

Be Nice

Part 3

Matthew 5:14-16 // 14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

What defines a nice person and what does the Bible say about being nice?

Our culture needs to learn the art of being nice again!

We are called to draw men to God, not throw up walls of resistance and separation that alienates men from God.

How do we exemplify this quality of nice?

Romans 12:9-10 // "9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. 10 Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;"

Being nice centers around displaying the love of God in such a way that you show honor to others regardless of their differences.

Even when we disagree with them we can still show them honor and respect.

God did that for us!

Romans 5:8 // God commended His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

If you want to be a nice person, quit hanging out with jerks.

Romans 12:18 // "If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men."

Notice the phrase "if it is possible"

There are just some people, no matter how much you try, they are just mean and you can't help but get hurt by them or wind up arguing with them.

Jesus didn't call you to be anyone's continual doormat and allow their poison to begin to corrupt you.

1 Corinthians 15:33 // "Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character.""

Sometimes you need to learn to love and forgive the jerks from a distance.

Forgive them, pray for them, wish the best for them, but ease on down the road.

So how do you do that Biblically?

Jesus gave us a process that shows us how to turn the other cheek and attempt to salvage the relationship and help the person before you abandon it.

Most people don't even know this process, much less practice it.

So they deal with conflict and mean people the worldly way:

- They gossip about how mean that person is
- They avoid the person
- And eventually abandon the relationship, and possibly all the good ones around it as well, with no explanation or forewarning

But nice people have the restraint to hold their tongue from airing the faults of the jerks in their life AND thick enough skin to forgive the petty stuff.

When we run away from problems, we lack the personal maturity required to grow in our influence as a leader.

This is why gossip and talking to everyone else about the problem is so wrong.

So how do you deal with the jerks in your life that keep making your life miserable?

You don't allow them to rob you of the places to which God has called you by running from them.

Matthew 18:15-17 // “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ 17 And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.”

- V15- "if a brother" - Don't waste your time on relationships that don't require the time

God has something better

- V15- "if a brother" - if this is an invested relationship, go to the person and tell them **with the intent to restore.**

Not with the intent to tell them off.

Instead of giving them a piece of your mind, give a piece of your heart.

Galatians 6:1-4 // “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. 2 Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. 3 For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.”

Most of the context of this verse tells us to get yourself right before you attempt to get the relationship right.

So don't go to them with bitterness in your heart.

Go with the peace of whether they hear me or not, I've done my part to reconcile.

Now when you go be candid, don't candy coat.

Tell the truth in love verses telling them off.

Ephesians 4:14-16 // “that we should no longer be children, ...15 but, **speaking the truth in love**, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together **by what every joint supplies**, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, **causes growth of the body** for the edifying of itself in love.”

If we are to grow up as leaders and individuals, we will have the courage to go talk to others when we notice a breach in the meaningful relationships in our lives.

•V15 - "**speak the truth in love**"

Don't make it about expressing your feelings

And don't make it about arguing your point to prove you were right

Make it about how the offense is affecting the unity between the two of you.

It's not about right and wrong, it's about working out the relationship.

"in love" - Give them the benefit of the doubt that they are a good person and that they just don't see that they are doing this.

Don't categorize them as a jerk YET.

Hopefully they are willing to eat the breakfast of champions.... Critical Feedback

What if they don't?

Matthew 18:15-17 // “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him ...16 But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be

established.' 17 And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.”

If a person doesn't listen to you privately then you continue to follow the process that Jesus gave us with the hopes of reconciliation.

Quit gossiping and deal with it.

If not affecting others, don't pull others in.

Just put up a fence and love from a distance.

But what if this is happening in an organization that is an integral part of my life?

(Job, Church, Group)

•V17 - if this is an organizational problem, and the person does not change, Don't run away and leave the organization. Don't let them bully you out of the place God has for you.

Don't let someone's bad behavior rob you of your place of calling.

Bring it to a leader in the organization or group to be dealt with.

A Godly leader will not allow a single individual to destroy the unity of the entire group.

What will a godly leader do if the person doesn't have a heart to listen and change?

He will take corrective action and ultimately ask the offender to leave.

Why?

The person that won't listen after repeated efforts to deal with the issue is categorically **A JERK!**

How do you handle the jerks?

Love them from a distance.

God is big enough to reach them without us.

Your accommodation of their bad behavior is hurting them more than it's helping them.

Simply put, nice people don't hang out with jerks.

If you want to be a nice person don't become a crusty old mean one!

Romans 12:21 // Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Don't allow bitterness to settle in your heart.

Choose to forgive.

One of the main reasons people become bitter, hard, and mean is because they can't forgive.

Romans 2:1 // "Some of you accuse others of doing wrong. But there is no excuse for what you do. When you judge others, you condemn yourselves, because you are guilty of doing the very same things."

We have to remove the judgement from our hearts and see even the unlovely as God does.

If Jesus can forgive them, then so can you!

Colossians 3:13 // ... forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.

Bottom line: To be a nice person, you have to forgive!

Matthew 7:17-18 // Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.

If there is bitterness in you, it's impossible to be the nice person God has called you to be.

Ephesians 4:30-32 // ...Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

Make the choice to forgive others, to let go of the bitterness, as Christ has forgiven you.

Sometimes deep rooted bitterness requires a work of God to be removed.

Hebrews 12:14-15 // Pursue peace with all people, ...lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;

Notice the phrase, "root of bitterness"

That is something deep down

It's the seeds of hatred and deep rooted bitterness

If has the potential to poison us from being able to be the nice person that God intends us to be.

Psalms 147:3 // He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

One of the great qualities of our God is that He is a healer.

Matthew 3:8-12 // Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, 9 For I say to you that God is able ...10 And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. 11... He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 12 His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor

Matthew 5:14-16 // Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid...16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Let's be the nice people God has called us to be!

