I'm better than you, I have the right to do this!”

Has the love of God really settled into your heart?

Do you love those who are hurting?

When people are lost,

hurting,

do you look on them with compassion or contempt,  
thinking  
"i would have never done that, God thank you for making me better than that person."

You know what the really sad part is, I know some of you are thinking "i would never say that!"  
thats terrible!

Your right you probably wouldn't.  
But i bet you would post it on twitter or Facebook. (or any other variety of social media)

I have witnessed some terribly unkind things in my life growing up in the church.

But it PALES in comparison to the hateful,  
ignorant,  
unkind things

i have seen people post, share, or like on social media.  
People in this building,  
people i have grown up with.

Christian friends who show an entirely different side of themselves on the internet.

Do you know who sees what you write?

I have friends who are gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, friends who have had abortions, friends who struggle with substance abuse, who have been homeless, left the church, don't know jesus, love jesus, some are Anglican, catholic, Pentecostal, methodist, mennonite, and the list goes on.

**IF** Saying something to 1 person in a conversation can have a lasting effect how much more when you broadcast things to not only people you know but **literally thousands of people who only know that you have christianity selected as your religious position in your profile.**

I dont want you to think that i am up here pointing the finger at just you.

I have said some terrible things to people,  
i have been deeply judgemental,  
i have been just straight mean,  
and all the while justified in my mind as in defences of the gospel of jesus.

I would not dare to think of picking up a stone to throw at others if jesus were here right now asking for someone without sin to throw.

I am also not here to bash social media. ( i don't want you to go home and un-friend me from facebook) all I am asking is that we think about who we are.

Some of you might be thinking “but brian I'm not really like that”.

Ive only said that on the internet.  
Or  
that just my opinion on the issue.

Thats the problem though. Out of the overflow of your heart your mouth speaks (or your fingers type). Its easy to compartmentalize who we are online and who we are in real life.

The exact same way we compartmentalize who we are in **this** building and who we are when we walk out **those** doors.

Honestly some of you are unkind in **ALL** of these places.

But we dont have to be! Paul has already told us earlier that we have been set free!

[6]

**“For you were called to freedom brothers; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, BUT through love serve one another, For the whole law is fulfilled in one word You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” 5:13-14**

Do you understand what this means for you?

The same love,  
the same kindness  
that pursued us from the dawn of time;  
all through history,  
ultimately finding its full expression in Christ Jesus’s death for us is alive!!!!

Its here in this very room,  
right here,  
right now,  
pursuing your heart, to change it.

[7]



As Jesus says in John 15:12 "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." (or to continue this as the fruits of the Spirit.)

to be joyful as I have been joyful with you

to be peaceful as I have been peaceful with you

to be patient as I have been patient with you

to be kind as I have been kind with you

to be good as I have been good with you

to be faithful as I have been faithful with you

to be gentle as I have been gentle with you

to have self control as I have had self control with you.

All of us here are alive today,  
in this room  
because all of these things are true of God,  
and they should be true of us.

It is for **freedom** that we have been set free so that we may **love** our neighbour.

Kindness is simply the outer workings of this knowledge towards others.

do not let our culture water down this foundational expression to simply being nice to people.

It was not niceness that brought Jesus to the cross  
to be broken and his blood poured out for us.

It was the love of God as he expressed kindness to us  
to rescue us in our time of weakness.

Kindness is the litmus test of a deeper heart attitude of love. Do you love God? do you love your self? what about your family? friends? do you love your neighbour as your self? This is what it means to be kind. It is the outer expression of a deep love for those around us. It comes from deep within us as the spirit of God empowers us and sets us free to express his love to others.

To call people to the one who says

Come to me all you who labour and are heavy laden, and i will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for i am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is "easy" and my burden is light."

-make is clear that the word easy is (*Chrestotes*) its kind, gentle),

This is the heart of Jesus, don't rob the gospel of christ by presenting it with out love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, self-control.

Be kind to one another as Christ has been kind to you.

This is what it means to be.....closing thoughts (as the spirit leads)

Galatians: Learning to Live in the Freedom of Christ  
Growing in Kindness  
Galatians 5:22-23  
Brian Miller

Objective: To see how "God's love transforms us to be like God, to treat people as HE treated us. To be kind to others as He has been kind to us."Worship: Psalm 63:1-8

Welcome:

What stories do you have to share about how you went to God when you needed help with patience? What were the results?

Word: (20—30 minutes)

1. What stood out from the sermon?
2. Recite Galatians 5:22-23. (Ok, peak at the verses if you need to :)
3. Read Galatians 5:13-14; Jeremiah 9:23-24; 1 John 4:7-12, 19.

What do these passages tell us about God's heart? ...about what he desires for us?

Sermon quote: "This concept of our actions towards others is central to us understanding the heart of God. Kindness IS the expression of God's love.... God's love, revealed to us in Christ Jesus, spread to our hearts by his Spirit, works itself out as "chrestotes," kindness towards our neighbours.

4. Read Romans 5:6-8. Here, Paul "paints an amazing picture of what exactly God's kindness looks like. 'While we were still weak' (or as the NASB puts it -- helpless) 'at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.' This is the ultimate kindness of God that out of his love he acted in kindness towards us and did what we had no hope of doing. He saved us, he set us free and in turn it is this very love that is the seed out of which the fruit of the Spirit are born....God's love transforms us to be like God, to treat people as HE treated us. To be kind to others as He has been kind to us."

What are some ways that others have been kind to you, when you were helpless or needy, that impacted your life?

In what situations do you find it hard to be kind?

5. Brian talked about the struggle it can be to be kind when we know, or think, that we are right. "We can become dangerously unkind people, who love the truth about God more than we love the people God cares about."

Can you relate to this?

Does God care about people he knows are wrong? How do you know? How does he show it?

Can you think of examples from the Bible?

Work: (30-40 minutes)

6. Let's think about kindness as it relates to words. Read Proverbs 12:18 and 12:25. Also re-read Galatians 5:13-14 and add verse 15.

What jumps out at you from these verses?

"When kindness is not central in our actions towards others, really terrible things can happen or be said...[to] deeply fragile people broken inside." Isaiah 42:3 says about Jesus: 'A bruised reed he will not break, a faintly burning wick he will not quench.'

7. What examples can you think of, of how Jesus was kind to people who others were judgmental towards? Consider his interactions with the Samaritan woman (in John 4:1-42) and the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11). (These passages can be read later at home for further study.)

How did Jesus' words impact these women?

How did his words impact others in the situation?

What heart change did his words cause?

8. These questions can be used for discussion now (perhaps in pairs) as well as for personal reflection at home during the week:

How has God's kindness impacted your life?

Is his love settling into your heart? How can we let his love settle into our hearts more?

Do you love those who are hurting? When people are lost, hurting, do you look on them with compassion or contempt?

What is the impact of your words on people? What impact would you like to have?

What is God putting on your heart regarding kindness?

Homework: Talk with God about these things. Perhaps journal about the questions in #8 above. Come back next week with stories to share about how God worked in your heart regarding kindness.