

Love is Kind and Uplifting

(Study is based on Sharon A. Steel's book Loving as Jesus Loves)

Pastor Sharon Tidd (2020-05-27)

Read and reflect on these passages that speak of the kindness and love of God: Jeremiah 31:3,4; Ephesians 2:4-7; Titus 3:4-7. What do they teach about God's love for you? How has His love been displayed? What is the result of His lovingkindness? What is the appropriate reaction/response to this love?

Read and reflect on 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. How is love described here? In what circumstances have you experienced this kind of love from God? from others? What difference has it made in your life? When this kind of love is withheld, what is the impact?

Read and reflect on these stories of Jesus: Matthew 19:13-15; Mark 5:25-34; Luke 5:12-13. How did Jesus demonstrate love/lovingkindness in these encounters? Why was this important? What difference did it make? What lesson can we take from His example?

Read and reflect on 2 Timothy 2:22-24. What qualities does this passage urge believers to pursue? How might you do that? What are you to avoid, according to this passage? Why?

What is the difference between arguments and quarrels? Why is it wise for the believer to stay clear of both? How do we do this in a world that thrives on debate? in a world filled with so many varying philosophies and perspectives?

Who are you teaching ... through your life, your words, your actions? How does kindness contribute to the effectiveness of the lessons your life is called to give? How would unkindness diminish your effectiveness?

Read and reflect on 1 Thessalonians 5:8-11. What qualities does this passage encourage believers to pursue? How might you do that? How are these qualities described here? Why is it important to recognize the value they bring? What actions flow out of an increase of God's faith, hope and love in our lives (verse 11)?

What does it mean to 'encourage one another'? In what practical ways might you do that for a fellow believer today? What does it mean to 'build each other up'? In what practical ways might you do that for a fellow believer today? Can it be said that you are already doing this, as was said of the Thessalonians? What happens when Christians fail to encourage and build each other up? What happens when we discourage or tear others down?

Read and reflect on these verses that speak of the power of speech: Proverbs 12:18; 15:1, 4; 16:24; 18:21. How have your words brought healing and life this week? Have they, in any way, brought harm? Is there need for confession or petition?

Read and reflect on Ephesians 4:29-32. What kinds of speech are we to avoid, according to this passage? What do you think is meant by 'unwholesome talk'? What are to be the intended outcomes of our words/speech? How do we keep this as our focus as we enter into conversations with others?

This passage indicates that our words can grieve the Holy Spirit. What do you think is meant by this? Why are we commanded here NOT to cause the Spirit grief?

What actions of love are captured in verse 32? How does this relate to our words/speech? How can we live in this way consistently? What must we get rid of in order to live out these actions of love (verse 31)? Why?