

SESSION 4: THE POWER OF KINDNESS



Now Jesus had to go through Samaria. So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?"

Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

– John 4:4-14

Samaritans were despised by the Jews. Their people were comprised of Israelites who had intermarried with idol-worshipping foreigners and Jewish criminals. On top of being a Samaritan, this woman was outcast by her own people. Women typically went to draw water together during the cooler early hours of the morning. This woman went to the well later in the day, alone.

Jesus didn't avoid this woman. He actually sought her out to have a conversation with her. He didn't judge or condemn her, despite her poor life choices. He was kind to her – he showed her compassion and generosity – by offering her living water.

We'll define the word "kind" as the ability to recognize the needs of others and take steps to meet those needs. Showing kindness looks like extending grace, mercy and charitable service.

Most of us aren't naturally wired to be kind – at least not consistently. Kindness requires being intentional. And because of that, we typically need to slow down a bit to express kindness. Being kind requires that we put our own needs aside, let go of our judgments and focus on the good in others. All of us were created by God in His image. But most of us are going fast at work. We have a lot of demands coming at us and it doesn't seem like we really have the time to be that intentional. The fact is, we don't have time not to. Why? Because when we react to those around us based on our own perceptions, needs, judgments and stress, we feed the stress in others and ourselves. This contributes to the breakdown of relationships and muddy communications, which just leads to more problems that slow us down.



Kindness is a superpower. When you wrap your working relationships in an envelope of kindness, you can accomplish more together. Being kind has the power to melt walls that get built up between us and other people.

Kindness empowers us to shift our perspective so that we can put ourselves in the shoes of the other person – which can help us see his heart. Kindness gives us the ability to change hearts – both ours and the hearts of others. Kindness is transformational. It helps us build stronger relationships and tap into creative solutions.

SIX WAYS YOU CAN EXPRESS KINDNESS TO OTHERS AT WORK



Praise people for small achievements & successes.



Support & encourage others in the midst of challenges.



Do small acts of kindness for others each day.



Pray for your boss, coworkers & subordinates.



Refrain from judgment & seek to understand what the other person is dealing with.



Offer a helping hand to someone who has a lot on his plate.

If you read on in the story of the Samaritan woman, you'll see that this woman was the one who delivered the news of Jesus, the Messiah, to the rest of her village. As a result, many Samaritans came to believe in Christ. Jesus made a brief investment in a woman's life that made an eternal difference for her and her people. You have no idea what impact your small gestures of kindness could have on a coworker.

REFLECTION & APPLICATION

- 01 What is the biggest factor in your work that makes it challenging for you to be kind to a coworker? What is your responsibility in that area?
- 02 Who have you had difficulty being kind to recently? What small step can you take to express more kindness to that person?
- 03 What can you do to help create a culture of kindness with others in your work?

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE

VERSE 1
JOHN 3:34-35

VERSE 2
LUKE 6:35-36

VERSE 3
JOHN 15:9-12

VERSE 4
EPH. 4:32