



kindness.

compassion.

humility.

respect.

love.

Bible Study

October - November 2024

This fall let's Cultivate Kindness. As we work on depolarizing, the most important thing we can do is practice kindness in all its forms. One way you can go deeper into these topics is by joining us for our Wednesday night Zoom Bible Study. We'll take four weeks to explore the scriptural call to bless others and wrestle with what this looks like in our day-to-day lives. Specifically, we'll look at why we struggle so much with loving our neighbors, and how the complexity of the world can challenge our most basic assumptions. All the while, we'll explore how to engage with people both inside the congregation and outside our church on a journey toward practicing the Bible's great love ethic: "Do unto others as you would have them do to you." (Matthew 7:12).

I suggest reading each scripture before class so you are ready to bring questions for discussion. However, we will also have time to read in class. Come as you are and be ready to think with your heart.

Class Overview

Date	Lesson	Homework (due on class day)
October 16	Calling: The call of Abraham and Sarah	Genesis 12: 1-3 and discussion questions
October 23	Fear: The universal experience of fear	Leviticus 19: 33-37 and discussion questions
October 30	NO CLASS	
November 6	Gospel: Jesus teaches us how to love others within and beyond our walls	Acts 1: 7-8 and discussion questions
November 13	Church: Intentionality in the life of the Church	John 4: 4-42 and discussion questions

October 16

Week 1: Calling

Read

Genesis 12: 1-3

Pray

Lord, give us comfort as we navigate a world filled with hatred and division. Show us how we might grow in kindness and love, and give us bravery to share it with our neighbors. Thank you for the blessings you have given to us, and make us be a blessing to the world around us. It is in the name of your Son, who showed us true love, that we ask this. Amen.

Class Discussion

1. The beginning of the lesson described the social context of the ancient Levant, the same context of Abraham and Sarah. What are some connections between that context and ours?
2. How have the divisions and disagreements in our society impacted you personally?
3. In this lesson, we see that God called Abraham and Sarah to pursue their calling in the midst of chaos. What is a time in which you have been called to bring peace to a chaotic situation?
4. What is your experience of political or social tension both within your community and outside your community? How do you think the pursuit of resources impact that dynamic?
5. What are times in your life in which circumstances made being kind to others complex and challenging?

October 23

Week 2: Fear

Read

Leviticus 19:33-37

Pray

Jesus, thank you for the hope and confidence you bring to our lives. We feel afraid as we look at the world around us, and we ask that you would bring peace. Embolden us to move beyond fear and to show your love to those around us, and forgive us for the times in which our fear has caused us to act unkindly. Amen.

Class Discussion

1. When you consider the bitterness so prevalent in our society, what role do you think fear plays in how people talk and act?
2. What in our culture brings you fear? Is it real, perceived, or both?
3. What is a time in your life in which you worked through great fear? What did that teach you, and what can it teach you today?
4. God frequently reminds the Israelites that they were once foreigners in Egypt, and that they should therefore treat foreigners with compassion. Who are the people today especially in need of compassion?
5. What are some things you could do to extend compassion to those you mentioned in the past question?

November 6

Week 3: Gospel

Read

Acts 1:7-8

Pray

Jesus, help us to love those who frustrate us. We ask your help for the transformation of our hearts as we show kindness to others. Especially, Jesus, in a season in which Christians are so divided and angry with one another, teach us to love our brothers and sisters well so that we may have a faithful witness to the whole world. Amen.

Class Discussion

1. This lesson suggests that Christians need to get along with each other in order to faithfully witness to the world. Where do you see division among Christians?
2. How do you think Christians are perceived by the non-Christians in our communities?
3. We saw in this lesson that Jesus addressed conflict within the Jewish community by directing frustration at religious leaders. If given a listening ear by a prominent Christian leader, what would you want her or him to hear?
4. Can you think of a person in your life who adheres to a kind of Christianity with which you disagree, but who models love and integrity?
5. If you were challenged to reconcile a division with another Christian in your life, who is the first person you would reach out to?

November 13

Week 4: Church

Read

John 4:4-42

Pray

Jesus, help us to love those who frustrate us. We ask your help for the transformation of our hearts as we show kindness to others. Especially, Jesus, in a season in which Christians are so divided and angry with one another, teach us to love our brothers and sisters well so that we may have a faithful witness to the whole world. Amen.

Class Discussion

1. Describe your church community with no judgment. Do most people agree on big issues? Do people come from similar backgrounds?
2. What would it look like for your church to go places that are usually avoided in your community? Is your church doing this already?
3. What might the Church miss out on if congregations are made of people who all think the same?
4. Think of an example from your life in which you intentionally went somewhere you didn't feel comfortable going. Why did you go? What was the impact?
5. How do you balance the call to love those outside the community and those inside the community?