



Scripture: Ephesians 4:25–32, Romans 5:8

Hey friends! I'm glad you made it tonight. Maybe getting here felt like a sprint, or maybe you've been counting down the minutes. Either way, I want you to know this: you're not here by accident, and you belong.

Today, we're diving into something that seems simple, but it's actually a big deal: **kindness**.

Let me ask — when's the last time you heard someone say, *“Be kind”*? Maybe it was your parents breaking up a sibling fight: *“Stop hitting! Be kind!”* Maybe it was a teacher after someone said something rude: *“Hey, that's not very nice. Be kind!”*

We hear it all the time growing up, but let's be honest: *kindness isn't just for little kids*. And it's definitely not just about saying “please” and “thank you.”

Kindness is one of the clearest ways we show what's really going on in our hearts. It's like a **mirror**. It reflects how we see other people, and even how we see God.

So today, we're not just talking about how to “be nice.” We're talking about what happens when our hearts are being shaped by the kindness of Jesus. Let's pray and ask God to speak to us.

[Pause and pray.]

Let's start by reading from the Bible, **Ephesians 4:25–32 (NIV)**. This is part of a letter the Apostle Paul wrote to early Christians:

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Let's get some quick background so we really understand this. This letter was written by the Apostle Paul while he was under house arrest; most likely around 60 to 62 A.D. This was sent to the church in Ephesus, but it wasn't just meant for them. Paul intended it to be shared with believers across Asia Minor, encouraging a wide community of Christians in what it looks like to follow Jesus.

It's important to note, that Paul had spent about three years with the Ephesian Christians; longer than he stayed with almost any other church. But this letter doesn't feel super personal or specific. Instead, it reads more like a big-picture reminder for all believers telling them what it meant to live a new life in Jesus.

Now, in the chapters leading up to this, Paul had laid down some foundational truth. He shared the reality that you are not saved by being good, or doing more, or trying harder. You're saved by grace, because of what Jesus has already done. And that grace is more than just something we think in our heads. It is something that truly changes our hearts and how we live.

So, in chapter 4, Paul wrote about this change and started to get very practical. He moved from big ideas to everyday stuff, like telling the truth, dealing with anger, not taking what isn't yours, and watching how you talk to people.

So, now let's zoom in on three places Paul said kindness shows up. We are going to call these the **kindness checkpoints** for your everyday life.

Checkpoint 1: Your Words — Do They Build or Break?

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up...” Eph. 4:29 (NIV)

Words are powerful. They can build someone up or tear someone down in seconds. You know that old saying, “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me”? That’s a lie. Straight up. Words can stick with you longer than any physical bruise. You know this. Some of you still remember something hurtful someone said to you years ago: a nickname, a rumor, or a sarcastic comment that cut a little too deep.

Or maybe you’ve said something — joking, snapping, trying to be funny — and as soon as it left your mouth, you saw the look on the other person’s face and thought, *“That hurt. That wasn’t kind.”*

Kindness with your words means:

- You pause before you post.
- You choose encouragement over sarcasm.
- You avoid joining the gossip circle, even if you’re not the one talking.

Real kindness doesn’t just avoid meanness, it looks for ways to build people up.

[Share an example how students can seek to find ways to build people up.]

Your words can either reflect Jesus or just blend in with the rest of the noise.

Checkpoint 2: Your Anger — Do You Explode or Engage?

“In your anger do not sin’: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry...” Eph. 4:26 (NIV)

Anger isn’t a sin; even Jesus got angry. But there’s a difference between **righteous anger** and **reactive anger**. Paul’s warning for us here is that anger can become a foothold, a way the enemy sneaks in and causes damage.

Think about it:

- Someone cuts you off in the hallway; your face gets hot.
- Your sibling takes your stuff, again, and you explode.

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