



STUDY GUIDE September 24, 2023

**Message Series:** Side By Side  
**Message Title:** How to Be Kind  
**Teaching Pastor:** Brian Hughes

**Warm-up/Icebreaker:** (10 min.)

How well do you know your people? **Two Truths and a Lie**

Description: Have each person make three statements about him or herself: two true statements and one lie. For example: "I've never broken a bone. I have five sisters. I was born in Poland." The group tries to guess which statement is the lie. If you write these on paper then you could even mix them up and guess who wrote it. Then guess the lie. This icebreaker should not take longer than 10-15 minutes.

OR, Share one high and one low from the week.

**Pray:**

Lord, we praise You because You are everything - Creator, Savior, Father, and Friend. We ask that You help us focus on You and what You have to say right now, in this moment. Let everything else in our lives be placed on hold so that we can hear from You. Thank You in advance for all You are going to do in and through us as we gather in Your name. Amen.

**Get Started:** (20 min.)

- Who is the kindest person you've ever known? In what ways were they kind?
- Do you equate kindness with weakness? Explain.

***"What is Kindness? Kindness: The treatment of another with respect, help and care, regardless of how I'm being treated. Let's be honest about this: most of us respond to disrespect with disrespect. We respond to neglect with neglect. We respond to lack of care by claiming that I don't care either. Our normal mode of operation is reciprocation. I treat you the way that you treat me. In other words: I allow your behavior to define mine. Can you see how unhealthy that is? We give up control of our own decision for how we will behave and give it to you, based on how you behave. If I could be so bold, THAT is weakness. Choosing to be kind regardless, that's strength."*** - Pastor Brian Hughes

**Read Proverbs 20:22 1 Peter 3:9, Romans 12:17-19.**

- Being completely honest, when you feel that someone is not treating you well, how do you respond? When you feel like your character is being attacked or your motives are questioned, what do you usually do? When you're in an argument with someone you love and the temperature of your opponent goes up into the red zone, do you take yours there, too? How would *others* say you react?
- According to these verses, what are the reasons we are to not reciprocate someone else's wrongdoing?

**Watch and Discuss Video** (running time 3:51 minutes, 20 minute discussion)

Some practical things you can work on:

1. Practice seeing things through other people's eyes.
2. Get your intentions right.
3. Kindness isn't about feelings, it's a choice.

It is important to own your emotions:

1. Acknowledge your feelings to God.
  2. Ask God to help to act in a way that is honoring to Him and to the other person.
  3. Ask God to help you evaluate your feelings.
  4. **Emotions do not have to dictate your feelings!**
- Thinking about the most recent interaction with someone else where you may not have been as kind as you could have been. Looking at the steps above, is there anything you might have done differently?

**Reflect and Commit:** (20 min.)

*"If we will choose kindness in our homes, as a response to others who treat us without it, I believe that, over time, people will take a second look at the One whose name we bear. And in the process, our homes will be places of peace and our lives will be less anxious as we realize that we can CHOOSE kindness, regardless of whether others around us do. Ironically, when we choose kindness consistently, over time, they will too."* - Pastor Brian Hughes

**Read Colossians 3:12, Ephesians 4:32 and Matthew 7:12.**

- Here's a daring exercise, for those brave enough to try it. Ask your spouse, child, friend, co-worker or the person closest to you, "Am I kind to you?" If you do ask this question, it has to come with an absolute promise: there will be no repercussions, no punishment - no silent treatment, no argument, no running away - regardless of their answer.
- What is one practical thing you can do to move the needle toward kindness in your life?

**Gather prayer requests and pray.** (5-10 min.)

**Pray:**

Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for calling us to be different in a world filled with unkindness. We confess that it is our human nature to want to retaliate when someone is unkind toward us, but we ask that You fill us with Your Spirit so that we can overflow with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control. Thank You that when we repay evil with blessing, You promise that we'll inherit a blessing. It's You that we can trust You with the outcome when others are unkind toward us - we only need to keep our eyes on You. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.