

CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Week #5 - Human-Kindness



GETTING STARTED

Spend some time checking in with each other. Any highs and lows since the last time you met?

When was the last time you witnessed or received a genuine act of kindness? How did it make you feel?

THIS WEEK'S THEME

Hans said, "Nice isn't necessarily kind. And kindness doesn't always appear nice." How would you define the difference between "kindness" and "niceness" in your own words? Can you think of a time you were "nice" but not truly kind—or vice versa?

Why do you think many Christians struggle with the idea of unrestrained kindness? What fears or concerns get in the way of practicing kindness like Jesus?

Read John 8:2-11

In this story, what stands out to you about how Jesus treats the woman? What do his actions and posture (bending down, standing up) teach us about kindness?

The religious leaders used the law to trap both the woman and Jesus. How do we sometimes use truth or rules to judge or exclude instead of to help?

Jesus protects the woman publicly, then speaks truth to her privately. What does this teach us about timing and context in showing kindness? How can we emulate that balance in our relationships?

Hans suggests that we often hold onto metaphorical "rocks." What are some "rocks" we might hold in our hearts (e.g., judgment, bitterness, control)? What does it look like to put down the rock in real life?

Hans said, "Jesus never asked us to be right. He asked us to be loving." How does this challenge your approach to disagreements, especially with those who think or live differently than you?

DIGGING DEEPER

The famous story about Jesus and the woman caught in adultery appears in John 7:53-8:11. In the surrounding context in the gospel, the Jewish leaders have been disturbed by the way Jesus taught and acted in ways that seemed contrary to their understanding of the law.

In 7:58-8:11 Jesus is confronted with a situation in which the verdict would seem to be self-evident. The woman was caught in the act of committing adultery, and the law clearly says that the punishment for adultery is death (Leviticus 20:10). So the Jewish leaders want to see whether Jesus will uphold the law in this case.

Yet the literary context also warns that people are not to judge by appearances (John 7:24), and in this episode there is more going on than what initially meets the eye. The evidence actually works against the woman's accusers. Note that the woman was caught in the act, which means that the man also must have been present, and the law is quite clear that in a case of adultery both people are to be put to death—the man as well as the woman (Leviticus 20:10). The accusers are guilty of ignoring the clear statutes in the law. When Jesus asks the person who is without sin to cast the first stone, no one responds. The accusers are guilty of a travesty of justice. They have violated the law by condemning the woman's sin while letting the other guilty party go free.

This story does not appear in the earliest manuscripts of John's gospel. Footnotes in many modern translations note that the story is missing from many manuscripts, while others insert it after John 7:36 or after 21:25 or even after Luke 21:38. The story seems to have circulated for some time before it was included in the written gospels. Nevertheless, it is possible that the story preserves an early tradition about Jesus, which was passed down in oral form.

<https://enterthebible.org/passage/john-753-811-jesus-and-the-woman-caught-in-adultery>

PRAY

Ask how you can pray for each other this week. What prayer requests do you have?

Gracious God, Thank you for the gifts of the spirit. Teach us to live in a way the world needs. Amen.

TAKING IT HOME

Put Down the Rock: Identify one judgment or grudge you've been carrying. Ask God to help you release it and choose kindness instead.